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# Between buttocks and tongues: sexuality and aging in the gaúcha scene

Entre bundas e línguas: sexualidade e envelhecimento na cena  
gaúcha

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## ABSTRACT

The text discusses dance teaching in schools and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The aim is to reflect on the role of teachers and methodological teaching possibilities that relate to the desire to understand the autistic body as the protagonist of possible dances in the school environment. The qualitative research was carried out through the experience lived by the authors in organizing and developing a study group on dance teaching and autism, during the year 2024, at the Universidade Federal de Pelotas. The theoretical basis is the studies of Freitas (2022) and Viana (2015; 2021), among others. It is considered that, to welcome autistic students, the school community must undertake means of attitudinal accessibility, which involves raising awareness about ASD and investing in simple strategies, such as developing plans that provide predictability, using visual resources and approaching the students' family context. The text explores the dramaturgy of Eduardo Severino Cia. de Dança, emphasizing themes of gender, sexuality, and aging in the contemporary dance scene of Rio Grande do Sul. The methodology for this case study involved questionnaires, performance analyses, promotional materials, and reviews of the Company's website. In this study, the body is examined through a critical and contemporary lens, where physicality highlights the passage of time and embraces a multifaceted, label-free sexuality that encompasses diverse, marginal, and human pleasures. For Eduardo Severino Cia. de Dança, ceasing to dance with advancing age is not an option; the aging body endures, reshaping both the creative process and the experience of dance.

**KEYWORDS:** Dramaturgy; Gender; Sexuality; Aging.

## RESUMO

O texto aborda a dramaturgia da Eduardo Severino Cia. de Dança, com foco nas questões de gênero, sexualidade e envelhecimento na cena contemporânea do Rio Grande do Sul. A metodologia deste estudo de caso incluiu questionários, análises de espetáculos, materiais de divulgação e consultas ao site da Companhia. Neste artigo, o corpo é analisado sob uma perspectiva crítica e contemporânea, na qual a fisicalidade revela a passagem do tempo e celebra uma sexualidade múltipla, livre de rótulos, que abarca prazeres diversos, marginais e humanos. Para a Eduardo Severino Cia. de Dança, abandonar a prática da dança com o avanço da idade não é uma possibilidade; o corpo que envelhece resiste, transformando a criação e a fruição da dança.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Dramaturgia; Gênero; Sexualidade; Envelhecimento.

# Between buttocks and tongues: sexuality and aging in the gaúcha scene

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## 1. Introduction

This article problematizes the categories man and masculinity in light of social markers of difference such as gender, sexuality and generation, based on the artistic history of the directors of the Eduardo Severino Companhia de Dança (Eduardo Severino Dance Company). The group, with twenty-three years of activity in the city of Porto Alegre, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul (RS), has a main cast composed exclusively of men.

In addition to its artistic relevance for contemporary dance in Rio Grande do Sul, the choice of researching the Eduardo Severino Companhia de Dança is justified by the long-lasting careers of interpreter-creators Eduardo Severino and Luciano Tavares, which instigates a reflection on the bodies that age dancing in the contemporary professional scene. The aesthetic comprehension of the aged body in the scene, as well as the personal experiences of these artists, involving questions of gender and sexuality, sustain the problematizations raised by this study.

The recurrence of gender and sexuality-related themes in the productions of the Companhia demonstrates that its artists are familiarized with such questions, which are fundamental for the objectives of this investigation. Thus, this study proposes an in-depth dialogue based on the creation processes of the performances and the histories of the artists, establishing connections with previous studies on the same theme, such as Duarte (2016), Duarte and Berté (2018), Duarte and Santos (2020) and Duarte (2022).

This investigation is a case study, which according to Maria Esteban (2010) is a detailed, encompassing, systematic and deep process centered on a specific phenomenon. This approach allows a descriptive analysis promoting new understandings and the construction of knowledge based on collected data.

Data was produced in two distinct phases. The first phase, carried out in 2018, consisted of an interview. According to sociologist Maria Minayo (1993), an interview is a talk guided by the researcher to gather information relevant to the object of study. The second phase, in 2023, involved the application of questionnaires,

which according to researcher Augusto Triviños are instruments allowing the creation of hypotheses and the formulation of new questions based on the obtained answers.

The interview, comprising five questions focused on the creative process of the Companhia, was answered simultaneously by the two artists. On the other hand, the questionnaires, featuring 22 open- and closed-ended questions, were answered individually and regarded personal and professional aspects of Eduardo Severino and Luciano Tavares.

Afterward, the transcription of the interview and the tabulation of questionnaire answers were carried out. The information obtained on the creative processes of the Companhia and the histories of its artists was organized and interpreted in light of the theories formulated by scholars of the fields of dance, gender, sexuality and aging. This theoretical reflection allowed a dialogue between the topics of artistic production and the subjective experiences of the artists in the Porto Alegre scene, with respect to artistic performances in the gaúcho (i.e. pertaining to the state of Rio Grande do Sul) and Brazilian contexts.

This article begins with the presentation of the bibliography of the Companhia directors and also of the groups in which they participated throughout their careers. Such contextualization helps in identifying characteristics in the artistic genealogy of the interpreter-creators, which can be perceived in the current productions of the group.

The possibility of learning about aspects of the personal lives of the artists and their implications to the artistic practice of the Companhia instigates discussions on the gender and sexuality markers among men who dance, through the lens of their aging process and professional life in the Porto Alegre/RS dance scene. Our observation is based on a critical perspective on Education and Art, aligned to post-structuralism and Cultural Studies.

Lastly, we seek to reflect on relationships between gender, sexuality and the creative processes in contemporary dance, in conjunction with aging and its historical, social and political unravelings. The inter-relationship between dance and politics permeates this whole text.

## 2. Gender and Sexuality in dancing: take a stand!

In the universe of Art, when we move scenically, dance can function as a subjective mirror, allowing us to look at ourselves or at how we can or wish to become ourselves. The *image revealed* by the act of dancing, with its psychological and social unravelings, can be pleasant, awkward or even unsettling and terrifying (Hanna, 1999). Different dance techniques, especially those related to contemporary dance and/or dance-theater, are being consolidated as a fertile field for reflecting on and problematizing relationships between dance, gender and sexuality.

In this context, Art stands out in its enabling of original and contingent actions, with dance being a language that incarnates and corporifies, in a literal way, discourses and relationships that provoke reflections on the dramaturgy of the body. According to historian Joan Scott (1995), gender is a useful category for historical analysis that is configured as relational and, therefore, political. Thus, gender questions never appear isolatedly; on the contrary, they are always associated with interfaces and connections with other social markers, such as race/ethnicity, social class, sexuality and generation.

The category of gender is explored in several fields of knowledge, from Biology to Law, and especially in History and Social Sciences. Joan Scott (1995) identifies four historical roots of research on the theme: patriarchal theory and the feminist movement, Marxism, the post-structuralist perspective of Michel Foucault and the view of psychoanalysis. There is no consensus or a single encompassing theory on the subject; however, we highlight the contribution of Cultural Studies in contemporaneity, especially in the dialogue with Art, the perspective we follow.

Professor Giuliano Andreoli (2010) stresses the importance of considering different social markers, in addition to gender, in the construction of meanings attributed to the body in dance, such as social class, ethnicity and generation. The author states:

It can be understood that dance is not exempt from operating, alongside many other practices of ritualization of the daily uses of the body, as a cultural pedagogy of gender, through which

social gender inequalities are reproduced via the configuration of different ways to use the body by men and women (Andreoli, 2010, p. 108, our translation).

By analyzing the intertwining of the social markers of difference, studies in the field of dance bring to light the difficulties faced by bodies that defy hegemonic social identities. Resistance to dissident bodies is manifested by means of prejudices and discriminations, as demonstrated by studies carried out in the non-metropolitan area of Rio Grande do Sul.

A study by Duarte (2016) involving male ballet dancers of several different techniques in the city of Pelotas/RS revealed that many of them had already suffered some kind of prejudice due to being dancers. Such prejudice might be related to the fact that boys are rarely incentivized to participate in dancing and, when that does happen, they tend to start dancing late, almost at an adult age. This is due to, for the most part, the social experiences and routines of childhood, which are frequently restricted to sport, as stressed by Andreoli (2011) and Andréa Souza (2007). Furthermore, the same study identified prejudices related to social class and race/ethnicity frequently faced by Black and peripheral artists who are urban dancers, evidencing the intersectional aspect of the oppressions.

In the city of Santa Maria/RS, a theoretical-practical study with young self-declared gay male ballet dancers sought to discuss their sociability after their *disclosure* to family and friends. The study included the writing of a memory diary by each dancer, which resulted in the creation of the choreography composition *Frescura de Guri* (2016), authored by Gustavo Duarte, about childhood and adolescence in the Rio Grande do Sul countryside (Duarte and Santos, 2020).

The investigation showed that most of the dancers had already been a victim of homophobia in different contexts, both in and out of the dance environment. It also demonstrated the collective organization of the group, especially with regard to LGBTQIAPN+ activism and involvement with political and social questions. Also observed was that university enrollment

broadened their worldviews, influencing positively their interpersonal relationships with family and friends.

The act of *disclosure or coming out of the closet*, as discussed by Eve Sedgwick in *Epistemology of the Closet* (2007), shows the challenges of making one's homosexual identity public, as it is a continuous and complex process full of social and political implications. In the case of men who dance, it can be inferred that this act of disclosure occurs not only verbally, but also by means of one's bodily features and actions, which frequently challenge heteronormativity.

According to Andreoli (2011), heteronormativity regulates control over the feminine and masculine, while homophobia sustains the hegemonic, socially-promoted model of masculinity. In this context, homosexuality, produced discursively as a natural deviation, is problematized due to being associated with a degraded gender or the absence of masculinity, justifying the need for homophobic practices.

Moreover, homophobia often emerges as a form of punishment for men who do not align with representations of hegemonic masculinity. Judith Butler (2018) complements this perspective by stating: Performing gender inadequately unleashes a series of punishments that are at once obvious and indirect, and to perform it well produces an ensuring feeling that there is, after all, an essentialism in gender identity (Butler, 2018, p. 78-79, our translation).

Eduardo Severino and Luciano Tavares, ballet dancers active in the gaúcha capital, even after consolidating their careers, report having faced different forms of prejudice in/through dance. Luciano remembers that, when dancing ballet, he would not play main roles because of his identity as a Black man with a height of 1.70 m and a curvy body, which did not fit the expected standard for princes in classic ballet—usually represented by blue-eyed, blonde men with long and tall features. He would get instead less expressive roles, such as that of a peasant. Luciano emphasizes that ballet is a racially discriminatory practice, which privileges certain bodies to the detriment of others.



Eduardo, a bisexual man, reveals having suffered prejudice due to his way of speaking, which did not correspond to the standards of hegemonic masculinity. He also reports facing discrimination related to his professional choice, pointing out the social depreciation faced by dance artists compared to professionals from fields that offer more status and financial gain.

It is worth stressing that, in addition to facing prejudice and discrimination, dissident bodies also deal with the precariousness of working with dance in Brazil. This reality affects not only artistic creation, but also pedagogic work, which to many artists is an indispensable source of complementary income.

Considering this, implementing effective public policies is crucial, as is the commitment of dance professionals – e.g. teachers, directors, choreographers and managers – to combat prejudices and discriminations in spaces under their management, be they schools, theaters, audiovisual productions or cultural institutions.

In this regard, in the field of Education, it is worth mentioning some studies on the teaching of ballroom dance in the cities of Pelotas/RS and Rio Grande/RS. These investigations sought to promote learning practices and spaces that value diversity, equity and plurality, based on teaching actions committed to social inclusion and transformation.

The article *Estratégias de ensino de Samba de Salão não heteronormativas: uma experiência no grupo Tatá* (Porto and Falkembach, 2022) proposes reflections on Ballroom Samba classes taught to contemporary dance artists under a non-heteronormative perspective. Adding to this discussion, the article *Ensino de danças de salão: transgredindo os binarismos de gênero* (Porto, 2022) presents, based on a self-reflection by the author about his artistic-pedagogical practice, alternatives to teach ballroom dance inclusively, especially for people who are dissident in relation to the categories of gender and sexuality.

In turn, the study *Ressignificando a Ação de Conduzir na Dança de Salão: uma revisão bibliográfica de produções acadêmicas* (Porto e Santos, 2023) analyzes the concept of conducting in texts on ballroom dance published between 2011

and 2021. Based on this analysis, the authors propose a contemporary ballroom dance approach named *Aula Baile* (Ball-Class), which seeks to deconstruct gender stereotypes and encourage an inclusive and democratic practice. In this approach, everyone can conduct or be conducted, regardless of their gender.

These investigations not only defend educational practices that are more inclusive and aligned to the demands of dissident bodies, but they also confront traditional and heteronormative perspectives on Ballroom Dance. Furthermore, they emphasize the importance of the presence of dissident bodies in the artistic scene, pointing out that this occupation is a form of subversion of hegemonic social identities that challenges norms and proposes new meanings.

Researchers Talles Lima and Marcílio Vieira (2023) highlight the scenic potential of these bodies, calling attention to the fact that their visibility in performances contributes toward deconstructing stereotypes and broadening expressive possibilities in dance. According to the authors, the bodies not only occupy the scenic space but also resignify it, promoting ruptures from pre-established standards and making ways for a more plural and diverse representation. In their words:

There is a discourse that is inscribed in the body(ies) and stated in their expressive and enunciative array of gestures. The dissident body, which reveals its political discourses of transgression, requires a critical reading. A powerful and political discourse that translates ambiguities, denounces inequalities and brings social conflicts to the fore. (Lima; Vieira, 2023, p. 6, our translation)

This excerpt makes the political dimension of dance evident and contributes to the comprehension of the aesthetic and relational implications of dissident bodies in the contemporary scene. The dialogue between dance and politics is essential for a critical reflection on current artistic propositions. The potentiality of contemporaneity resides, first and foremost, in its capacity of exploring questions that, in other times, were silenced or erased from Brazilian history due to the colonial European heritage that still persists in the country.

Contemporary dance has the power to transgress norms and cultural standards, problematizing the multiplicity of bodies, pleasures and identities, especially in the dimensions of gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity and generation. The interplay between art and activism – or *ativismo* (artivism), a concept coined by Leandro Colling (2017) – stresses this relationship, allowing criticism of the normative framing of bodies and sexualities, as argued by Sant'Ana (2017).

In this context, the media work *Plutônico* (2021), created by Gustavo Duarte and directed by Valdemir de Oliveira, is a notable mention. It is a videoperformance<sup>3</sup> that explores questions of gender, sexuality and aging. Created by a collaboration between UFSM and UEA, *Plutônico* subverts stereotypes of hegemonic masculinity by presenting a mature, masculine body that challenges social conventions, playing with elements such as skirts, hats and lipstick.

*Plutônico* (plutonian) is anything one wishes to be, wherever they want to be – as long as during the night, when one's peers are met. *Plutônico's* dance invents a place of otherness, a space of being and coming-to-be: a possible heterotopia (Foucault, 2013). It is a micropolitics of the now. There is no time to wait or lose, not even after your 40s, the winter season or the pandemic. The body dances and ages: belly, baldness, the leg that does not rise anymore. Expose, assume, accept yourself. Dance while you can. Be *Plutônico*.

Pluto, in astrology, symbolizes transformation: to deconstruct, reconstruct, move in new ways, perceive and accept. This is echoed in the proposal by Duarte (2013), who defends an erotics of aging, celebrating the mature body and resignifying desire by challenging standards of youth and beauty. In this context, the dance of a gay body that ages becomes a political and liberating act.

Duarte (2022) and Louro (1999) widen this discussion by emphasizing the importance of deconstructing borders and

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<sup>3</sup> Videoperformance is a form of registering a single event located in time. It is done as an archive/document or a media work in itself, using the language of cinema and video to assemble a recording using a priori performances.

challenging normative representations of gender and sexuality. Both authors defend free and fluid body experiences, allowing the body, regardless of age, to express itself plainly. Complementing this perspective, the *Ética Bixa*, proposed by Paco Vidarte (2019), questions social norms and celebrates freedom and pleasure as forms of political resistance and transgression.

In the context of the deconstruction of normativities, researchers Guita Debert and Mauro Brigadeiro (2012) emphasize the importance of breaking away from normative prescriptions on the erotization of old age. They criticize the idea of an inevitable sexual decline and defend a sexually-active old age, aligned to the Theory of Activity, which associates the continuity of practices and interests – including sexual ones – with greater satisfaction and happiness among aged people. According to the authors, even though physical changes occur, sexual interest and activity persist throughout life, refuting the idea of an *asexuality* in old age (Debert; Brigeiro, 2012, p. 39). They also question traditional sexology, which privileges a heteronormative vision and ignores sexual diversity, neglecting non-heterosexual experiences.

The reflection by researcher Julio Simões (2004) deepens this question by showing the stigmas faced by aged bodies, such as the decline of desire and sexual invisibility. To him, such stigmas sustain the fear of aged bodies, as well as their repudiation: “The decline of desire, the loss of sexual attractiveness and one’s virtual erasure as a sexed person are among the main marks and conditions of aging” (Simões, 2004, p. 417, our translation).

The Eduardo Severino Companhia de Dança corporifies these concepts by challenging the idea of sexual finitude and decline. Its performances bring, to the contemporary scene, new forms of experiencing affections and pleasures after the age of 40, promoting an innovative and transgressive view on the mature body. Despite many of its dancing bodies still following traditional aesthetic standards, the Companhia questions conventions by thematizing gender and sexuality issues, fostering debates on identity and desire.

Lastly, dance and politics are intertwined in the contemporary scene, giving visibility to narratives that break away from oppressive structures. In an anthropological perspective, Andreoli (2010) observes that, although each social context has its own norms, hegemonic representations of gender still regulate dancing bodies. In this sense, the performances by the Eduardo Severino Companhia de Dança emerge as spaces of resistance, celebrating the diversity of bodies and desires, challenging established norms and expanding the limits of artistic representation.

### **3. The Eduardo Severino Companhia de Dança**

The Eduardo Severino Companhia de Dança, founded in 2000 by Eduardo Severino and Luciano Tavares, is a collective from Porto Alegre (RS) with a consolidated history in Brazil and abroad. The Companhia is characterized by its research in contemporary dance, exploring provoking themes such as the environment, gender and sexuality, in addition to its development of a unique style of scenic language.

Luciano Tavares began his career in classic ballet at 14 years old, inspired by references such as Mikhail Baryshnikov and Carlos Acosta. His formation was marked by a transition to neoclassical ballet and, afterward, to contemporary dance, a move in which his influences expanded to also include Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker, Wim Vandekeybus and Germaine Acogny. On the other hand, Eduardo Severino, who defines the start of his dance career as an intense and challenging process, has as his main influences in Brazil ballet dancer and choreographer Eva Schull and ballet dancer Klauss Vianna, in addition to international figures such as Twyla Tharp and Mats Ek.

Performing an average of one show per year, the Companhia is distinguished in its creation of performances dealing with urgent social issues. The long artistic career of the Eduardo Severino Companhia de Dança, as well as the impact of its fourteen productions in Rio Grande do Sul, has contributed to generate deep reflections by the public. Among the main performances

approaching these themes are *Planetário* (1999), *Lixo, lixo Severino* (2001) (Figure 4), *IN/compatível?* (2005), *Bundaflor, Bundamor* (2008), *Tempostepegoquedelícia* (2012) and *Pelelingua Sedentobeijo* (2021). For the directors, these productions aim to provoke an act of questioning by the viewers, inciting them to reflect on social and cultural realities, especially when gender and sexual questions are involved.

In its productions, themes such as deforestation, forest fires, global warming and the irresponsible use of natural resources are treated in a poignant way. The productions *Manchas Urbanas* (2013), *Lixo, Lixo Severino* (2001), *Y Kúá – O silenciar de um rio* (2006) and *Planetário* (1999) are examples of how the Companhia uses dance as a tool for building environmental awareness.

Another central theme of the productions by the Companhia is the exploration of gender and sexuality. With a good-humored and critical approach, its artists create performances that provoke the public, using naked or half-naked bodies, scenic phalluses and kisses between same-gender individuals. The productions seek to demystify social conventions and question norms related to the body and to sexuality.

*IN/compatível?* (2005, 2016) (Figure 1) was a remarkable achievement in this regard, bringing forth discussions on empty relationships in a mechanistic world, while *Bundaflor, Bundamor* (2008) (Figure 2) and *Tempostepegoquedelícia* (2012) (Figure 3) further the investigation on blurred boundaries between masculinity and femininity, also exploring the multiple connotations of the body, especially of the *bunda* (butt), in a challenging and non-moralistic way. In *Pelelingua Sedentobeijo* (2021), the exploration of touch, or the lack of it, becomes the central motif of the performance, challenging the representations of the body in society even more.

The Eduardo Severino Companhia de Dança has been consolidating itself as a vanguard group in the contemporary dance scene, with performances that not only provoke, but also incentivize profound reflections on human subjectivities, social norms and contemporary challenges. Through its art, the Companhia questions and redefines the boundaries between dance and the body, offering to the public an immersive and transforming experience.

Figure 1 – Record of the *IN/compatível?* Show



Source: Lu Mena Barreto (2006).  
(Eduardo Severino Companhia de Dança Archive).

The productions of the Companhia are based on the principle that there is no neutral body, since every individual bears experiences, memories, sensations and feelings that are constructed throughout their life. For its directors, a scenic work has the power to impact spectators, regardless of their opinion or tastes. It can provoke a change in the *inner world of each spectator*, causing an unusual feeling of strangeness or a deep reflection.

Figure 2 – Record of the *Bundaflor, Bundamor* show



Source: Cristiano Prim (2006).  
(Eduardo Severino Companhia de Dança Archive).



Figure 3 – Record of the *Tempostepegoquedelícia* show



Source: Cristiano Prim (2013).  
(Eduardo Severino Companhia de Dança Archive).

The artistic practice of the Eduardo Severino Companhia de Dança functions as an agent for problematizing and transforming reality and social practices. Aligned to Queer theory and activism (Butler, 2016), the Companhia expands comprehensions of sexuality, overcoming restrictive and positivist perspectives. In this process, art becomes an essential tool for creating acts of agency, challenging norms of exclusion and marginalization. Dance, in this context, is not limited to bodily expression; rather, it integrates political, historical and social questions.

As to the process of choosing artists to compose casts, the directors of the Companhia explain that they seek professionals with diverse backgrounds, which contributes to the richness of the creative processes of the Companhia. Since its creation, the company has maintained a main cast composed of themselves and invited artists, which participate in a specific manner in each performance, further enriching its productions.



**Figure 4** – Record of the restaging of the *Lixo, lixo Severino* (2008) show



Source: Lu Mena Barreto (2008).  
(Eduardo Severino Companhia de Dança Archive).

In 2018, after being questioned on the experience of working with a male cast, the directors reported developing a scenic work with a group of four men and two women. According to them, this composition enabled an expansion in the development of the artistic language employed. The diversity of experiences among the invited artists contributed significantly to the creative process, generating possibilities not only for main cast members, but for all involved in the production.

When questioned on the predominance of men in their productions, the directors made it clear that their casting choice is not tied to gender, but rather to the proposal of the performance. They mentioned that Brazilian artist Alair Gomes, known for his view of the male body and masculine erotics, was one of the inspirations for their recent productions. Nevertheless, they also emphasized their fondness for choreographing and directing women, citing professor and ballet dancer Mônica Dantas of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), who participated in several of the productions of the group.

In *Tempostepegoquedelícia*, for instance, although the directors could choose to cast duos of two men or two women, they chose a man and a woman for each duo in order to bring more diversity to the scenic production. In this context, gender questions are key in many of their shows.

#### **4. Brazilian regulations for inclusive educationThe mature body and possibilities of expression in the contemporary scene**

Research on gender, sexuality and aging was already discussed in many studies (Duarte, 2016; Duarte & Berté, 2018; Duarte, 2022). In the case of the Eduardo Severino Companhia de Dança, investigating masculinities in dance involves the relationship with time and the limitations and possibilities of the mature body that grows old and resists in the contemporary scene. Aging and dancing in Brazil is a task that offers significant challenges, demanding courage and resistance from the artists.

When asked about aging, artists Eduardo Severino and Luciano Tavares highlight the impact of time on their performance as dancers. Luciano observed that he cannot do certain movements from a few dance techniques anymore, while Eduardo mentioned he began to feel a number of pains.

However, both noted an increase in bodily self-perception. Luciano feels more mature and more conscious of his body, while Eduardo emphasizes the importance of healthy habits such as a good diet and regular exercise to maintain one's health and keep dancing.

Despite physical limitations, the mature body can remain expressive in dance. As stated by Vieira (2016), the body is always in a process of reconstruction throughout life, and movement is never repeated the same way, as it is influenced by different emotions and feelings. While there is still life, there are still reasons to continue dancing.

In addition to the work done by the Eduardo Severino Companhia de Dança, there are other Companies and collectives working with mature bodies that stand out in Rio Grande do Sul. In the city of Rio Grande, the Companhia de Dança de Salão Robson Porto has a cast aged between 30 and 65 years. In Pelotas, Daniela Llopart's group, Turno 2, has a cast aged 40 to 60. In Santa Maria, Gustavo Duarte's Dança 40+ group investigates male intergenerationality and homosexuality. In Porto

Alegre, besides the Eduardo Severino Companhia de Dança itself, a noteworthy mention is the Novos Velhos Corpos 50+ collective directed by Suzi Weber, which features artists aged 50 or older.

These groups differ from amateur dance collectives for aged people in the sense that their casts are integrated by dance professionals who remain active as they grow old or return to the scene after a long hiatus. This represents a change compared to previous generations, when many dancers would quit dancing after reaching a certain age. This new generation of artists is discovering the potentialities of the mature body and helping to prolong the artistic career of dancers.

Eduardo and Luciano were also questioned regarding the changes in work opportunities that come with aging and whether they planned to stop dancing. Eduardo, at the age of 60, reported that opportunities changed, but also that he does not plan to retire. Luciano, at 45, stated he did not perceive any changes, as his work does not depend on technical virtuosity, but instead on scenic presence, experience and worldview. Both do not plan to stop dancing and intend to act as teacher-artists.

Dialoguing with a study done with mature male ballet dancers in Salvador (Duarte, 2022), in the northeastern state of Bahia, similarities and differences can be observed with respect to the opportunities offered to those professionals, possibly due to the touristic character of the city and the greater value given to dance in the region. While gaúcho ballet dancers face challenges related to career continuity, those from the Northeast perceive maturity as a phase of new possibilities. They point out that, when aging, many begin to dedicate themselves more to teaching, to choreographic direction and to artistic creation. Additionally, there is a change in expectation regarding 40+ bodies, as gathered experience and knowledge become prioritized instead of technical virtuosity.

The reports given by the artists from Rio Grande do Sul and Bahia bring forth a question common to practically the entirety of Brazil: the rarity of dance artists that can work in a single function, given the instability of the sector. Few have the opportunity of becoming public servants or ensuring they receive

social security benefits, as in other fields of work. Most depend on public policies and need to perform a variety of functions to sustain their careers. Furthermore, the scarcity of public grants adequate to the creation and production of contemporary dance represents a significant challenge, which prevents many artists from dedicating themselves exclusively to art.

Luciano and Eduardo exemplify this reality. Previously, Luciano worked in many different capacities, such as that of director, choreographer, lighting technician, sound designer, teacher and producer, while Eduardo worked as choreographer, director, teacher and producer. Currently, in addition to the activities in the Eduardo Severino Cia. de Dança, they both collaborate with other artists. Luciano collaborates with Luciana Paludo, and Eduardo with Suzi Weber, Mônica Dantas and Eva Schul. Outside of the artistic field, Eduardo receives a retirement pension, and Luciano works as a substitute professor at FURG. This multiplicity of functions reflects the reality of dance artists, who need to reinvent themselves to sustain their careers in a challenging context.

### **Final Considerations**

This article discussed questions of gender, sexuality and aging based on the case study of the Eduardo Severino Companhia de Dança, focusing on the artistic production and the personal experiences of artists Eduardo Severino and Luciano Tavares, both members of the main cast of the Companhia. The history of these interpreter-creators, men of the LGBTQIAPN+ community who are over 40 years old, reveals points of convergence with the narratives of artists with similar profiles in different contexts.

In addition to the precariousness faced by dance workers, issues related to gender, sexuality and aging intensify the difficulties of the artistic field, especially for those who stand apart from conventional social norms. They need to deal not only with physical limitations and body wear, but also with social and cultural prejudices related to aging.

The lack of consistent public policies ensuring social security for dance artists is a generalized problem, which nonetheless affects more intensely those who do not fit in normative gender stereotypes, such as artists that are overweight, non-white or outside the standards of youth and the middle class. With time, difficulties increase, demanding more boldness and resilience so that these artists can continue expressing themselves through dance, especially in the limited context of the gaúcha artistic scene.

Although this study focused on the experience of cisgender men, with an intersectional approach, it is important to recognize that women and transgender persons face even graver oppressions within this context. Aging emerges as an additional marker of oppression, a factor that needs to be discussed in a broader fashion.

Eduardo Severino and Luciano Tavares exemplify an optimistic approach in relation to the challenges imposed by time, emphasizing the importance of self care, such as a healthy diet and regular physical activity. Despite having noticed physical changes with time, they also noticed a greater awareness of their bodies, which has increased their interest in work that values skills other than technical virtuosity.

The productions of the Eduardo Severino Companhia de Dança, which approach themes such as (homo)affectivity, gender, sexuality and the environment, demonstrate how dance can be a powerful tool for social criticism. The work of the Companhia, with its contemporary scenic language, has contributed to the deconstruction of paradigms determining which bodies are able to dance, demonstrating that the mature body has a significant role in the contemporary scene.

Finally, the long history of the Eduardo Severino Companhia de Dança and its substantial contribution to the artistic field reinforce the importance of continuing to explore the potentialities of mature bodies in dance. It is essential that more collectives and artists join this movement so we can, thus, grow old and keep dancing.

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