


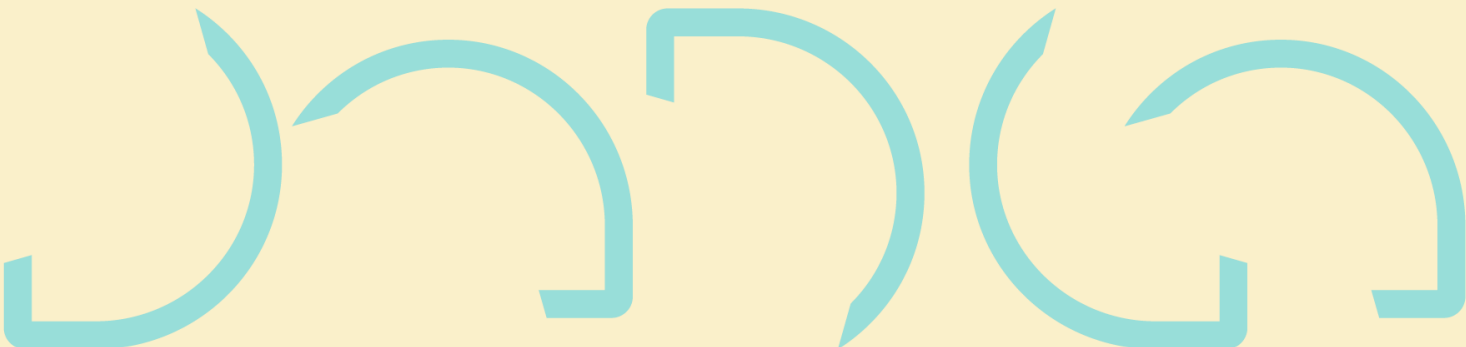
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***The Burden of the History of
(and in) Dance:
consequences of coloniality and de-
coloniality for historiographies of the
souths of the “global south”***

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ABSTRACT


This article is an endeavor to diagnose different burdens associated with the dance historiographies produced from the global souths, based on my training and experience as a dance historian and as a dancer and researcher of peripheral dances. The purpose of the text is, firstly, to analyze how these different burdens operate and, secondly, to propose the hypothesis that: if coloniality bequeaths us burdens, de-coloniality does not necessarily operate differently. Therefore, the text resorts to central questions so as to elect critical thinking and show that the issue of marginalized subjects in dance mattering should not be a pretext that exempts us from dealing with historiographical methods and theories. The study employs historical sources and is guided by existing theories and debates in the field of dance studies, history, and cultural criticism.

KEYWORDS Dance history; burden; de-coloniality; coloniality; intracoloniality

RESUMO

O presente artigo é um esforço em diagnosticar diferentes fardos que acompanham as historiografias de dança produzidas desde os suls do globo, partindo de minha formação e experiência como historiador da dança e como dançarino e pesquisador de danças de periferia. O objetivo do texto consiste, num primeiro movimento, em analisar como esses diferentes fardos operam, para num segundo movimento, propor a hipótese de que: se a colonialidade nos lega fardos, a decolonialidade não opera necessariamente de modo diferente. Para tanto, o texto recorre ao uso de perguntas centrais com intuito de provocar o pensamento crítico e evidenciar que, a questão de sujeitos marginalizados em dança importarem não deve ser um pretexto que nos isenta a tratar de métodos e teorias historiográficas. O estudo recorre a fontes históricas e é orientado por teorias e debates existentes no campo dos estudos de dança, da história e da crítica cultural.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE História da dança; fardo; decolonialidade; colonialidade; intracolonialidade



The burden of the history of (and in) dance: consequences of coloniality and de-coloniality for historiographies of the *souths* of the “global south”

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A specter haunts the globe: the specter of de-coloniality. They bubble from the different souths to the different norths, claims and manifests that point to an immediate world-class task at the beginning of this 21st century, that of purging the inherited effects of our colonial past that insists on haunting the contemporaneity of artistic practices and academic studies in dance. In this process, it is possible to recognize two more latent movements that make this specter something present: the first is a broader recognition at the social level of the importance of de-colonizing², based on the basic understanding that the effects of the colonization-based imperialist stage of capitalism have not ceased its *modus operandi* with the end of the political-administrative monopolist dominion. The second, dealing specifically with dance, consists in increasing the protagonism of artists and intellectuals who assume this perspective in positions of visibility and prestige in the field of dance (at the local, regional, national or international levels).

The development of this double movement over the last hundred years authorizes the comparison with the spectral allegory between de-coloniality and communism as suggested by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1848) in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Considering the specificities and historicities between de-coloniality and communism, both are presented as a threat to a substantial part of how capitalism organized forms of macrostructural domination. The specter in Marx is something threatening to the current forms of domination, and for this reason I situate de-coloniality as thoughts and doings committed to destabilizing these historically inherited forms of domination, which considerably impacts the historiographic practices of dances.

What mobilized Marx and Engels (1848) to write and publish the manifesto was the attempt to suppress the condition of specter of communism by means of broad and public elucidation of the intentions of this revolutionary theory, which assumed the recognition of the class struggle as a constituent and necessary element for changing society. And following this

² In the Portuguese and Spanish languages, there is an important difference in the use of the words "descolonial" and "decolonial". The suppression of the letter "s" implies an intellectual and political stance of identification with the practice, which I will try to explain later. For translation purposes and in order to maintain this distinction, the text uses the term "decolonial" when I refer to the word "decolonial" and the term "de-colonial" when I refer to the thought and practice "decolonial" the writing without the "s".

same intention to unveil from a critical perspective, I will dedicate myself to examining how studies focused on decolonization (post-colonial and de-colonial) have enabled characterizing the configuration of a double burden: on the one hand, the burden of dance history as a discipline of studies in relation to its own tradition, understanding its procedures, epistemologies and objects of study; on the other hand, the burden that the history of dance has been for people who work with dance in their daily lives, enabling the past of dance to act as a sort of inspector of the present in dance.

Once these burdens have been examined, I will present the theoretical and practical strategies to combat the burden most used in dance studies, and then conduct a critical analysis of the consequences of this combat from a de-colonial perspective. At this point, my attention will be directed not only to the altruistic perspective of the de-colonial proposal, but also to its unannounced consequences for studies in dance history. The proposal consists in the ambiguity in demonstrating that coloniality does not have enemies that are as easily identifiable as postulated by Latin American authors in macrostructural analyses, while seeking to demonstrate that the criticism proposed here does not invalidate the denouncing premises and their importance for dances here.

The burden, coloniality, and usefulness of dance history

Historian Hayden White in 1966 wrote that history as an academic discipline carried a burden. In his text titled "The burden of history," the author revisits the critical thought of the late nineteenth century promoted by philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (2005[1874]) and his denunciation that history had become something useless for life in his "Second Untimely Consideration." Interested in rethinking the theoretical and methodological foundations of the history discipline, White (1966) updated the inability of history to put itself at the service of life, in the sense of life that occurs now, in the present time.

The basic structure of argumentation, both in Nietzsche and in White, consists in demonstrating that, in the effort to attain the status of science, history as a discipline has based its importance not only on its methodological procedures or theoretical assumptions, but on making the

notion of “historical consciousness” credible³. For both, this awareness in its excessive use makes us feel outsiders in our own world, in the sense that everything that is important has already been done, leaving us to learn and replicate in the present the doings of previous generations. Even so, White and Nietzsche, each in their own way, did not abandon history as a place of importance, promoting a diagnosis that the issue of uselessness does not consist in history itself, but in a specific mode of historiography that assumes primacy for historical consciousness guided by a highly rationalized and objectified conception of the past, bequeathing us dedicated analyses and inheritances and indebting the present in relation to the past while making itself distant and without intersection with the desires and issues of the present time. Nietzsche called traditional/antiquity and White called positivist this model of thinking and doing historiography linked to objectivity.

Therefore, the burden was characterized by the recognition of the limits of history and of its importance to humanity, demanding a reaction to the impossible objectivity (striving to promote unshakable inheritances and legacies) and a combat of history with history itself, which consisted in the attack on disciplined historiography and its inability—because of its obsession to become “scientific”—to contribute in building perspectives that could afford solutions to the peculiar problems of its time.

And why revisit this debate from fifty years ago and that has been widely debated in the historiographical field? Considering both authors as thinkers located in privileged locations in the production of North-White-centered knowledge, in the sense of thinking about how and in relation to which situations they can help us here in the global souths and in the very beginning of the third decade of the 21st century? What interests me in this debate is the recognition of the limits of history, the notion of burden as a weight carried collectively because it is understood as a hindrance, an inconvenience. And the identification of a basic burden common to history as a discipline and to the history of dance consists in freeing oneself from the

³The assumption of historical consciousness assumes a format of knowledge of the past that would serve to guide our actions in the present. Thus, the study of history is not satisfied only with knowing what occurred, but with making these occurrences a sort of moral compass for our present actions. According to this perspective, there is an overvaluation of past experiences in relation to the experiences of the present time, since they are subject to understandings, explanations and conducts that already have orientations developed and lived by other people before us.

pretension of projecting universalized answers and orientations. And, thus, I am based on the recognition that the area of historical studies in dance has left us inadequate and often obsolete devices to investigate the many histories of dance "below the tropics."

Here, the burdens we inherit in dance have not only theoretical and/or methodological issues pervaded by class issues and ideologies that have become historically dominant. These issues are mediated, beaten, raped, stolen, extorted by the historical imperial constitution of wealth based on colonization. Therefore, the challenge of producing historiographies of dance(s) in the different souths of the global south deals with a peculiar burden: the burden of coloniality. This is a term that has been used to explain the dynamics by which power, when exercised, makes use of inheritances and legacies of experiences forged during colonization.

Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (1992) explains that the functioning of the colonial power structure was anchored in discriminations that enabled the European white elites to invent justifications for their domination. And these discriminations are today identified as racial, ethnic, national, gender discriminations, oscillating according to the interests and populations involved in the process of domination, consisting in the construction of a paradigm that Argentine sociologist Eduardo Grüner (2007, p. 83) defined as "classificatory delirium," which while multiplying definitions, generalizes and objectifies complex cultures with the aim of "dividing and conquering." With this epistemology, it was possible to separate the "other" as "non-European" and treat them as inferior. Therefore, the colonial regime based its justification and practice on processes of classification and reduction of importance through inferiorization over centuries, considering specific languages, beliefs, customs, places, clothes, dances, people... classified as "non-European or descendants of Europeans."

And the recognition of coloniality occurs with the realization of its maintenance over time. That is, even after the end of colonizing relations, it is perceivable in the present time that most of those exploited and the socially inferiorized dances remain those practiced by people who are linked to "races," "ethnicities," "nations," "genders," or "places" that were colonized in the past, perpetuating an unequal and combined logic. Therefore, there is a macro platform that guides the recognition of coloniality and its effects, and this macro platform was responsible for the incapacity or limitation that the

history of dance has shown to update itself in relation to the historical issues bequeathed us by the different colonizing regimes. From a global perspective, this subject already has critical perspectives (Tambutti & Gigena, 2018; Wilcox, 2018; Purkayastha, 2018; Fratagnoli & Lassibille, 2018; Cadús, 2019; Guarato, 2019a) that denounce the universalist pretension of specific dances that are generalized as timeless and not provincial, through terms such as classic, modern, contemporary and nationalisms. Roughly speaking, coloniality consists in a present and sneaky practice, which insists on categorizing to, in the middle of the way, use specific dance inheritances and legacies to subdue, simplify, inferiorize and/or make disappear the distances that constitute differences in dance. And, consequently, de-colonizing sounds threatening to the most conservative ears, affording us a practical example of the popular proverb that says: “The wraith knows to whom it appears.”

Regarding how these modes of exercising power managed to remain, it is salutary to consider their seductive aspect. The instrumentalization of reason by colonial power and its allocation to people that are white (taking into account the scales of inferiorization existing among white people), heteronormative and male (taking into account the scales of different gender identities that promote layers of exclusion) also fostered imaginations based on the liberating promises of modernity. Just as in the exercise of the monopoly of power, there was a constant domination of the imagination based on the seductive notion that European culture—and later the American culture—“gave access to power” (Quijano, 1992, p. 12). Operating by seduction, coloniality is also perpetuated in the maintenance of the concept that the lives of those discriminated against in the present will improve with the approximation and reproduction of dances from places and ethnicities of power established according to their principles developed in the past, as the university and the artistic field request from us, for example. Here again, the present is held hostage by the past, just as Nietzsche and White warned us.

And so that we can recognize the specific burdens that the history of dance carries with bent legs today, it seems to me prudent to highlight four historical-cultural effects of coloniality for dance:

1 – hierarchization of the qualities and importance (aesthetic and historical) of dances according to ethnic and georeferenced matrices;

2 – alignment of those discriminated against with their marginal position, mediated by the tenuous balance between the fear of losing what they already have and the seduction of legitimization of their actions;

3 – imagination divided between superiority/inferiority not only of ethnicities, but of bodies, genders, geographies, gestures, poetics and practices;

4 – inability to disregard explanatory models provided by dominant groups, enabling a macro hegemony that determines the ways of dancing, talking about dancing, and making oneself understandable to the other.

Starting from these points, I have been able to recognize a double burden of the history of dance related to coloniality. The first consists in the recognition that the history of dance as an area of knowledge has remained resistant to the interdisciplinary contributions promoted by disciplines such as history, art history, anthropology and psychoanalysis (Vallejos, 2014), becoming for a long time a place dedicated more to the legitimation of legacies than to research with a view to understanding and explaining the past and its links with the present. This recognition makes the history of dance – especially that produced until the 1990s – both internationally and in Latin American countries present ambitious characteristics of objectivity similar to those denounced by Friedrich Nietzsche and Hayden White, in carrying the difficulty of performing critical analyses on canons and non-inferiorization of non-canonical dances.

The result of this resistance found in the history of dance here in the global south was the creation of a local conception that in order to have our histories we would have to elect, strengthen and disseminate our own canons, our national universals. This was the historiographic consequence of colonial heritage, perpetuating a burden that comes from the past and that settles in the present through ideas and institutions, triggering the legacies of coloniality to promote specific traditions and aesthetics of dance in the 20th century.⁴ Roughly speaking, the historiography dedicated to the

⁴A common element in dance historiographies in South and Central America consists in the narrative of the discovery of dance. As suggested by Diana Taylor (2013), the history of dance replicates the history of colonization by suggesting that the history of dance in the different countries of the Americas begins with the

excessive praise and heroicization of artists does not consist only in a methodological way of making history, it shares old-fashioned values linked to a way of seeing the world that guided colonial discrimination, proceeding by exclusion and abandonment of certain legacies of dances in the same process in which it praises and canonizes specific dances. Therefore, there is today a historical burden of dance history with the past in dance in our countries, since their way of proceeding is supported by the edification of aesthetic universalisms that authorizes the idea of Western canon, indebting the present in relation to the past in dance.

However, there is a second burden of dance history that enable us to recognize that history, whatever it may be, can never be fully treated as useless. When we endeavor to understand the burden that the history of dance exerts in artistic practice, it demonstrates all its vigor and power, serving both to oppress and also to protect and claim power. Briefly, I will mention two occurrences to exemplify what I am trying to formulate. On March 30, 2020, choreographer and dancer Sandro Borelli from the city of São Paulo published on his profile on the social network Facebook.com a critique directed at some personalities of scenic dance in Brazil, accusing them of being supporters of President Jair Bolsonaro, using the following words:

Marika Guidali and Cílicia Kerche supporters of Bozo Scum, is that it?
Can anyone tell them that they are in the risk group of this pandemic?
There are more braindead people out there.
Dance also produces genetic aberrations.⁵

Five days later, on April 4, Sandro Borelli added the names of Eliana Caminada and Magaly Bueno to this list. By adjectivizing the current president of the republic as “Bozo Scum,” Borelli makes use of caricature for naming the chief of the executive branch, shared on social networks by

arrival of European artists or Russian artists who bring with them some dance technique/aesthetics from the European nobility of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This can be observed in the accounts of ballroom dance masters and in the processes of institutionalization of ballet masters in their classical tradition, especially in the national capitals in the early twentieth century, such as: Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Santiago, Bogotá, Montevideo, etc.

⁵ BORELLI, Sandro. *Perfil de Sandro Borelli no Facebook.com*. 04 abr. 2020. Disponível em: <
<https://www.facebook.com/sandro.borelli.3>>.
Acesso em 13 abr. 2021.

citizens that disagree as to the ideologies and management platforms of the current government. It also exposes as problematic the negationist character of the federal government in relation to the lethality of the COVID-19 virus in times of pandemic. It is also important to note that since the presidential elections of 2018 public debates on government policy in our country have been organized mostly with Manichean characteristics. On the one hand, people in favor of a platform of neoliberal economic nature, combined with a sociocultural thought of conservative and religious orientation, instrumentalized in the idea of nationalism, in the use of police and military force, in the fight against corruption and represented by a then candidate – but today president – former military and retired army captain.

This context matters to us to the extent that the accusations made by Sandro Borelli are suggesting that dance artists agree with a government that shows similarities with the authoritarian way of governing exercised by the military when they were in power. The denouncing content of Sandro Borelli's publication generated a considerable debate that mobilized 117 comments until the writing of this text. And what draws attention in these interactions is the recurrence of statements in defense exclusively of Marika Gidali. In general, the comments dedicated to support this artist support their arguments by pointing out her history and company, the Stagium Ballet. Dance historiography in Brazil has endeavored to associate the Stagium Ballet to the official memory of dance in our country, as a dance that resisted the dictatorship (Guarato, 2019b). Therefore, the history of dance worked in this case as a tool that informs the present and shows that the past does not end in itself, even serving to defend against public accusations.

The second example in which universalist dance histories can be used to protect artists is that of dancer and researcher of trans and black dance Pietra Pedrosa Silva Rodrigues (2021) when analyzing the history of Vogue dance in the city of Goiânia, finding that this dance presents in this city its first contours linked to practitioners whose gender identifications were mostly male and heterosexual during the 1990s. Similarly, in the early 21st century, the practice of Vogue dance, even when practiced by non-binary or homoaffective female and male dancers, was displaced from the American Ballroom Culture and the notion of community that surrounds it. According to

the author, this displacement contributes to exclusive uses and appropriations of the aesthetics and form of dance, taking from it its community contribution to socially excluded segments, especially transsexual black people and contributing to the perpetuation of historical discriminations/exclusions even within the LGBTQIA+ community. According to Pietra Pedrosa Rodrigues (2021, p. 1996):

... this research begins as an effort to tell stories about the ballroom culture in Goiânia, because we have our stories and they are loaded with ancestry, they are generational, with them we give meaning to what we build for ourselves and for our community. (...) Voguing dance is never just dancing in the sense of a phenomenon that presents itself publicly, it is part of who we are as an identity, it has been linked to us for many years through history. Therefore, voguing carries with it these dance stories with people's lives, as well as showing us the first moments in thinking about dance movement within the culture of balls...

According to the author, the Vogue dance is important for the strengthening of marginalized groups. And, in this sense, the objectification of a transnational past originating from the American Ballroom Culture, in which the protagonism of trans black people is remarkable, it is politically important to claim the "origin" and objectivity of the history of this dance as a way to promote visibility and recognition of the inheritances and knowledge of people silenced in official discourses. Here, the history of dance has the practical use of authorizing ownership and authority over dance. Therefore, instead of treating the history of dance as useless, we have to recognize its potential for specific groups and communities, as it always serves someone. And in the same process, while the history of dance benefits some, it discredits other groups and communities.

At this point in the text, we can understand that the burden that Hayden White was dealing with is not the same burden that the dance histories of the different souths of the globe carry. The solution proposed by White (1966, p. 125) consisted in methodological issues, proposing that "The contemporary historian has to establish the value of the study of the past, not as 'an end in itself,' but as a way of providing perspectives on the present that contribute to the solution of problems peculiar to our own time."⁶ Now,

⁶In the original: "The contemporary historian has to establish the value of the study of the past, not as "an end in itself," but as a way of providing perspectives on the present that contribute to the solution of problems peculiar to our own time."

the invalidity of White's proposal lies precisely in the recognition that, when viewed from here, the problem of the past is that it is perceived precisely as the foundation for the problems of the present. To some extent, even knowing all the limitations and problems of the objectified history, for inheritances and legacies of dance discriminated against and inferiorized over centuries, history—even when generalized—does not lose its usefulness, on the contrary, it is claimed as a *combat weapon* in the right to recognition of these inheritances and legacies.

Therefore, instead of treating history for its methodological uselessness, from the history of dances of the south of the globe we have the perception of the practical and warlike aspect of the history of dance and its power to bequeath inheritances to the present and future. In this context, we are dealing with dances whose pasts, when they were objectified, were objectified from the perspective of inferiorization, enabling an implicit social recognition authorized exclusively as being inferior. The burden of the historical past of dance for people who dance is in the importance of the past and not in its uselessness, since it enables the exercise of power through inheritances that are utilized in the present. In this regard, there is another burden of dance history constituted by its barbarism in granting that specific ethnicities and groups situate their ancestry in dance as something relevant to society while other groups and ethnicities were deprived of this possibility.

Based on the recognition of these two burdens present in the history of dance, it seems more plausible to us that their historiographies are not only a knowledge, but that their very constitution occurred by an ideology transformed into discipline to meet the interests of dominant groups of modern societies. From this point of view, the history of dance becomes a piece of knowledge precisely when it reviews its own precepts, which, mostly until the 1990s, were guided by the premise of universalization of inheritances and legacies, leading to a symbolic indebtedness of the global souths with inheritances of specific dances. Therefore, there is a basic premise that supports the burdens: the prestige that dance techniques and aesthetics enjoyed over time were the result of specific cultural forces represented by colonialism and imperialism. The diagnosis of this premise is associated with the realization that cultural forces have changed significantly

in recent decades, also altering the prestige that the history of dance enjoyed. It is no longer an area guarding canonical knowledge of the past in dance that will serve as guidance for artistic practices of the present, since the accumulation of these inheritances and legacies occurred unequally and generated unpayable debts. It is precisely this weight that history has placed on artists and dance scholars for a long time, which has turned against it, a weight of inheritances and legacies that have been abandoned and excluded from history.

The history of dance as a weapon and practice to combat the burden

Once the history of dance is understood by its practical uses, the last decades have experienced a process of producing weapons for confrontation. And the main ammunition that the area of dance studies in Latin America has made use of comes from studies dedicated to decolonizing dance thinking and practices, based on two main routes: postcolonial and de-colonial studies. Here, I will briefly present these two major fronts, seeking to demonstrate their interrelations and how the thought that is called de-colonial seeks to differentiate itself from postcolonial thought.

Postcolonial terminology gathers a plurality of thinkers who gained international prominence mainly after the 1970s, following the processes of struggles for independence of African countries that still experienced colonizing regimes amid the late twentieth century. Therefore, it is impossible to reduce postcolonial studies to specific precepts, being characterized by a macro perspective that consists in redistributing the authority of thinking to subjects and locations inferiorized throughout history, as well as a fervent criticism of the perversity of the consequences of colonization in the present and the recognition of other perspectives for cultural analysis that interrelate ethnicity, class, gender and race.

The first great movement consisted in understanding how the colonizer thinks and how the colonized manages to think their position according to the explanations of the colonizer, with notorious approach in relation to postmodern, poststructuralist thinkers and Marxist revisionism thinkers, mainly from French philosophy and British cultural studies

dedicated to the critical analysis of culture. Similarly, there is now attention directed to writings by African, Arab and Indian authors such as Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, Kwame Nkrumah, Edward Said, Ashis Nandy, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Valentin Mudimbe, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, Achille Mbembe and the South Asian Subaltern Studies Group, dedicated to thinking about the effects left by colonialism both in colonized countries and in those who exercised colonization as colonizers.

Guided by criticism of Eurocentrism and mostly carried out by intellectuals from marginal localities, postcolonial studies formulated criticisms regarding the scales of marginalization and subalternization, in the sense that, as a person or locality accumulates positions that have been historically sexualized, classist, racialized and geopoliticalized, less power to know is granted to them and, therefore, less authority to their discourse and activities in dance, limiting their contributions to the concept of "local knowledge" (Mudimbe, 1998). Or, as demonstrated by Gayatri Spivak (1988) regarding epistemological shortcuts and the trap of "giving voice" or "letting speak," unveiling the forms of homogenizing domination of globalization (supposedly universal), dedicated to this, to examine Indian women and the intersectionalities of power (racial, ethnic, gender, class). Roughly speaking, postcolonial studies have reintroduced the importance of the concept of ideology as a structured set that provides explanation and justifies the relationship of people with the world, using representations that organize them and make operate forms of domination and subordination, functioning in the sphere of consciousness and the unconscious, enabling the naturalization of the conditions of subaltern and/or dominant.

For dance studies, the postcolonial contributions to decolonize knowledge and practices range from north-centered criticism to concepts of canon or classic and their alleged timelessness, assuming that "good dance" or "good dance history" is something valid and replicable for everyone and with unique versions, as carried out for example by Susan Manning (1993), Mark Franko (1995) and Isabelle Launay (1996); to critical readings about the past in dance from non-globohegemonic locations, such as the writings of Ananya Chatterjea (2009), Rafael Guarato (2010), Roberta Marques

(2016), Prarthana Purkayastha (2018), Eugenia Cadús (2020) and Juan Vallejos (2020), for example.

In line with this aspect of cultural criticism of postcolonial studies, in different locations in Latin America authors who identify themselves under the term de-colonial have gained prominence. The term came from a group of Latin American researchers who were studying and working in the United States, who came together to found the Latin American Group of Subaltern Studies in 1993. But at this meeting they realized that the references read by them were mainly produced by European theorists, and understood this as a betrayal of the idea of thought dedicated to decolonizing, since the maintenance of postmodern and poststructuralist authors replicated what they criticized, the predominance of North and White-centered supremacy. Hence the importance of the concept of coloniality of power of Aníbal Quijano (1992) and his denunciations, demonstrating that the domination is in the maintenance of centralities and peripheries through differences, this domination being justified at first by the idea of race, but which spreads to epistemic, gender, geographic, economy, aesthetics, poetics, and academic domination, among others (Mignolo, 2002 and 2003; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Lugones, 2008).

In order to justify their differences that allow us to speak of de-coloniality rather than postcoloniality, different thinkers dedicated themselves to explaining that Latin America served as an example to global colonization models, the relations of inferiorization having lasted longer here and been exercised more violently, producing colonial differences of deep aspect. Therefore, de-colonial thinking is consistent with postcolonial thinking about the need for knowledge to be situated, recognizing that it is the margins that teach us to think with it. Likewise, de-colonial thought and practice reinforce the critical aspect and the emphasis on a rebellious ideology in conjunction with a perspective of hope in the future, through the confrontation of oppressive problems that we have experienced in our past.

Therefore, the first step in defining de-colonial in relation to postcolonial studies—but not in opposition—consists in the rebellious attitude and the practical action of promoting postures in the face of modes of domination in the present time. Therefore, it consists not only in criticizing

and denouncing, but also in promoting disobedient practical attitudes with a view to interfering in the models of domination historically forged from colonization, as a kind of “immediate task.” However, in practice, de-colonial thought does not have a unity of action. The unity that allows us to talk about a “de-colonial thought” consists in its diagnosis of coloniality and the proposal of rebellion to it, with different proposals and strategies competing with each other on what tactics to be employed, being common the proposition, for example, of a theft of authorship that authorizes indifference to the north-centered history... the de-colonial in dance history is first of all a revolt (Cadús, 2019 and Guarato, 2019a).

And it is on these revolts that I would like to focus from now on, when the de-colonial gains the aspect of a movement—also described as a “de-colonial turn”—that starts to combine struggles that intersect anti-racist, feminist and Marxist criticism postures, which from my point of view have always existed here. To paraphrase Jesús Martín-Barbero: we practiced de-coloniality long before this terminology existed. Thus, the strength that de-colonial thought has gained in recent decades is due to an oppressive condition and a rebellious existence experienced in practice by the many historically marginalized bodies in our Latin American societies, which enables us to recognize dance historiographies as a tool of social power.

And if at present we enjoy the consensus that coloniality is a consequence of modernity and its support in colonization, demanding rebelliousness to combat it, it is important that we ask ourselves: what is the function of the dance historian in a time of rebelliousness? With the aim of stimulating debate on this subject, I would like to propose that we also be able to perceive with critical parameters about what are the consequences of de-coloniality for historiography of dance(s). And I make this proposal motivated less by the search to disqualify de-colonial thought and movement, with which I agree in many of its attitudes, but rather, following the popular premise that says: “not everything that shines is gold.”

Consequences of de-coloniality for dance(s) history(s) of the souths of the globe.

The immediate consequence of de-colonial thought for dance histories, since it assumes the commitment to undo inheritances based on colonization, is to favor people, inheritances, places and ideas that have been historically marginalized. Therefore, throughout this debate we cannot lose sight of the fact that there is a great benefit to the different dance legacies of the globe's souths when they opt for de-colonial thought, which consists in the displacement of powers and importance, reinvigorating the practical power of theory and enabling us to speak of "de-colonial movement," since it has practical use guided by an ideology that enables social gathering and struggle. This consequence stems from the ideological organization of a teleological nature of de-colonial thought, which establishes the root of an infrastructured evil traced in the past, but which expands deterministically to the present in a structural and macro way, therefore omnipresent; then, it establishes the urgency of political intervention practices that guarantee the combat against the permanence of this evil, whatever they may be; and a future to be achieved, where coloniality would cease to exist.

What attracts me in this teleological proposal is: the absence of an action project aimed at decimating coloniality. On the one hand, we can conceive of this absence of an action project oriented according to de-colonial thought, as a democratic recognition that Latin Americans experience coloniality and understand it on a daily basis, the nuances and dynamics by which its power is updated. And thus, given the different scales and facets of its perpetuation, it would be the daily life itself and each locality that will demand specific projects. On the other hand, it can signal a political immaturity of de-colonial thinking, with regard to the understanding of the very functioning of society and its dynamics that allow the perpetuation of coloniality, thus transferring the responsibility of these tasks to marginalized groups and non-marginalized people interested in historical repair.

In both possibilities, the consequence of summoning people to combat without guidance opens cracks for a multiplicity of discourses and practices that are stated as de-colonial, including those antagonistic to one another. Therefore, de-colonial as a movement is more diffuse and dispersed than de-colonial as thought, requiring us to understand the distance between

these two instances. And, as a dance historian, I am also interested in understanding what the “de-colonial movement” does not announce and which is veiled in its assumptions, along with the question: “whom does the dance histories already written serve?” we should add “Which groups does the de-colonial premise promote?” “What are the dance legacies that gain prominence?” My hypothesis is that, together with the democratization announced, the “de-colonial movement” in its practical use also serves to build groups of domination (scales of internal elites to marginalized sectors) that begin to articulate hegemony and not necessarily to combat established hegemony.

I formulate this observation by realizing that in this global and macro-historical saga in search of justice, de-colonial thought promotes a mirror game between colonized and colonizer, between dominant and subaltern that prevents us from recognizing the scales between these positions, without which I understand, we will hardly be able to actually combat coloniality in dance historiographies. And, for this reason, I begin this passage dedicated to the consequences of de-coloniality, warning about the generic aspect of its explanations and its inability to respond to the immediate material reality in its complexity.

In the foreground, by electing the macro explanatory aspect, de-colonial thinking, despite dealing with colonial differences, ended up by essentializing a mode of colonization in Latin America, failing to penetrate the differences between regions and the Portuguese and Spanish models of exploitation, for example. There is, therefore, a gap of studies on colonization in the proposals and formulations of de-coloniality. Similarly, there is an explanatory naturalization resulting from its universalization, founding an explanatory platform that is caught by the same trap from which it intends to escape (modernity), when formulating a monistic explanatory system.

In practice and in the present time, the explanatory model based on ethnic and gender inferiority serves to explain many social relations permeated by coloniality, but not all. And I will cite a few examples: I am a man, white, cisgender and heterosexual. Given these characteristics of mine, I occupy a privileged place that guaranteed me the white-centered and malecentric hegemony. However, when I am together with other dance

researchers from the global north, I am treated as Latin American and given a place of speech as a marginal intellectual (politely called emerging). However, when I am in the role of a professor at the university, I lose this position and again occupy the role of the dominator/oppressor, due to my physical-biological aspects, my gender identity, and my position as a doctor professor. Therefore, a single person can experience the exercise of coloniality (as a man, white, cisgender, heterosexual and doctoral professor) and inferiorization by the same coloniality (as a Latin American at the international level). And it is this shift between exercising and suffering coloniality that de-colonial thought cannot explain.

To be a little more enlightening in my example, I will describe how suffering coloniality can at the same time give me power among those marginalized through the functioning of this same coloniality.⁷ In dance studies, mainly in the last two decades globally, being a marginal intellectual and announcing oneself as decolonial or de-colonial has become a valued currency. The north-centered traditions of dance studies today recognize more easily the importance of different dance legacies. However, there is a recurring expectation that we will be able to deal with our national localities. I refer to a kind of academic fetishism where an Argentine researcher, when part of a global dynamics of dance studies, assumes the responsibility of talking about Argentina, as well as that a Brazilian or Indian researcher also conducts macro analyses of their countries.

The support that exemplifies my sentence can be found in the article on dance archives that I wrote at the request of the editorial of *Dance Research* in 2020, but also in the complimentary content of the text of Cristina F. Rosa (2020) that insists on the possibility of a “Brazilian Body”⁸ in performances of Grupo Corpo without problematizing this relationship with the fetishes of international alterity, as well as the idea of “heat” proposed by

⁷I can provide other examples of this dynamics applied to Afro-descendant and peripheral groups, in the article “The concepts of ‘street dance’ and ‘urban dances’ and how they help us understand a little more about coloniality,” divided into two parts and published in the *Arte da Cena* journal in 2020 and 2021.

⁸Disregarding both the set of works of Grupo Corpo that does not have “Brazilianess” as a guiding element of their works and the local historiography produced by Daniela Reis (2005) dedicated to the subject, the author is based on broadly problematic issues in the national context to build and perpetuate international expectations of dance interaction carried out by Brazilian artists with global audiences.

Ananya Chatterjea (2020) when dealing with contemporary dance in non-hegemonic contexts, when viewed by Latin American countries, reinforces the exotization of the body widely debated in Latin American countries. I do not intend with this exposition to question the quality of these texts, but only to identify that there is a common track: intellectuals from the different souths, when immersed in the global academic market, assume for themselves the responsibility of speaking for the “south.” And that is not criticism, that is a statement. And the understanding of this dynamics of coloniality requires us to address, in this case, issues such as: Why do they ask and expect that from us? And, above all, why do we submit to doing this kind of analysis?

The effect of this observation is to build up people who come to exercise a dominion among subordinates, in the sense of silencing other subordinates with this posture of assuming the position of speaking of nations and souths, even if we do not intend to. In this facet of coloniality, if the subaltern cannot speak, he can at least dominate other subalterns. And what I would like to emphasize with this example is that coloniality has different facets. While there are some readily identifiable—such as those realized by de-colonial thought—many others almost invisible transversalize their uses and show us the dangers among ourselves when we put ourselves in the position of representatives of large regions and promote the generalization of ourselves.

Also due to the macro perspective, there is a consequence resulting from the supremacy of de-colonial explanation and its ideological-practical use over material conditions. Conversely, the de-colonial movement has promoted idolatry and the re-implementation of the narratives of heroes and villains, reinstating the cells and the spectre of the burden of history that returns to haunt historians. It has been increasingly common the appearance of historical narratives that instead of understanding ancestry in its tensions and antagonisms, present it as a kind of “positive salvation,” contributing to the strengthening of indigenous and afrodescendant elites who, while fighting the domination of whiteness, reinforce and set in motion the existing hegemony, that is, the way of functioning that enable that these people and not their communities reinforce each other.

Thus, just as there is an obscure side to modernity, in practice, there is the maintenance of many dynamics of coloniality through de-colonial practices.⁹ I want to refer here to the denunciation of the de-colonial oppression carried out by Chilean dancer and geographer Mónica Pinto Verdugo (2021), which forces historically marginalized people to link themselves to ethnic ancestry and demands worship of specific heritages. According to Verdugo's conception, the de-colonial movement presents its limits and privileges by concentrating its struggles on the ethnic aspect, inculcating a biological (phenotypic) logic of claim based on ancestral cultural parameters. As per this criticism, the de-colonial cannot measure the material conditions of the present, tending to strengthen people, groups and ethnic places that already had certain access even before the claim, and devalue and inferiorize the urban and peripheral mixed race existences that dialogue their identities with the mass media and that do not have sufficient temporal support for their actions, "pues en su condición mestiza no hay nada que reivindicar o patrimonializar." (Verdugo, 2021, p. 141)

From this point of view, the de-colonial movement is important and can benefit people, places and dance institutions that assume and recognize themselves in ethnic ancestry inferiorized by the colonial process: indigenous and African descent ancestry. Therefore, from this stems the importance and expansion of the uses of de-colonial in dance historiographies, it functions as a tool in combating historical inequalities that over centuries inferiorized, invisibilized and abandoned indigenous and Afro-descendant inheritances, mainly through the processes of nationalization and regionalization of dance practices, but does little in relation to family dance practices and traditions that do not fit the discourses of ethnic ancestry.

⁹ The also remarkable critique of Argentine feminist Maria Lugones (2008) to the treatment of the gender issue in Anibal Quijano helps us to formulate this premise. Lugones, based on the studies of Nigerian sociologist Oyéronké Oyewùmí in her book "The Invention of Women," recognizes that, unlike the deterministic and macro-structural explanation of the coloniality of power, the dimorphic gender system constituted the coloniality of power just as the coloniality of power constituted this gender system. That is, despite recognizing the coloniality proposed by Quijano and its power, Lugones shows that this power is not radiating, but diffuse and multifaceted.

Hence, once we understand that there are groups benefiting from the de-colonial movement, is it up to us to recognize whether these benefits are distributed equally among the members of the same historically discriminated ethnic group or whether these benefits are concentrated in specific people, places and dance institutions? What I am asking here is to recognize that, since our attention focuses on dances that have been historically considered unworthy, how do we proceed to historiographize these dances? And here it is where the de-colonial presents its most conservative aspect, as it has been commonly seduced by the theoretical and methodological whitecentric procedures of historiographing dances, making recurrent use of the positive, complimentary and anxious way for the canonization of people, places and institutions of non-white dance. In Brazil, examples of this procedure are the book “Eros Volusia: criadora do bailado nacional” by Roberto Pereira (2004), the documentary by Lilian Solá Santiago and Mariana Monteiro (2005) titled “Balé de Pé no chão - a dança afro de Mercedes Baptista” and the recently published book by Paulo Melgaço da Silva Junior (2021), “Mercedes Baptista: a dama negra da dança”. Moreover, the recurrence of names such as Inaicyrá Falcão dos Santos, Rubens Barbot, Ismael Ivo, Rui Moreira, Elísio Pita, Eusébio Lobo da Silva, Raimundo Bispo dos Santos when dealing with black dances shows us that some black artists who related to the artistic field of dance have been highlighted in an unequal comparison to histories of black dances that were not related to the artistic field of dance.

Even recognizing that this movement is temporally recent and that it consists of a “posture that demands cognitive justice to historically minorised dance knowledge and practices” (Ferraz, 2018, p. 2), it is worth emphasizing the wide adoption of the procedure of recognizing black personalities in the dance that whiteness defined as scenic. What I am formulating here is that the de-colonial initiatives have proceeded much closer to coloniality than they suppose, since the large masses of excluded, unlegitimized communities and knowledge remain for the most part made invisible by the blinding light of the stars of dance. From this perspective, it is worth asking whether the affective and intellectual orientations of Afro-descendant and indigenous traditions, when looking at the past seriously, are closer to the enemy than they would like? In other words, do they exercise domination, establish

hierarchy, build canons and make them function within in a coordinated manner between those who stand out and those who do not stand out? If that is the case, our effort can focus on the observation that what changes is not the suppression of the relations of domination, they remain... but on explaining who exercises it and how?

Still following the de-colonial aspect, the claim of ancestry does not succumb to historical debts, it maintains the dynamics that we are in historical debt, modifying the creditor. Thus, the de-colonial in dance historiographies shifts the legacies, but maintains the debts of the present with the historical past of dances. And, thus, de-colonial thought bequeaths us another burden for dance histories, different and diluted by the glow of the de-colonial, but that is still a burden despite glowing.

Facing the burdens and their consequences

So far, I have been under the impression that the text presents a skeptical aspect as to changes. But that is not my intention. And, therefore, I chose to conduct the final stage aiming to point out some issues that I face when I intend to do historiographies from the different souths of the globe. The most urgent thing seems to me to be the recognition of the still little evidenced facets of coloniality, which consists in understanding that coloniality is not owned by a specific group of people historically characterized as European/American, male, white, heterosexual or by people who have the nationality of imperialist countries. Coloniality refers to the effects that this geographical, ethnic and gender organization has produced for the exercise and maintenance of power, that is, its domination strategies based on principles guided by practices of inferiorization and/or simplification of the complexity of the "other," even if this other is an "equal." In other words: what are the principles that allow us to simplify or inferiorize the dances of the "other" of ourselves? This question has no immediate answer, it is a warning, so that we do not pretend that the issue of coloniality is present exclusively in the relations between global north and south or between different ethnic groups, but rather that they are more easily found in these contexts.

Following the diagnosis of researcher and artist Jotta Mombaça (2016), coloniality is a power that can be exercised regardless of ethnicity, gender identities, or religion. Centuries of colonialism have matured a coloniality that replicates itself, without the need for the oppressive and coercive platform described by de-colonial thinking, requiring from us the ability to recognize the modes of functioning of what I have called intracolony (Guarato, 2021). In this sense, the de-colonial as a ghost must remain haunting not only the hegemonic elites, but also the local, ethnic elites, of dances that make use of the de-colonial to impose themselves on other versions and legacies of dance in their places.

In practice, coloniality and de-coloniality are not opposed and objective faces of a chessboard, they are constant and mobile. And in order to recognize them we have to qualify what they are in each of our analyses, the hegemonic, domination, subalternity positions and how these relate or not with specific legacies of the way colonial power is explained and functions. While on a macro scale it becomes easy to group and explain relations of oppression and inferiorization of dances between different ethnic groups, when we look at dances practiced by people from the same ethnic group or gender identity, how do we perceive the maintenance of coloniality of power in these relations? This parallax challenges us not to limit ourselves to the macro diagnoses of de-colonial thought, to enter into practical explanations of how coloniality remains and is updated in specific relationships and situations of our daily lives. After all, is every relationship of coloniality based on the exercise of a power that oppresses or does coloniality also remain through a power that is exercised through its welcoming and integralist aspect?

Thus, presented the issue, it challenges us to understand the relationships between coloniality, domination and hegemony, words that are often confused and lose their explanatory potential. A simple exercise that we can carry out is to ask ourselves: do we agree that all coloniality presupposes domination, but is it plausible to affirm that all domination corresponds to the relations of coloniality? If not, where are the boundaries between domination and domination by coloniality? What relations, aesthetics, gestures, movements, choreographies exercise domination

without being colonizing? Observing from here in Brazil, I have the impression that these instances are cloudy to the historiographical eyes untrained to perceive these distances.

Recently, my attention has been drawn by the capacity of the peripheral African-American community to manage to systematize, hierarchize, value and reinvent its inheritances in the urban setting. Let us briefly take as an example the *Krumping dance*, which emerged at the beginning of this 21st century and in less than a decade had a dictionary dedicated to systematizing its practice, the *Krumptionary* (2008) prepared by a group of precursors who called themselves *Krump Kings*.¹⁰ This degree of organization of Afro-descendant peripheral dancers in the United States shows us the disputes for hegemonies within the *Krumping* culture itself, moving groups to organize themselves according to the same principles that ensured the supremacy of ethnic dances such as ballet in its classical tradition in the West, the systematization, claim of authorship and the international spread of its localized knowledge.

What I am formulating here is that in geographies that played the role of empire even the peripheral communities share an aura of power over their knowledge. That is, they organize themselves and make use of coloniality even though they are in the peripheries of their localities and organize the information of their local traditions, with a view to disseminating them in other locations. Therefore, in the case of *Krumping*, the afroreferentiality of dance is undeniable; however, as this referentiality is used and put to work in the social environment, it does not deal with epistemological assumptions of Afro-descendant communities, but rather with the dynamics of imperialist domination of the localities where these people live in the present.

In the briefly reported case, cultural information is ancestral and African descent, but its organization and distribution in the present is whitecentered. But we need to understand: what is solved in this model of inheritance projection? If it does solve, who does it solve it for? The question

¹⁰The dictionary was available online at: <http://krumpkings.com>. However, as the group was disbanded, all material was removed from the web. However, excerpts from the *Krumptionary* can be found in different profiles on youtube.com

is not only which heritage is being reinforced, but as important as what is being reinvigorated, it is to pay attention to “how” these processes are being constituted, given that hegemony is not done in a localized and easily identifiable way, but in the tensions and consensus between dominants and subordinates that enable the hegemonic to remain and be updated, sometimes with oppression, at other times by consensus.

Finally, it seems plausible to me to recognize that, like coloniality, de-coloniality also produces its legacies. And, as a rebellious thought, we can ask ourselves: who is interested in building legacies and inheritances? Is it possible to have histories of dances without the obligation of inheritances? The point is to recognize that there are dances that possess and claim inheritances and dances in which these inheritances are precisely what must be disregarded so the dance remains alive. And meseems that it is these dances without inheritances, that invent their legacies in their presents of nowness, which both coloniality and de-coloniality seek to reduce with their essentializing aspects and their pursuits of establishing the presence of the past in the present.

On the occasion of the defense board of my master’s student Patrícia Ordaz, who researches aspects of indigenous ancestral musicality in Mexico, I heard that people treated as “mixed race” should identify themselves as indigenous or black, having the colonization process created this “mixed race” category as an epistemicide tool. I cannot deny that Patrícia Ordaz’s argument is important and serves many people in their identity processes. However, when doing something determining, the obligation to identify with inheritances established in a white, African and indigenous trilogy, the de-colonial presents its authoritarian character in the effort to democratize inheritances. Following this perspective, dances and their practices gain historical validity only when they are linked to specific identities/ancestries, with dances that are not identified in ancestry being treated as “unaware” of their histories, and therefore unable to recognize their ancestry due to inability. And, thus, the de-colonial operates together and coordinated with coloniality, inferiorizing and simplifying the processes of symbolic construction and identification, always destined to be hostage of an original past.

And why do not we develop dance legacies without obligation to pasts or hierarchies? Is it only possible to recognize the importance through the orthodoxy of inheritances and the building of legacies? What role does the legacy play and who needs a legacy? What does it “protect” us from or supposedly “make us impervious” to? At the same time, what kind of indebtedness does it cast us into? These questions show us that the issue of the marginalized subjects in dance mattering cannot be a pretext that exempts us from dealing with historiographic methods.

And, for all of this, the de-colonial combat calls us to the understanding that the history of dance is more useful than ever. Instead of refusing historiographical discourses, we must occupy and entrench the history of dance, battling for our pasts, as they contribute to the practices of the present and the building of our futures. From this perspective, the past is more useful to us when it serves to demonstrate to us and to make us aware that this same past contributes to ethics that are responsible in the present for its future effects and less to obey and indebted us. Therefore, instead of the burden, we must ask ourselves whether the histories we write are dedicated to indebting people in the present or to writing for futures different than the present?

We live in places where it is impossible to exist a history of dance without burdens. Even if we insist on not recognizing them, they will not cease to exist. And these burdens are presented to us through the recognition of privileges, but also of social responsibilities.

In this process, the historical study helps to legitimize powers constituted or to be constituted... in all scales of social life. Therefore, there are always ethical and political implications in making dance history from here, and, in the present, demanding us to recognize the ambiguity in our uses of coloniality in our de-colonial proposals.

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