Social Identity and Self-Esteem in Participants of Flamenco Dance Groups: The Pedagogical and Psychological Contribution to the Man’s being in Movement

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Abstract: This present work was related to the establishment of a intersection point (interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity) in the human movement to concepts that come from Psychology, Psychoanalysis, Symbolic Interactionism, and the Science of Human Motricity. The development of this work sustained that the social identity and self esteem, keeping in mind that flamenco dance is a technique and a psychopedagogical tool to maintain them. The goal of this study was to verify the relation between the level of social identification sustained by those who belong to groups naturally created (flamenco dancers) and also the importance that these dancers attribute to their own group (“in-group”) and to other groups (“out-group”) and finally, to ascertain if the master figure practices the role of an external mediator agent for the pupils’social identity. For those supposes, the following tools were used: typicalness and value evaluation questionary (flamenco dancers and classical ballet, flamenco dancers and non-dancers), positiveness evaluation questionary, collective self-esteem scale (CROCKER & LUHTANEN, 1992), questions for the evaluation of the degree identifi cation with the group and questions presented to the flamenco teachers. This recognition of the self image is primordial to the intersubjective motions. This sample was composed by 200 flamenco dancers divided in two groups of 100. The results show that the larger the identifi cation level of flamenco dancers with their own group, the more favorable their valuation of the group will be. The depiction of the master as a booster of the group’s identity process is the definitive. The motor behavior of dancing works in intimacy with the word, and the verb is charged with meaning and quality, both of which will be sent to the sensorial and mental receptors. In conclusion, they have such a strong identity that any event occurring outside their group is not part of their concern. And the flamenco reflecting in the body the memories recreated along the history of mankind, supports the self-esteem thus generated from the constructed social identity.

Keywords - Psychosocial aspects of the Human Motricity, corporeity, self esteem, flamenco dance, social identity.

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INTRODUCTION

The production and the design study in question, limits on the approach and establishment of an intersection point (interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary) of human movement, in the light of concepts from Social Psychology, Psychoanalysis, Symbolic Interactionism and of the Science of the Human Motricity.

The Theory of the Social Identity formulated in 1979 by Henri Tajfel (1981) is clearly one of the most prolific and innovative contributions to the panoramas of contemporary Social Psychology, the Social and Humane Sciences. His assumptions bases the analysis of the inner and between groups conflicts that leads the individual to social change and to the need of aim and extend the distinctiveness of belonging to the internal group (“in-group”) or when compared to the outsider group (“out-group”), achieving positive social identity.

According to the author’s conception, self-esteem is defined in terms of cause and consequence of the favoritism term manifested by the “group of us” (“in-group”). In that case, the establishment of a positive social identity raises the level of self-esteem streamlining man’s capacity to fight and maintain their social identity shared with the elements of the “group of us” (“in-group”).

In accordance, the cognitivists Baron and Byrne (1994) emphasize self-esteem as part of the self (identity, self-image) regarding the self-perception, self-evaluation and attitudes on the subject itself.

Tajfel (op.cit.), and Baron Byrne (op.cit.) ratify their positions highlighting the notion that the weakening or strengthening of self-esteem is coming from the reviews and comparisons made by the individual or by a third party, having as a standard the reference, particular elements of his own group. Starting from these premises we hope that the human being in the path of its historicity resizes and resigns its circumstantial existence, factual and bodily in upward movements that leads him to transcendence. For that, the central idea of this work is the use of flamenco dance as a tool for educational and psychological resurgence of self-esteem and social identity of the moving human being.

We understand man holistically and believe that the maintenance and preservation of their self-esteem comes from the link between the biological, psychological and social universe. Therefore, the structuration and integration of the personality of the being in contingency “between” is a result of the inter-relationship body-mind. The construct social-identity which is the focus of this research...
is, in this case, as psychological manifestation of interpersonal relations between individuals and society.

According Deaux (1996), identity is to stretch the ties outlined between groups and individuals. Social identification is set by the psychological commitment that the person has with the others, regardless of physical contact. The child that imitates its parents, a fan that uses on his clothes the symbol of the preferred football team, the nationalist who defends the name of its country and the political that organizes his social group agenda are illustrative cases of the individual perception and of his own self through collectivity.

The questions regarding identification as a basis for supporting the identification, as well as the self-esteem motor conduct level expressed by individuals together with their groups of origin possibly are elucidated from the compilations of Henri Tajfel (1981) and his followers.

For the theorist, the social self is characterized by the need of the subjects to present beliefs or to play behavior of another group or culture.

Identification is, therefore, the thinking and feeling about yourself as a part of another individual or culture. This way, people experience conduct and attitudes of several belonging to a particular social contextualization.

The incursions from the references of the psychoanalytic school (FREUD, 1921-76) of the Symbolic Interactionism (Mead, 1934; Goffman, 1975 apud VALA and MONTEIRO, 1993), of the Social Theory Identity (TAJFEL, op. Cit.) and of the Moscovici conceptions of (1984) about minorities and their dilemmas, makes us reflect about the understanding of human subjectivity in its particular way of social integration, often dramatically interpreting roles as a theoretic character to make an creative existence affronting the social dictatorship. The condition of man absolutely and definitely requires an instinct or impulse or motivation / desire / action oriented to self-preservation.

The Theory of Social Identity (TAJFEL 1981) came from crisis episodes experienced by European students at the end of the decade of 60. The conflictive situations expressed definitively the rebellion of man facing the State’s power in various social systems.

The Human Motricity Science is the consciousness of the interaction between body-world translating men as a project. The motricity emphasizes the development and functioning of brain structures keeping the regulation, execution and integration of behavior connected to human life and culture. This way, the man will be interpreted through its cultural trajectory, its circumstances, and facticity and corpority (BERESFORD, 2000).

In short, permit us infer that an instincts, explicit impulse or not, in a way of conduct or motor behavior, resume the definition of motricity to the Science of Human Motricity.

Generically the dance per se is the place where the most archaic cultures and present ones become living, reactivating our sociocultural memory. The codes and gestures of the human species are symbolized in body language implicating in the expansion of the subject in the universe (LABAN, 1978). At this time, the body is one of the avenues of access to the formation of social identity.

The dance (arts in general) represents the identity of a people / race, what people are and what people can donate.

The flamenco is a genuine movement of resistance, the result of the conjunction between minority groups socially excluded and stigmatized that inhabited the south of Spain, more precisely Seville and Cadiz, Triana and Gerez, centers of large concentrations of Gypsies.

The dance is the product of fusion of various cultures and subcultures, Gypsies primarily, then followed by the Arab, Jewish and black are also considering the peasant populations and the humble walkers (FLORES, 1998, a).

The collective resistance to social norms established had already revealed the social identity put against art marked by the elitist nature of that time.

The strong prosecution to these groups exaggerated its unification and inspiration so that the songs and the flamenco dance were propagated universally as a cry of liberation echoing the internal suffering of so many times of oppression. Despite controversies, the flamencology is coincident about the appearance of flamenco around the fifteenth century with the arrival of the gypsies to Spain in 1447. Dancing for them, especially the flamenco is a tribute to life and the outsourcing of their joys and sorrows over their journey on earth (FLORES, 1998, b).

The flamenco philosophy, the theory of Tajfel (1979-1981), the teachings of psychoanalysis and the symbolic interactionism follows, convert themselves on the argumentation of the primacy that individuals in conflict or in state of deprivation affilites to others in a way to overcome obstacles and social constraints. The aegis mechanisms of defense described in the psychoanalytic work as mental resources destined to alleviate tension and anxiety need an other, the external object (social) as a continent to which the psychic energy is channeled, causing a decrease in the unpleasure. And it is precisely this point that the influence of motricity is done through internal movements (psychological and biological) and external (dance), transferring reality and words leaving us the revelation of a human project going beyond your physical space and its time, advertising and disseminating their culture worldwide. This way “the flamenco is more than sacred: it is a re-link in search of the meeting of the ME with the ME deeper, more primitive and true” (FLORES, op. Cit., B, p.6).

Undoubtedly, the perception of the body as part of a universe totalizing is redeemed by transsubjective existentialist phenomenology (Ortega y Gasset, Heidegger and Merleau - Ponty, apud BERESFORD, 2000). In this view, man took his place in history through corporeity. The body declares itself inexorably under the aegis of two functions to be known: the body is the principle of the being structure’s, concomitant to the constituent nature of the existence of the individual. The identity is the result of the perception and awareness of the physical and mental aspects of the body, and its constant inter-relations.

In the same line of thought proposed by Merleau - Ponty (1983 apud BERESFORD, op. Cit.), we are our body. It’s extremely healthy that man develops bodily as a font of sense (project), as a significant being occupying their place in the world of culture and values.
For that, motricity is to transcend, the expansion and resizing corporeity in the “here and the now”. So the motricity is then postulated as ontological energy in time, while the corporeity is the materialization of energy in the tridimensional space of human experience. Motricity and corporeity are, therefore, complementary modes of the existence of the Being: physical, social and psychological.

Based on the theoretical formulations of Henri Tajfel (1981) and on the Science of the Human Motricity, the strict way of this work will be to determine the relationship between the degree of social identification maintained by the integrated elements of groups naturally formed (participants of flamenco dance), and to investigate the valorization that these individuals attach to the group itself (“in-groups”) and the other groups (“out-groups”), and finally will be studied, by the responses of the teachers of flamenco dance, is the figure of the teacher shows the function of external agent facilitator of social identity of the dancers.

Citing Cunha (1985), every man is one on the person who is, and plural in the person who expresses. And because the motricity focuses on the expression and action, it is revealed in endless forms and styles. Their analysis is succeeding the convergence between different methods: history, phenomenological, psychoanalytic, dialectical and structural.

METHODS

The study on screen is described as ex post facto, which included 2 groups of flamenco dancers composed of 100 subjects each, which differ on the target which is the purpose of evaluation. This way, the first group was targeted on the flamenco dancers and classical ballet dancers, while the second, the flamenco dancers and the subjects who never practiced any kind of dance before. The cast of flamenco teachers was held with 5 individuals of male and 13 female, selected by academies initially mentioned. All teachers interviewed teaches this role for over a year in each class.

INSTRUMENTOS

a) Individuals interviews applied to groups of 20 participants of flamenco classes and 20 of classical ballet dancers, based on the belief Spears, Oakes, Ellemers and Haslam (1997) to obtain prior tracks and consensually defined as typical or non-typical, as well as their positive/negative valence.

b) Evaluative questionnaire of typical characteristics and valence of the characteristics belonging to members of the target groups, built from the analysis of the interviews previously quoted, setting as a standard Likert scale of 9 points.

c) Scale of collective self-esteem (CROCKER and LUHTANEN, 1992). Hired in order to measure social identity.

d) Additional questions to evaluate the degree of identification with the group.

e) Questions related to socio-demographic data (gender, age, education, time participating in the current dance group, time of practice of the flamenco dance and the group in which it is affiliated).

f) Enlightening questions about the place of the teacher as an agent facilitating the identification group of dancers and their perception regarding the increase in self-esteem in classes of flamenco.

RESULTS

There was a greater degree of identification of the participants in groups of flamenco dance with the group itself (“in-group”), and they were more favorable about their evaluation about the typical characteristics of the same.

The presence of a significant positive correlation between the factor 1 (esteem to be a member of the group) of the scale of collective self-esteem and the positivity of the set of typical characteristics of the flamenco dancers, on both rated groups, showed a variation between the joint feeling of belonging and the tendency to favor the valuation of the group. It is believed then that participants in groups of flamenco that evaluated the non dancers were possibly influenced by their identification with their relevance groups. Most likely for them, belonging to dancing groups is enough to ensure the positive valuation of their social identity.

On this level of argumentation, dance, as an universe of creation, seems to be for us the point of reference from which the identifying processes sign in the flamenco’s dancer body bringing him closer to the symbolic context of the combination of verb to dance. This may be a plausible explanation that the classical ballet members are not included in the “out-groups”. However, the non dancers were spared from discrimination and favoritism by the flamenco dancers, especially because they prioritize the desire to dance and their personal choices, not listening to the opinions and the thoughts of others. The identity of the flamenco dancers is so strongly established that they are indifferent to what is happening outside their group.

The flamenco teacher carries the post of external agent facilitator of social identity of the dancers and, as a consequence, understands changes in the sense of self-esteem of students have been strengthened by the analysis of the teacher’s testimony of the academies. Referring to the Bipolar Personality Theory (FEIJÓ, 1998), this interpretation together to the belief that the identity of the group is generated in conjunction of the vast and profound qualities as kind of leadership, respect for the members, working conditions, progress perspective, individual investment retribution, understanding and mutual aid, acceptance. These attributes are the ones that must updated in the teacher-student relationship on the flamenco dance.

This way, all interviewed were unanimous in the contextualizing the flamenco dance as a transformer of the subjectivity of its dancers.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research does not exhaust the infinite possibilities of deployment and reflection, or even to recast, once that making science is to go hand in hand with the refutability.

The collected field materials makes possible the plan and implement practices to poor communities, in which children, teenagers, adults and elderly to use dance, especially flamenco, as a catalyst.
vehicle to identify with the group, and therefore having their self-esteem internalized strongly. Since individuals were experiencing a new mode of perception of themselves and of the world initiated by the experience of the belonging feeling, that experience would permit to reunite their dignity and self-trust, and who knows, the restructuring of its style of confrontation before the social hostilities and aggressions.

The self-esteem construction is associated with relation systems (internal and external movements) that will push the human being in search of pleasure and the investment of their autonomy, conquering and occupying its place in time and space.

This proposal can be extended to any groups where the demand is the rise of sense of independence previously lost in individuals.

The pedagogical and psychological leap that will permit social changes and restructure is creation (MARCUSE, 1965). The permanent state of images and memories recreated over time, accelerate the self-knowledge, where self-esteem is born. The flamenco established as speech and body language ensures the internalization of this symbolic language played and translated by the eternal reinvent and the move of its steps. This is the fertile ground where self-esteem flourishes and perpetuates.

In that plan, the Human Motricity Science promulgates the moving of humans in theoretical and formal object condition object in all of its complexity, beyond the limits of the existing disciplinary systems, sustaining that the holistic approach of the motricity- corporeity phenomena evolutes transversally across the other areas of knowledge. Therefore, the epistemological basis of the Human Motricity Science is the coexistence of multiple integrated types of knowledge into a single academic matrix (CUNHA, 1985).

There is no motor conduct that doesn’t reflect a culture, a socio-economic context. Furthermore, the variety of these conducts presumes ideologies and concepts of body, diversified body schemes, conflicts of personality and the practice of physical activities (frequent or not). The human motricity mirrors and projects the world, otherwise on this planning, man is always the same, differently generating in its unpredictability, the future. The motor conduct is then a historic process, resting in permanent devir. Synchrony and diachronic supplement is inevitable. This way, the steps of sociability are truly motricity stages, understanding in this as an expression of the language incorporated socially by mankind’s the experience (CUNHA, op.cit.).

Freud (1923, apud LEVIN, 1999) states that reality and the body are based on a construct organized and demarcated by myths, desires and representations interacting with the speech that makes them real.

The guiding principle by which the research has been transiting certifies that the educational and psychological effect generated by flamenco over the social identity and self-esteem of the individual, is the transition (passage) of the desire and aspiration of the act. In a last instance, the praxis of citizenship.

Concluding, therefore, that the dance as an expression of the social imaginary strength working over the subjects in different cultures emerge in the context of Psychoanalysis, Social Psychology, Symbolic Interactionism and Human Motricity Science as an element of reintegration and identity consolidation, a body dialogue beyond its limits and boundaries: the evolution of the being on the ontic contingency to absolute and universal Being.

REFERENCES