



The issues presented in this article emerged from my training as a dancer, my professional experience, and the teaching practices at the university level. These questions are related to difficulties that I experienced or observed in colleagues and students, which motivated my growing interest in investigating pedagogical alternatives that could contemplate different dance training demands. Such demands involve specific dance content and aspects related to sources of knowledge, power relations, and ethical issues connected to education as a practice of freedom.

In the dance tradition, it is common for teachers to reproduce the pedagogical practices they have learned. As stated by Fortin (2003, p. 163, translation author's own), "it is interesting to note that choreographic creation evolved through successive breaks with previous aesthetic works, while teaching remained largely faithful to the uses and customs of tradition."

In my teaching practice, a recurring question is: how can the university contribute to enhancing dance education to foster students' self-knowledge, critical thinking, and autonomy?

The inclusion of dance as an area of knowledge within Brazilian universities is recent. In Brazil, the first undergraduate dance course was created in 1956, at the Federal University of Bahia, according to Corrêa and Nascimento (2013). However, until the end of the 20th century, few dance courses were created at other universities. Fortunately, in the 21st century, this scenario has been changing. Currently, there are over 40 undergraduate dance courses at Brazilian universities. The graduate programs in performing arts have also contributed to fostering dance as an area of knowledge.

The consolidation of dance as an area of knowledge within Brazilian universities has demanded answers to different questions. One of them, which will be the focus of this article, is related to how to provide dance training that includes ethical issues to foster students' autonomy and critical thinking development.

In my work as a teacher, I observe that, in general, students who enter

the undergraduate dance course have undergone previous training in dance schools of their home cities or in the locations where they lived. Therefore, the contents, values, habits, and behaviors learned in these schools are brought into the university.

A goal-oriented environment often characterizes dance training in the Western tradition. In this environment, the dominant discourse often values ideal bodies and movements. The aesthetic criteria of beauty, thinness, virtuosity, devotion, and asceticism prevail, as Fortin *et al.* (2009) pointed out. Within the university, it is expected that students bring with them many of the values described above. Therefore, in this article, I reflect on teaching practices that have contributed to helping students react to dominant discourses and finding alternatives for other ways of being and moving. This effort has been made by an increasing number of artists, teachers, researchers and can be seen as part of a process of reviewing dance practices, which began in the late 19th century. However, despite this revision process, there is a tradition that resists change.

Next, I contextualize what I call a revision of dance practices, which involves both on-stage performances and issues related to teaching and body techniques. We will see that the somatics arise from the 19th century and will play an essential role in renewing dance practices.

According to Beavers (2008), a revisionist history of dance techniques begins with Mabel Todd. In her 1937 book "The Thinking Body", Todd articulates more than thirty years of experience in applying the study of physics, mechanics, anatomy, and physiology to the body and movement. From a scientific basis, Todd (1937) identified that one of the organic development laws determines that function makes form. Beavers (2008) notes that if form follows function, the way we walk, feel, run, and think is related to our postural structure and possibilities of movement. Beavers comments that, since then, there has been a significant transformation of aesthetics in dance, gradually being supported by a technical base, which arises from research on the body, later known as part of the area of knowledge called somatic education. Thus,

in this article, we will see how the emergence of modern dance and somatic practices transformed the values and foundations of dance that prevailed until then.

In teaching dance in undergraduate courses, Margareth H'Doubler had a pioneering work at the University of Wisconsin. One of her students, Anna Halprin – dancer, teacher, and dance researcher –, recalls that undergraduate students in dance, under the tutelage of H'Doubler in Wisconsin, needed to study anatomy, physiology, physics, biology, and kinesiology (HALPRIN apud EDDY, 2016). Halprin (apud EDDY, 2016) recalls that, during her graduation in dance and her studies with H'Doubler, from 1939 to 1943, they used Mabel Todd's (1937) book and were encouraged to approach the movement based on the science of how the body works.

If I understood somatics correctly, I think Margaret H'Doubler was the mother of somatics [within the dance community] because she taught strictly objectively, using anatomical knowledge. She didn't demonstrate movement. She wanted us to [explore and] understand how the body works (HALPRIN 2003<sup>2</sup> apud EDDY, 2016, p. 39, additions by Eddy).

This process of reviewing dance practices was also related to ethical, political issues and the reaction to systems of domination. When commenting on the impact that various world events had on dance in the second half of the 20th century, Lepecki (2012, p. 19) notes that, after the Second World War, events such as the horrors of the Holocaust, the bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Cold War and anti-colonial movements, among others, led "[...] many artists to link their practice directly to questions of freedom and participation, sometimes even aiming radically to recast the whole conception of 'man' and the human".

Lepecki (2012) comments that, in this scenario, issues related to politics and subjectivity impacted the arts' aesthetic priorities. There was, then, an increasing emphasis on experimentation focused on the materiality of the body. Lepecki clarifies that to experiment has come to mean animating the body's capabilities and potential in the sense of considering the human as subjectivity.

To experiment was to open up the body to new areas of the sensible, the perceptible and the meaningful, of affects and sensations as moving and mobilizing corporeal assemblages. Thus to experiment meant to get closer to problems deeply linked to questions that are constitutive of dance and choreography (LEPECKI, 2012, p. 19).

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<sup>2</sup> Halprin interviewed by Eddy in 2003.

In this way, dance artists created alternatives to react to systems of domination and subjugation present in the political scene and the sphere of ballet and even in modern dance in the mid-twentieth century. Banes (1987) argues that the body configurations of modern dance, at that time, were rigid in various stylized vocabularies, and dance companies were structured in hierarchies in an artistic medium that hardly welcomed new choreographers.

From the second half of the 20th century onwards, there was an increasing reaction to the rules and values that prevailed in dance. In this context, the rise of American postmodern dance was revolutionary. Banes (1987) comments that the artists who were part of this movement questioned the history, function, and structure of the dance and unleashed a rebellion spirit in the 1960s. At that moment, there was a movement towards expressiveness intrinsic to the body in its materiality.

In this context, Anna Halprin was a significant influence. "Through her students Trisha Brown, Yvonne Rainer, and Simone Forti, Anna strongly influenced New York's Judson Dance Theater, one of the seedbeds of postmodern dance."<sup>3</sup> Besides, "defying traditional notions of dance, Anna has extended its boundaries to address social issues, build community, foster both physical and emotional healing, and connect people to nature."<sup>4</sup> Eddy (2016) comments that Halprin absorbed much of H'Doubler's criticism of dance education and that she experienced somatic inquiry as a personal investigation, in addition to developing the habit of questioning dogmas, in any situation. Eddy points out that Halprin considers the link between somatic experiences with expressiveness and politics to be especially important.

Postmodern artists reacted against dance techniques and explored everyday actions such as walking, running, manipulating objects, brushing their hair, for example. Thus, they had to reinvent themselves in preparing for the scene, composing movements, and presenting their creations. Improvisational practices had a great emphasis in this environment. The postmodern dance was also taken out of the theaters, starting to occupy the most diverse spaces for

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.annahalprin.org/biography>

<sup>4</sup> Idem.

presentations. All this atmosphere created an aesthetic diversity that is still present today.

This revolutionary environment of the 1960s impacted dance in its multiple aspects, including teaching practices. In this process, there was an increasing hybridization of dance techniques and the incorporation of different practices, among which somatics had growing importance. The artists needed to develop several skills that a single technique could not embrace.

In Brazil, Klauss Vianna and Angel Vianna's pioneering work can be seen within this context of reviewing dance practices that prevailed until then, since the Vianna couple proposed to their students, from the 1950s, classes in which structures of the body were studied and respected. According to their own experience, each person had time to explore the movement (ROSA, 2016).

These proposals, which were revolutionary in the second half of the 20th century, are still present in the contemporary scene. Within this context, somatic education has been increasingly integrated into dance; however, it continues as a marginal discourse in many spaces. Diverse somatic practices, processes, and methods opened ways for new explorations, different from those that prevailed in the traditional dance environment. However, this change has been occurring gradually and often still finds strong resistance from teachers, choreographers, and dancers.

Today, we can identify in different contexts of Western scenic dance a dominant traditional discourse, and a marginal somatic discourse:

For example, we can distinguish both a dominant discourse and a marginal somatic discourse in dance training. Each discourse proposes different perceptions of the body and training modalities. In general, the dominant discourse of dance values an ideal body where aesthetic criteria of beauty, slimness, virtuosity, devotion and asceticism prevail. On the other hand, the somatic discourse promotes body awareness to allow individuals to make choices for their own well-being, thus counteracting the fantasy of an ideal body, which is so often removed from the concreteness of the lived body. However, these different and sometimes opposing discourses may be confusing in the student's experience (FORTIN *et al*, 2009, p. 48).

Therefore, teachers and students must recognize and verbalize the different discourses underlying the practices. Often, there is no clarity of the

principles and contents supporting the dance practices. The lack of clarity regarding the criteria that guide the practices makes it difficult for students to have the resources to position themselves and understand. Fortin *et al.* comment on this:

For change, dancers need to raise their consciousness about the dominant discourse and how it constructs dancing bodies. Unless the dominant discourse in dance changes, or marginal discourses are given a more prominent place, changes in dancers' health and well-being will remain limited (FORTIN *et al.*, 2009, p. 61, 62).

Thus, despite its growth as a field of knowledge, somatic education remains a marginal proposition in many dance environments and is often approached as just one more content.

The emphasis on the body seen from the perspective of the first person, proposed by somatic practices, differs from the focus on the body from the third-person viewpoint, which is common in more traditional dance environments:

Generally speaking, the goal oriented environment of professional dance schools encourages students to emphasize the representational body (how the body looks from a third person viewpoint) while the process orientation of somatics favours the experiential soma (how the body feels from a first person viewpoint) (FORTIN *et al.*, 2002, p. 172).

In addition to the goal-oriented environment, other common aspects in traditional dance teaching are the emphasis on the teacher's authority, the choreographer, the technique, the mirror, and the practice of imitating movements. There is also the imposition of an ideal body and movement, accompanied by the lack of dialogue between teachers and students. This environment favors the construction of docile bodies, a term used by the philosopher Michel Foucault.

Green (2002) addresses the training of docile bodies in dance. She notes that ballet and modern dance are the main focus of many dance programs at American universities. Her description of the environment in which the classes take place seems to refer to traditional dance teaching:

When I think of a typical university ballet or modern dance technique class, I see a large studio space filled with mirrors. The dance teacher usually stands at the front of the studio while the students are often lined up in neat rows facing the mirror and the teacher. Students in dance classes spend much time gazing in the mirror in order to perfect the outward appearance of the body and strengthen dance technique. They commonly wear leotards and tights or variations of tightly clad clothing that allow the teacher to view the body from an outside perspective (GREEN, 1999, p. 81 apud GREEN, 2002, p. 99).

Different dance styles bring marks of social groups that generated them, and aspects related to the historical context. Racial, gender, ethnic and social class issues are present in different dance styles, with varied emphases, even if practitioners are not aware of these aspects. Often, certain dance styles are seen as more relevant than others, and their values are considered hegemonic. However, hegemonic values are not only related to certain types of dance, as they are often identified as transversal characteristics that permeate the view of body and movement in different styles. There is, therefore, work to be done that is independent of the dance style approached and that seeks to reconnect people with their own sensory experiences as a way of knowing themselves, allowing them to establish choices.

By disconnecting people from their sensory and sensual selves, through the imposition of external models of "ideal bodies," or standards of what the body "should be" and how it should act, the dominant culture maintains control as people in oppressed groups distrust their own sensory impulses and give up their bodily authority (GREEN, 2002, p. 103).

Therefore, the renewal of dance education involves a review of the teacher's pedagogical practices and the search for an environment that enables human development. Somatics has been used as a resource for this renewal, as Jill Green notes:

Since the 1960s, dance educators explored somatic practices as a way to help dance students perform more expressively and efficiently, with less injury, habitual tension and stress. Some dance educators additionally applied somatic practices in an effort to help students overcome the abusive effects and damage to their bodies caused from traditional dance training and education. As a result, a number of dance education scholars began to explore somatic theory as a research emphasis (GREEN, 2007, p. 1120).

The somatic theory has driven research in dance. Fortin (2003, p. 163, translation author's own) comments that "the philosopher Tony Eichelberger (1989) postulates three main sources of knowledge: tradition, scientific research, and personal experience". The Canadian researcher argues that changing sources of knowledge alters power relations. In the context of dance, the validation of personal experience as a legitimate source of knowledge, provided by somatic education, can change the power relations



characteristic of tradition. Thus, the personal experience becomes complementary knowledge to tradition, which can boost research in dance.

When reflecting on the construction of bodies in dance, Fortin *et al.* (2002) highlight the importance of the dancer's creative participation in his training process. They criticize Foster's analysis (1997, p. 241) that "each dance technique, however, constructs a specialized and specific body, one that represents a given choreographer's or tradition's aesthetic vision of dance", as they consider that it neglects the dancer as the subject of his own construction:

She [Foster] neglects the dancer as a subject of their own construction when she stresses the roles of the training, the choreographer or the teacher, as being responsible for constructing the student's dancing body. She overlooks the possibility of creative self-fashioning by the dancers. To me, this view sustains dancers' disempowerment. Just as aesthetic authority seems to be encoded in our bodies through our training, can it also be challenged by it? Can somatics be used as a way to resist the situation portrayed by Foster? (FORTIN *et al.*, 2002, p. 171).

Both Foster and Fortin touch on issues relevant to dance training. On the one hand, it is undeniable that the systematic exposure for long periods to specific procedures and movements leaves their imprints in the bodies of that particular way of moving and dancing. But neither can the artist's participation as the subject of his body construction be denied, a process that can be facilitated by somatics.

Fortin *et al.* (2002) comment on the importance of investing in teaching the functional aspect of personal organization in movement. The authors comment that Warwick, when teaching dance technique and movement sequences in a class taught jointly by the authors, said to the students: "I am interested in the material so that you extract what is meaningful to you, rather than just following the way I am doing" (FORTIN *et al.*, 2002, p. 172). To extract something significant from a sequence of movements, each dancer must be aware of how and why that movement takes place. The authors comment that the teacher's orientation promotes learning based on function, which is different from learning by copying movements.

Promoting a functional, self-referential and contextual aesthetic is tied to the goal of understanding personal organisation in movement which in turn will facilitate acquiring

someone else's style. It is not only the training itself that constructs the dancing bodies, but how the individual approaches his or her training (FORTIN *et al.*, 2002, p. 173).

## **Somatic education as a technology of the self**

Fortin *et al.* (2009) propose to think of somatic education as a technology of the self capable of reacting to the creation of docile bodies in dance. Fortin *et al.* (2002, p. 171) pose the question: "How are 'Dancing Bodies' Constructed in the Dance Classes Informed by Somatics?". To answer this question, they address different aspects, including resistance to the creation of docile bodies:

I have argued that somatics does not promote the making of a docile body but rather might encourage self fashioning as well as reaching out of one's narrow frontier. A dance class informed by somatics is not only about constructing our dancing bodies; it is also about developing a more accurate sense of the world we live in (FORTIN *et al.*, 2002, p. 175, 176).

In this perspective, Foucault's theory helps us think about educational processes, as it contributes to elucidating and problematizing power relations in different social contexts. Foucault (1971, translation author's own) comments that "we have the custom, at least our European society, to consider that power is in the hands of the government and that it is exercised by some very particular institutions, which are the administration [...], the police, the army". However, he highlights that some institutions, such as universities, seem independent of political power but are not.

We know well that the university [and], in general, the entire school system, apparently were created to distribute knowledge, [but] we know that this school system was created to maintain the power of a certain social class and exclude from the instruments of power every other social class (FOUCAULT, 1971, translation author's own).

Foucault recognizes the power relationships that permeate the different spheres of society. When observing these relationships on the dance tradition, we can see that it is characterized by very hierarchical power relations, in which the authority of teachers and choreographers often oppresses dancers. These relationships can be understood as technologies of domination of dancers so that they are obedient and productive. Fortin *et al.* (2009) comment that Foucault named technologies of domination as the modes of production and organization of knowledge that determine individuals' conduct and limit their choices according to interests related to productivity. Relations of domination are characterized by power relations that lose their reversibility and limited spaces of freedom in which the subject is treated as an object. Different researchers have identified domination relationships in dance:

According to Huesca (2005), classical ballet, as a historically institutionalized practice, offers many examples of technologies of domination, whereas contemporary dance allows dancers more possibilities for creative construction of the self. Dance ethnographers have challenged this point of view, showing that even in contemporary dance, there prevails a view of the body as being alienated from the self, something to be subdued and managed (FORTIN *et al.* 2009, p. 49).

Values such as overcoming limits, unconditional dedication in any situation are absorbed and become part of the dance practices environment. Often, the dancer himself is treated as an object. In my dance career, in different situations, professional demands were oppressive in terms of technical needs, hours worked, and exhaustive repetition of movements in rehearsals. In these situations, it was common that the work would go beyond what would be reasonable for health. Experiences like these are customary in the context of dance and are naturalized by dancers. However, a growing number of artists, teachers, and dance researchers study, experiment, and end up knowing different possibilities, therefore, they develop their work within another logic. In this way, they become able to recognize and offer resistance to systems of domination. In these contexts, somatic education has contributed to the development of practices of resistance.

In his last works, Foucault took the focus away from his analysis of domination systems, turning his interest to the study of how individuals act upon themselves. In the text called "Technologies of the self," Foucault (1988, p. 19) observes that: "perhaps I've insisted too much on the technology of domination and power. I am more and more interested in the interaction between oneself and others and in the technologies of individual domination, the history of how an individual acts upon himself, in the technology of self". In this text, Foucault turns his interest to researching how individuals are constituted, act upon themselves and recognize themselves as subjects:

[...] technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (FOUCAULT, 1988, p. 18).

The verb "transform", used by Foucault in the above quote, can be interpreted, according to Markula (2004), in the sense that the technologies

of the self can be materialized in "resistance" practices, which can be used by individuals to change power relations and can function as practices of freedom. Fortin *et al.* (2009) suggest that somatic practices as technologies of the self allow us to reflect on how each person acts on himself and the resources that such practices can offer for the self-construction of bodies in dance. The technologies of the self as practices of freedom enable a creative reconstruction of the self. However, they will always be in relation to restrictions of the context in which the person is inserted.

These operations that individuals may draw upon in their self-construction make a greater state of autonomy possible, enabling them to resist domination. However, self-construction does not happen in a vacuum – unfettered by context and the constraints of the surrounding discourses. Technologies of domination and technologies of the self are always interrelated, and contribute to our constructions, deconstructions and reconstructions of ourselves in the world (FORTIN *et al.*, 2009, p. 48).

Fortin *et al.* (2009) comment that, throughout their activities as teachers of somatic education and dance, they were faced with situations in which some students reintegrate the dominant discourse relatively quickly after the end of classes with somatic approaches – despite experiencing the benefits of somatic education and their internal authority. These students return to their "old habits", as we know that changes are generated gradually and need to be embodied by individuals. Therefore, the authors highlight the importance of three aspects, identified by Markula (2004):

She [Markula, 2004] explains that new bodily experiences are necessary but insufficient in the development of practices that constitute a technology of the self able to resist the technologies of domination. For the technologies of the self to be liberating, she asserts that the person must do three things: (1) foster a self open to change and constant re-creation, (2) increase critical awareness of the dominant discourse, and (3) develop an ethical care of the self that translates to ethical care of others (FORTIN *et al.*, 2009, p. 51).

For now, I would like to reflect on the third aspect, the ethical care of the self, as approached by Foucault, when referring to a set of practices in late Antiquity.

Foucault (1988, p. 19) refers to late Antiquity practices of the self that "[...] were constituted in Greek as *epimeleisthai sautou*, 'to take care of yourself', 'the concern with self', 'to be concerned, to take care of yourself'". "The precept 'to be concerned with oneself' was, for the Greeks, one of the main principles of cities, one of the main rules for social and personal conduct and for the art of life" (FOUCAULT, 1988, p. 19).

It is important to note that the transformations in moral principles in Western societies have changed the understanding that we have, today, about the care of the self. In Greek Antiquity, the ethical aspect was inseparable from the care of oneself. However, this aspect is often overlooked today. Quilici (2012) explores the tensions between the meaning that the techniques of the self had in Antiquity and their sense in contemporary artistic practices. He proposes that “[...] 'to take care of yourself' would be much closer today to artistic activity than to philosophy. We feel at home with the notions of exercises, training, changes in daily life, in other words, of a practical knowledge capable of triggering an “intense experience”, as it is usual to say” (QUILICI, 2012, p. 6, translation author's own). However, the care of oneself in Antiquity did not have this experimental character of contemporary artistic practices:

A more than evident difference is that the "techniques of the self" of Antiquity do not have the same "experimental" meaning present in the artistic activities to which we refer. In the context of philosophical schools, it was intended to trigger a more defined transformation in the subject, which would correspond to the flourishing of certain qualities of being and of conscience. It is impossible to understand "the care of the self" that is detached from a certain image of man and his possibilities, the degrees of consciousness that he can know, the ways of being that he can accomplish, the supreme good that he can achieve (QUILICI, 2012, p. 6, translation author's own).

In particular, when considering educational processes, the connection with the ethical dimension of the ways of living is a point that deserves attention. Quilici addresses this issue:

If artistic techniques and experiments have great pretensions, they will certainly have to be accompanied by a (theoretical-practical) knowledge that guarantees the precision, effectiveness and ethical quality of their processes. Such knowledge cannot be based only on more or less isolated experiments, by talented individuals. It requires processes of transmission, improvement, renewal of knowledge, practices, and techniques that take place from generation to generation (a little like what happens in traditions, or in science itself). An environment in which knowledge, techniques and ways of living can be articulated, revealing human possibilities and qualities stunted by the current world machine (QUILICI, 2012, p. 7, translation author's own).

I want to highlight from the quote above the importance of tradition as a process of transmission and improvement of knowledge. Therefore, it is not a question of denying the dance tradition, which has accumulated knowledge about the body and movement throughout its history. On the contrary, the research developed here seeks to address dance practices in their ethical dimension in teaching, transmission, improvement, and renewal

of knowledge to enhance the work that each one does upon himself in the training processes.

### **Education as a practice of freedom**

As I mentioned above, educational processes can be thought of in terms of what we want to accept or refuse from the dance tradition, looking for possibilities for its revision and transformation. For this, the development of critical awareness has a central place. In this context, Paulo Freire's (2009) proposal for an education that leads to the man-subject makes perfect sense, unlike the education for domestication, alienation, which leads to the man-object. Freire points out that the process of education for freedom should begin by investing in the exercise of self-reflection, a dispositive that creates possibilities for the awareness and insertion of the subject as the author of the history and not as a spectator. If Freire's education were applied in primary schools, we would probably feel its positive impact in the context of dance training at the university. Students would arrive at the university with the habit of reflection and critical thinking, which could facilitate the deepening of awareness concerning different aspects of body practices in the sphere of dance.

In the context of dance, the validation of the first-person experience, characteristic of somatic education, contributes to the student's formation as a subject of history. It also reinforces the proposal of education as a practice of freedom, as it stimulates the development of critical awareness through self-knowledge, dialogue, and the sharing of experiences.

Another important aspect of education as a practice of freedom is that the practices developed are contextualized and related to the macro, social and political levels. In this sense, in the sphere of dance and somatic education, there is, according to Green (2015), growing theoretical production of what she called "social somatic theory":

In 1993, I coined the term "social somatic theory" (GREEN, 1993). Since that time, the need for viewing dance bodies through a socio-political lens has grown, particularly in current times of social upheaval and unrest. A number of scholars are now questioning the ideas and viewpoints inherent in a somatic approach that does not address a larger macro context (GREEN, 2015, p. 67).

Green (2015) cites examples of applying social somatic theory to dance research and pedagogy in a study she carried out within the university. She investigated how the participants' perceptions and body images were influenced by society and the dance world. As part of the project, she asked participants about their dance experiences and how they have learned to perceive themselves in reference to an ideal body and a model of weight.

The initial qualitative/postpositivist analysis, from class discussion, interviews, observation and document analysis, indicated that the participants' previous experiences in dance did reflect an emphasis on 'ideal body' myths in the dance world. Students also expressed the value of somatic practice as a tool for body awareness and consciousness of these socio-political issues in traditional dance education. The students tended to tie somatics to an inner authority that resists technologies of normalisation and dominant meaning systems in dance and society. Somatic practice facilitated a dialogue through which they realised and expressed the pressures to meet an imposed bodily standard. [...] (GREEN, 2001 apud GREEN, 2015, p. 70).

When reporting on the research carried out, Green (2015, p. 70) comments that she focused on themes related to the body, pedagogy and power that emerged from the study and that somatic practice was a space that allowed participants "[...] to explore a connection to their bodies rather than the disconnection that comes from attempting to meet standards of bodily ideals".

The development of an awareness of the power relationships present in dance teaching environments can contribute to the perception that we live in shared spaces and that our choices affect us individually and within the community in which we live. So, in education, somatic practices can bring up questions such as: how do my choices affect me? How do my actions affect the environment and others? How am I affected by the behavior of others? Do situations of injustice and social violence affect my dance practice?

## **Conclusion**

The validation of personal experience as a source of knowledge allows us to critically and creatively approach the dance tradition, which has contributed to the development of educational practices and research in dance more connected with ethical issues. Attention to somatic experience

can favor self-knowledge and increase the critical perception of bodily practices. Therefore, somatic education as a source of knowledge can provide means for the analysis and investigation of dance practices and contribute to the review of prejudices or impositions.

Somatic practices can be seen as a source of power thanks to self-validation as a source of knowledge. Appropriating your own experience as a source of knowledge can contribute to relationships that are less vulnerable to the power of others. In this way, the body reveals itself as the first space of freedom (FORTIN 2003).

Understanding the relationships between dance practices, sources of knowledge and power relations allows the recognition of relationships of domination and tradition revision based on critical thinking and self-management of the movement. All of this, combined with theoretical-practical research, has offered dance artists tools for training that are more connected to ethical issues and life in society, preparing them for professional life demands and enriching their relationship with the world.

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