

PRESENTATION

To think about the dancing body, one that moves, that puts itself into a performative state, that intertwines with digital media in their imagistic settings of sound and data, we propose to understand it as a perceiving subject - a perceiver - and agent in *its* world; and not as a universal and abstract one. We assume that such attitudes are involved in the act of studying, practicing, creating, executing and enjoying dance. We affirm that the capability and competence of this “perceiving” and “action”¹ enables the dance (the dancing body and that which enjoys it) to be understood not only by its motoricity and expression, but also by its situated cognition, which proposes a body divested from a dualistic view and that is inexorably involved with its environment. This subject carries distinct skills to discover the world in the act itself, that is, at the very moment that it experiences. It is from this “embodied” perspective (in the sense of the concept of “embodied”) and “Situated Cognition,” which states that all knowledge is involved with the social, cultural and physical context, that we decided to dedicate Volume 3, Number 1 2016 of the Electronic Journal MAPAD2 to a theme composed by the trinomial dance-cognition-technology that delimits and indicates reflections on dance, performance and their relationship with digital media from that corporeal point of view.

This third edition has been honored by an article by the artist and professor of audiovisual theory and practice Dr. Robin Curtis, from the Heinrich-Heine-University in Düsseldorf, Germany, whom we thank immensely for providing the text for translation, since it was originally published in the journal *Science in Context*, Cambridge University Press. This article, entitled “‘Einfühlung’ and abstraction in the moving image: historical and contemporary reflections,” is an unusual theoretical opportunity and an enormous contribution this literature in Portuguese by providing an insightful reasoning on one of the concepts widely used in the world of Arts: “empathy.” The term was adopted by the American psychologist Edward Titchener in 1909 as a translation of the philosophical concept *Einfühlung*, coined by Robert Vischer in 1872, which can be understood as the feelings that a work of art evokes in the viewer. It was of interest to these thinkers, and to others relevant to this study, to clarify the organic and physical implications that arise during the act of enjoyment or being entertained: for example, when one feel butterflies in one’s stomach as if one were the circus artist himself in full flight on the trapeze or vulnerable on the tightrope, or even to address an example perhaps more common today, to experience vertigo on empathizing with the subjective perspective of someone on top of a sky-scraper, jumping from a paraglider or a hang glider, as in so many images registered with the Go Pro camera or mobile phones. Currently, many scholars argue that these aspects of *Einfühlung* and empathy should also be considered in

relation to dance; therefore, finding in the term a support to address complex issues of the nature of dance, as we will see in other articles in this issue. Dr. Curtis provides us with a generous and rigorous reflection on the concept of empathy and existing distinctions with the German term *Einfühlung* through reflections applied in the analysis of the moving image that the author makes in her article.

The concepts of empathy, synchrony and harmony are employed by Professor Monica Ribeiro, from the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, a specialist trained in neuropsychology, as well as in neuroscience and behavior, to do an analysis of corporeal processes in the production of *Play it Again*, by the group *Oficina Multimídia* from Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil. A PhD in Arts, an actress and dancer, Ribeiro is also consultant for corporal preparation and adviser in scenic movement for the group. By a genetic analysis of the documentation of the creative process of the work, she argues that in *Play it Again* it is possible to consider the body as “empathic” working through a shared experience of “enaction,” a concept that permeates other articles in this issue.

“Enaction” is a term coined by the Chilean biologists Dr. Humberto Maturana and Dr. Francisco Varela in the ‘80s and was developed by Varela and his colleagues in the next decade. Using the Spanish term “en acción,” [in action], they attest to the comprehension of perception as the way in which the perceiving subject - the perceiver - can know his context and thus guide his actions. Since this is a dynamic context, rather than an already given context, it cannot be independent from the subject’s perception, as this is involved with the sensorimotor structure of the subject. It is within this structure that cognition can occur and allow action to be stimulated, developed and guided by perception. Thus situated, i.e., contextualized, the subject’s body becomes involved with its environment and is therefore modulated by means of events, thereby determining how to act.

In line with biological concepts guided by the Maturana and Varela studies, the article “Autopoiesis and Dance,” by Dr. Mark Bishop and Dr. Mohammad Majid Al-Rifaie, of Goldsmiths, University of London, deals with autonomy, “self” and “poiesis” to analyze the dancer’s relationship with movement, tracing understandings about this engagement that both enables the reproduction and maintenance of action (dance movement), as well as its waning.

The researcher and artist Dr. Pil Hansen of the University of Calgary, Canada, presents a conceptual analysis of a dynamic coordination experience applied in practice in dance and theater founded through the Theory of Dynamic Systems and by considerations on theories about the corporeal mind (embodied, enactive, embedded, extended mind). The author investigated new experimental evidence, application solutions based on artistic practice and specificity departing from empirical studies. The results of these investigations are considered in terms of their usefulness and potential for application in areas such as gesture-based memorization, choreographic reflection and feedback systems in dance and theater improvisation.

Another experience is analyzed in the article of the actress, dancer and researcher Dr. Fatima Wachowicz of the Federal University of Bahia School of Dance. The principles of the Viewpoints training are presented in dialogue with the concept of attention as proposed in cognitive psychology. While in another

article, Dr. Gilsamara Moura, a colleague in the same institution and academic unit, discusses a creative process of an artistic and pedagogical experience begun in July 2015 at the Cultural Center of Alagados in the city of Salvador, Bahia. Through research founded on studies on empathy and mirror neurons, the author has elaborated research on the creative process and, consequently, on her own artistic creation.

We hope this issue will contribute to the investigations of researchers, artists and students interested in theories of Cognitive Sciences as a way to advance the study of perception, which is of enormous importance in the field of dance and performance, whether it be on issues related aesthetics studies, teaching, practice, creation and the enjoyment that these artistic languages afford.

We thank all the authors who participated in this edition for the valuable contribution they are offering to our readers. Mainly because we are aware that relationships between these areas of knowledge transit through rough territory, demanding dedication and interdisciplinary capacity from all involved. We are confident that studies on Cognitive Sciences can promote another way to investigate and reflect on the Corporal Arts and believe that the arts, in all their aspects and forms, provide bodies, environments and challenging contexts for human cognition.

I thank, in my name and that of the Grupo de Pesquisa Poéticas Tecnológicas: corpoaudiovisual (Research in Group in Technological Poetics: the audiovisual body), who produces this Electronic Journal, the Graduate Program at the Federal University of Bahia for Performing Arts [Programa de Pós Graduação em Artes Cênicas - PPGAC) both for its support for this journal for the belief in the editorial line taken.

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Endnotes

- 1 Noë, Alva. *Action in Perception*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. HC 2004; PB 2006