

Intertwining languages...: art and bodies to think about education and human development*

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at starting a discussion about the biographical body (Danis Bois) and the imaginary (Gilbert Durand) in the area of education. This theme results from a research whose objective was to bring new ideas to reflect on human. This paper describes a part of the study to reflect the intertwining between arts and bodies as languages which may trigger education and human development. The biographical body has been seen as a source that hosts the history of human beings whose gestures spread a singular and plural story. It should be understood as a subtle and sensitive matter which is as important as pragmatic and utilitarian matters. It still needs to be revealed by artistic languages or, at least, to use other rationalities, rather than merely the hegemonic and instituted ones.

KEYWORDS

biographical body; languages; education; human development.

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NO ENTRECRUZAMENTO DE LINGUAGENS...: A ARTE E O CORPO PARA PENSAR A EDUCAÇÃO E A FORMAÇÃO DO HUMANO

RESUMO

Este trabalho pretende introduzir uma discussão sobre o corpo biográfico (Danis Bois) e o imaginário (Gilbert Durand) na área da educação. O tema resulta de uma pesquisa cujo intuito foi trazer outros aportes para pensar a formação humana. Neste texto, fez-se um recorte para refletir os entrecruzamentos da arte e do corpo como linguagens que podem fomentar a educação e a formação humana. Defende-se que o corpo biográfico abriga a história do ser humano, em cujos gestos repercutem uma história singular e plural. Ressaltamos que este seja contemplado como uma matéria sutil e sensível, tão importante quanto às matérias pragmáticas e utilitárias. Sobretudo, ainda a ser desvelado por linguagens artísticas ou pelo menos que se utilize de outras racionalidades que não somente as hegemônicas e instituídas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

corpo biográfico; linguagens; educação; formação humana.

EN EL ENTRECRUCE DE LENGUAJES...: EL ARTE Y EL CUERPO PARA PENSAR LA EDUCACIÓN Y LA FORMACIÓN DE LO HUMANO

RESUMEN

Este trabajo pretende introducir una discusión sobre el cuerpo biográfico (Danis Bois) y el imaginario (Gilbert Durand) en el área de la educación. El tema resulta de una investigación, cuyo intuito ha sido traer otros aportes para pensar la formación humana. En este texto, se ha brindado un espacio para reflexionar los entrecruces del arte y del cuerpo como lenguajes que pueden fomentar la educación y la formación humana. Se defiende que el cuerpo biográfico abriga la historia del ser humano, en cuyos gestos reflejan una historia singular y plural. Resaltamos que esto se contemple como una materia sutil y sensible, tan importante como las materias pragmáticas y utilitarias. Sobre todo, aun por revelar a través de lenguajes artísticos o por lo menos que se utilice de otras racionalidades, que no solamente las hegemónicas e instituidas.

PALABRAS CLAVE

cuerpo biográfico; lenguajes; educación; formación humana.

INITIAL REMARKS

The purpose of this study is to initiate a discussion about the biographical body and the imaginary in the field of education. Its main goal is to find other languages for thinking about human development. The reflections presented here result from a study conducted in early teacher education at a public university in Brazil.

The purpose of the project was to study the memories of the educational trajectory inscribed in the bodies of pedagogy students. To conduct this study, a work plan was developed that focused on corporal biographization through theatrical improvisation, using narration about oneself and theatrical expression. The investigation is based on the proposal that corporal memory is part of every person's developmental path through which experiences are registered as a scripture.¹ The sum of these scriptures compose a human being's imaginary reservoir and are made visible by gesture.

The empirical foundation of the study was developed in six encounters with four female college students, which emphasized gesture as language for biographization, in movements that evoke memories of experiences and the visibilization of corporal inscriptions. Two kinds of registrations were used in the study: video recorded by the researchers and diaries of the experience prepared by the students. Video was used to capture as much as possible of the corporal manifestations, while the students used diaries to record what their bodies felt during the work. The analysis was based on a qualitative approach as follows:

- 1) a descriptive and hermeneutic analysis of the video registrations, based on gesture interpretation;
- 2) an analysis of the diaries of the experience in three steps, i.e., classificatory, phenomenological and hermeneutic; and
- 3) a convergence of the empirical data of the research – from the symbolic nuclei to the mythemes.

This study is based on the idea that the body is a carrier of relevant knowledge. We know that this has been forgotten and we affirm that it should be “awakened” when thinking about the human education of teachers'. Therefore, the study will give visibility to other languages, such as gesture and art. These languages reveal how subjects are constituted during their lives as a result of experiences connected with bio-psycho-social inheritances from ancestors.

Therefore, to attribute a certain status to the body may reveal other ways of thinking and designing our relations in the world, based on immanent knowledge stemming from corporal subjectivity, which contemplates the dimensions of a

1 Scripture, in this context, is understood as registers that are inscribed in each student's body, in physical and psychic dimensions, as a result of experiences during their developmental path – which, somehow, reflect their interaction with/in the world.

subject that is both singular and plural.² It should be remembered that immanent knowledge (Bois; Rugira, 2006) is directly related to immediate body experience, although it is silent material at an experiential level.

The two theoretical fields used in this study – the biographical body (Danis Bois) and the imaginary (Gilbert Durand) – affirm the importance of corporal memory as silent material, as well as its intrinsic relation to people's lives, actions and what they do. In the case under investigation, our focus was on future teachers.

ART AND BODIES IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: THE EXERCISE OF CORPORAL BIOGRAPHIZATION

To think about education and human development from the perspective of art and the body leads to the construction of other forms of knowledge in this context. This knowledge breaks from the established representation of the body and art as utilitarian function and encompasses its sensitive dimension.³ From this perspective, space is created for a proposal that focuses on the subject as an investigator of the self.

When the subject begins a process of studying herself, she can access an “immanent corporalized” knowledge that, according to Bois, derives from the experience of the moment lived here and now. This results in the construction of knowledge that arises from a “let me think” and “let me reflect”, which are consequences of thought that takes place in the act of artistic and body experience, rather than of mental activity that thinks about or reflects upon, for instance, a previously experienced event. It is a body focused on the here and now and is extremely attentive to everything that happens to it at the interior of the experience. According to Josso (2010, p.178-179), when this body takes on these characteristics, it becomes

a full actor of its life and capable of engendering life as a partner from its very beginning. A body that is aware of itself and that takes care of itself, for the other it has within itself. A relation with its outer body, its inner body and an inner body that is a part of itself.

In this process, the subject is conscious and perceives everything she experiences and feels; thus, she lets corporal and imaginary subjectivities emerge from the relation with her body. In other words, there is an interest in the corporal creation that takes places during the experience. The person is invited to take on the position of an actor-spectator and “experience” what happens at the moment of the concrete experience: “‘experience’ the body, the movement, its perceptions, its

2 This concept is based on Josso (2009), who designates the problematic between the permanent tension which results from demands of the collective group to which we belong to and the evolution of individual aspirations, dreams and wishes.

3 Bois and Rugira (2006) call our attention to the need for a re-signification of the representation instituted of the body, and propose another approach known as the paradigm of sensitivity.

thought” [...] be aware of what is felt in a clearer, sharper and deeper way; [...] to outline the contours or comprehend the meaning” (Bois, 2008b, p. 143-144). The meaning is constructed by the description of the experience on a phenomenological, metaphorical and symbolic level.

Based on this perspective, a proposal was developed that was focused on corporal biographization through drama improvisation, in which the body was the protagonist and spokesperson of the scriptures of the “being of the flesh” (Josso, 2008a, 2008b, 2009). To do so, it was necessary to abandon words so that we could contact a specific language, which is revealed by the intention and attitude of the gesture in the act of (re)-presenting experienced moments, thus valuing the experience here and now. In other words, a biographization process was implemented, which left aside the mental process and reflection on narrative, to focus on a representation of the narrative through dramatic expression. With this bias, the body took on an important role because it became the organizer and revealer of experiences based on the logic of narrative structure.

To implement a biographization process from the corporal perspective, by inciting the subject to dare to move towards herself (Josso, 2010) and experience her biographical construction, we used drama improvisation, which according to Desgranges’ (2006) is characterized by drama exercises in which the actors improvise a scene, that is without rehearsal, based either on previous agreement or a situation proposed by the coordinator of the process. In an educational context, it aims to promote personal development, i. e., the enrichment of means of expression through dramatic or theatrical⁴ exercises that focus on creation in the present moment and emphasize actions, gestures and the way each person gets involved in the act of creation.

Drama improvisation allows conducting experimental work and incites the actors to elaborate and express “particular ways of understanding the world, the everyday events related not only to their personal lives but also to social and collective issues” (*idem*, p. 89). Thus, it is necessary to invent a particular way of understanding these things and the imagination must be activated in a process of invention that makes a certain idea become concrete. To do so, the human being searches his life experiences that were stored in his inner reservoir, for elements that can help perform the scene. In this study, the work with drama mobilized the corporal-memory, as mentioned before, by exercising the symbolic imagination, thus enabling the (re)presentation of previously experienced sensations.

In this study, work on drama improvisation was based on themes that consider moments related to certain periods in the students’ lives, with no previous

4 The dramatic exercise has a more contextualist view, as the studies of Olga Reverbel (1989) indicate. Reverbel sees the possibility of using the dramatic exercise to help the teaching and learning of other disciplines. In an essentialist view, whose main authors are Viola Spolin (2004) and Ingrid Koudela (2001), through the dramatic exercise, art and artistic performance sustain themselves and are a form of knowledge.

elaboration.⁵ We, (the researchers) recorded the improvisations in video and the students wrote about them in their diaries of the experience.⁶ It is worth mentioning that the theoretical field of studies of the imaginary significantly contributed to the research in the pedagogy course because it allowed us to invest in the exercise of symbolic imagination by convoking the body to (re)presentation, in an improvised way, and by inciting the students to search through their “memory chest”, and use gestures to visibilize the scriptures that were printed on their bodies through an approach that considered human beings and the symbolic web that constitutes them.

This is because, in the interaction with the environment, human beings construct a repertoire of knowledge and experiences that define how they constitute themselves. The imaginary has a fundamental role in this process since it is the great denominator in which all the creations of human thought can be found. It thus activates different ways of understanding the world from a symbolic perspective.

The imaginary is like an existential lake “that gives meaning to our individual or group existence”, according to Machado da Silva (2016, p. 22). Above all, it is a semantic lake (Durand, 2001), from which images, emotions, experiences and sensations are derived. This “place” accumulates all that is meaningful for us and drives us to act daily.

Therefore, it may be stated that the imaginary involves innate aptitudes and ancestral inheritances in the social and cultural environment in which the subject is inserted. Therefore, it is the *connector* that organizes human understanding; which according to Durand (2001), becomes a mandatory connector through which any human representation⁷ is formed, which is woven in the symbolic articulations coming from intimations of the entire order of experience, enrooted in a personal bio-history.

This connection enables individuals to interact in a unique way by summoning them to undertake a movement of expansion and renewal based on a symbolization that causes them to participate effectively in the world, in its totality. The images are composed in the confluence of these articulations. The images arise from an anthropological trajectory with its exchanges among social, cultural and psychic drives.

In other words, events which human beings experience in their lives – the ones that touch them somehow – trigger “a specific state” and are stored as memories in their cells and in their cognitive, affective and gestural universes, according to Bois (2008b). This memory is “constituted by a mixture of habits, beliefs and knowledge

5 The activity was proposed and they began to act immediately. At times they were given time to talk briefly about some arrangements when they worked in pairs.

6 The Diary of the Experience was kept by each student for registering her impressions of her experiences. There was no model to be followed. Suggestions included the use of written comments, drawings, images and narrative texts. Each student was given complete freedom over how to keep the diary.

7 According to Durand (1988, 1996, 2002), a representation is always a (re)presentation of the absent object. That is why both spellings – representation and (re)presentation – are used in this text.

that stems from time immemorial, and is transmitted to each person by conditions that are specific to their socio-historical inscription” (Lapointe; Rugira, 2012, p. 53).

Therefore, the relation between the human being and the world enters the body in two ways: as the repercussion of an inherited history and experienced events that produce memories that are inscribed on the body and can affect both its anatomic/physiologic aspect and its psychic/emotional one; and as a stimulant to action since, in these inscriptions, it searches for bases that serve as references for its effective interaction with the world.

Consequently, the exercise of corporal biographization through drama improvisation contemplated this dual movement by inciting the students to begin a process of “prospection” to find the most meaningful events in their lives, considering the (re)presentation of experiences through gestures. In turn, the gesture seeks in the corporal registers the tonality needed to “color” the scene, which is an indication of the visibility of the imaginary in the corporal scripture. By investing in this visualization we reveal the importance of the body as relevant knowledge that must be considered in teacher education to help think about the project of (self)education.

CONVERGENCES BETWEEN THE IMAGINARY AND THE BIOGRAPHICAL BODY

The realization of the corporal exercise made it possible to construct the theoretical and analytical basis because we grounded ourselves in concrete experience. From that moment on, we sought to weave the convergences and relationships between the imaginary and the biographical body, to legitimate the importance of the theoretical field of the imaginary for a study of the body, specifically the biographical body, as previously mentioned.

Before describing the theoretical basis of the biographical body and present the contribution of the studies of the imaginary to this concept, the concept of body used in this study must be clarified. The approach to the body was based on a broad concept that encompasses several authors (Corbin; Courtine; Vigarello, 2009; Crema, 1998; Leloup, 1998; Leroi-Gourhan, 1965; Pereira, 2010; Queré, 2008; Singer, 2005). We decided to use the idea of a body that has a biography (Bois, 2008a, 2008b) and as a “humble residence” (Josso, 2009), where human experiences are recorded.

These conceptions of the human being’s body reinforce the supposition that human history has an individual and collective inscription since we all carry ancestral marks. Human beings evolve and the imaginary is produced at the conjuncture between these subjective and objective intimations, between human imperatives at the psychic and physiological levels, which are inherent to the zoological species and which come from the social, cultural and physiological environment. According to Durand (1996, p. 65), the imaginary is “the concrete reservoir of human representation in general, it is where the reversible trajectory is inscribed, which from the

social to the biological, and vice-versa, informs the global conscience, the human conscience”.

Human representations, as images pregnant with meaning, are nothing more than

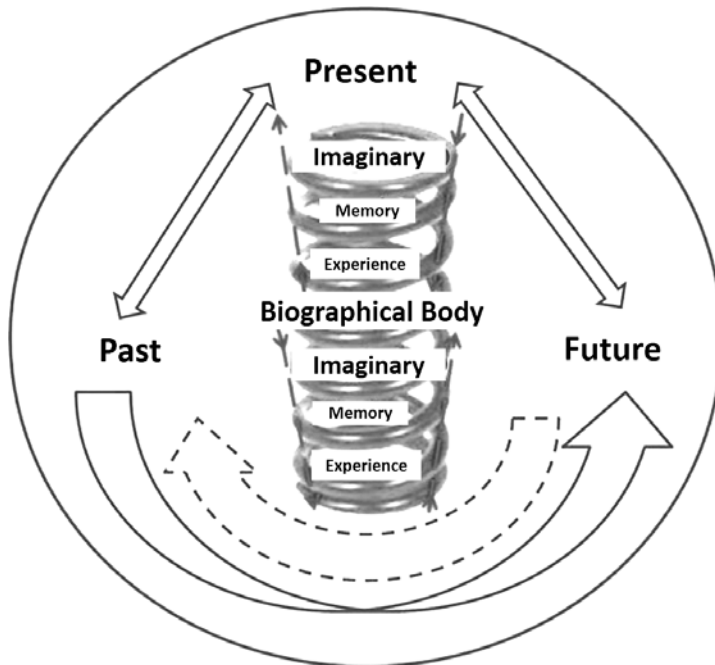
this trajectory in which the representation of the object lets itself be assimilated and modeled by the subject's emotional imperatives and in which, reciprocally, as Piaget has magisterially shown, subjective representations are explained “by the subject's previous accommodation” (Durand, 2002, p. 41).

Therefore, we may think about the body as the living and concrete inscription of each person's developmental path. It is important to consider that, when each student begins the course, they carry in their body registers of experiences. These registers compose the biographical dimension of the body and are the physical, cognitive, emotional and psychic bases of what they have become and are becoming in their lives. This all integrates the imaginary reservoir where every student searches for her references to interact in the space in which she lives.

Although the body is present in everything they do in their lives, as Josso (2010) highlights, not all of them are aware of their biographical body because to access it and make it visible to themselves they must become a researcher of the self and begin a detailed “prospection” of their life legacy. Thus, this study focused on the biographical body of the pedagogy students in a process that evoked memories and the (re)presentation of experiences through gestural language. This steering involved meaningful experiences in the individuals' lives, encompassing the bio-psycho-cosmic-social, historical and cultural traces of each of their histories, through the exercise of corporal biographization through drama improvisation.

In these convergences between the imaginary and the biographical body, we encountered the arduous task of systematizing the latter. This was first elaborated by Danis Bois (2008a, 2008b) and then studied by Marie-Christine Josso (2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2010). The biographical body is constituted in the interweaving of three dimensions: *experience*, *memory* and *imaginary*, permeated by a temporality that we call (a)temporal drives of the anthropological trajectory. The idea of (a)temporal drives is understood as the movement that subjects make when they decide to prospect their imaginary reservoir to bring to the present significant memories from their life paths.

The diagram is as follows:



(A) Temporal Drives in the Anthropological Journey

Figure 1 – Relation between Danis Bois' theory and the Anthropology of the Imaginary: convergence points between the model theorized by Danis Bois and the theoretical field of the Imaginary.

Elaboration of the authors.

To understand the diagram...

In Bois' theory, life experience may be understood as the fundamental dimension for the development of work focused on the biographical body. In this study, it was associated to the exercise of corporal biographization that focused on gestural language as primordial to the narrative of the self. When the focus became the relation between life experience and the biographical body, based on the theory being used, we entered the phenomenological dimension (sensitive dimension). In this dimension, the body is the protagonist of reservoirs and memories, rather than a mere object.

Therefore, life experience in this context was characterized by the posture of the subject actor-spectator that each student adopted during the experimentation with her body, requiring attention to the here and now. This required being constantly present in the corporal exercise and oneself. This is what happened with the students who took part in the study. At each encounter, they were challenged to biograph themselves only through gestural language to perform moments of their developmental path. We noticed that from the moment that they exercised their bodies acting at the heart of experience, they allowed themselves to be touched

by what had been significant in their lives. Consequently, they unveiled clues that helped them perceive the inscriptions on their bodies. They took on the role of conscious subject through the perception of what they experienced and felt, by allowing their corporal subjectivities to emerge from their relations with the body. This triggered memory, granting access to their imaginary reservoirs.

In this process, they sought to grasp their memories. They are a register of life experiences that not only assure to human beings awareness of their existence but above all represent the possibility to regress and (re)create the most meaningful moments in life. In other words, memory has a euphemizing character and is one of the ways to deceive time and fate. In this study, it signifies a possibility to re-encounter a time that was lived, and to have an experiential relation with the body. The temporal logic was broken and meaningful events that marked each student were sought. This is the result of a situation that attributes substance to life experience based on a fantastic sphere, disconnecting it from temporal orders.

Thus, memory allows organizing, based on a fragment, the group that composes the whole, impregnated by the significations of the moment. According to Durand (2002, p. 403),

the organization that causes one part to become “dominant” in relation to the whole is precisely the denial of the capacity for irreversible equivalence that is time. Memory – as image – is this vicarious magic through which an existential fragment may summarize and symbolize the totality of a reencountered time [...] that stimulates all our representations and takes advantage of all the escapes from temporality to cause to grow within us the very figure of our *essential hope*, with the help of images of small dead experiences.

Memory is vicarious magic because it allows human beings to reencounter what was meaningful in their lives, in an (a)temporal process, in the form of images that refer to past experiences. These images attribute a new sense to the present and renew hope in face of adversities that constantly remind us of our finitude.

According to Izquierdo (1989), memory is the result of things that a person either perceives or feels in life. It relates directly to storage and evocation, also known as recollections or memories of information acquired through life experiences. The acquisition of these memories is called learning. According to the author (*idem*, p.90),

learning and memory are basic properties of the nervous system; there is no activity of the nervous system that does not include or is not somehow affected by learning and by memory. We learn how to walk, think, love, imagine, create, carry out motor activities or simple and complex ideations, etc; and our lives depend on the fact that we should remember all of this.

Therefore, memory plays a fundamental role because the storage of all we have learned in life, in the form of memory, is a determinant factor in human

evolution. As a result, the acquisition of other lessons depends on previously produced memory.

Another reservation must also be mentioned: the non-mobility of wishes and feelings, or even indifference in relation to a life experience, may not be incorporated “as knowledge and learning” (Brandão, 2008, p. 10). This usually leads to the non-recovery of this fact because it has not been transformed into long-lasting memory. Thus, we may think that only events that had meaning to a person are recorded. To make them visible allows reflecting on moments that were vital in the developmental path. Consequently, based on Brandão (*idem*), memory may be considered a self-education process.

It is worth adding that the formation of an individual’s memories has been associated to experiences that are not directly experienced, but that are passed on from generation to generation in the family and social group she belongs to. That is, there are memories that result from a group or collective process.

Leroi-Gourhan (1965, p. 13) describes memory as a group or collective manifestation based on language, in which the social group “only survives through the exercise of true memory in which behavior is inscribed”. Education is inserted into this context to act on a person’s operational behavior that carries genetic conditioning, as well as conditioning that results from individual experience.

Memory of individual construction, as well as the inscription of programs of personal behavior, are totally controlled by knowledge, whose conservation and transmission are assured in each ethnic community by language. This creates an authentic paradox: the possibilities for an individual’s confrontation and liberation are based on virtual memory whose content belongs to society (*idem*, p. 22).

From the perspective of autobiographical memory in narrated stories, language guides a process of reflection, comprehension, reorganization and re-signification of life paths and projects, as well as those of work, in an articulation of individual and group/collective memories and gives them a “sense-meaning”, according to Brandão (2008, p. 15). This author states that “this history, which belongs to us and the groups we belong to, tells us who we are, helps and strengthens our identity, lightens our way in search for meanings to our existence in the world” (*idem, ibidem*).

According to Izquierdo (2004), both the creation and the extinction of memory are related to the result of the biochemical interaction that makes cognition, learning, use and development easier or more difficult. The process consists in understanding that everything that affects the senses is re-elaborated and may become learning and, consequently, new memory. Brandão (2008) participates in this discussion and highlights the influence of two aspects on this process. According to her,

on one hand, we have neurobiological conditions that enable the creation and consolidation of memories; on the other hand, the emotion that accompanies

life experience – there would be no consolidation without it – and, consequently, the possibility for recovery or re-memorization. We are nothing but what we remember... But also what we forget, either silenced memories (voluntarily or not) or those left unsaid (*idem*, p. 12).

Therefore, memory may be characterized as being adrift (Delory-Momberger, 2010) because it is constituted by both things we remember and things we forget. Thus, memory is formed and becomes concrete through the body, since it takes on the role of reflector of life experiences. The body is present in all circumstances of a human being's life. It is through the body that we feel each sensation and emotion and adventure into exploratory actions, making the learning process concrete.

In the study presented in this article, the body evoked memories resulting from events experienced in the subject's life time, with the goal of accessing reservoirs of personal images to make visible the scriptures that were assimilated and accommodated in the students' bodies. It should be highlighted that the scriptures that proved to be pregnant came from childhood experiences, and from formal and non-formal education (family and school). This approach was based on Bergson's statement (1999, p. 178): "it is from the present that comes the appeal to which the recollection responds and it is from the sensorial-motor elements of the action present that the recollection takes the heat that it confers to life". In other words, to make the recollection reappear in the conscience, pure memory must encounter the precise point at which the action is realized.

From this perspective, the focus of the study was directed towards long-lasting and declarative memories of an episodic or autobiographical nature, which link childhood to the present moment. This steering sought to evoke significant events of that time, and search for clues of the biographical body in the gesture of each student. The tones of each gesture during the exercise of corporal biographization were considered to be clues of how a certain event touched and reverberated in the way that they have become what they are today. This approach was chosen to access each student's imaginary reservoir and reveal the anthropological trajectory that composes her bio-psychic-social history. It is at this point that the relation between the imaginary and the biographical body is revealed because the imaginary allows accessing a set of images, symbols, beliefs, values, feelings, affections and vestiges that constitute an individual's biographical history.

According to Durand (2002), the imaginary is produced in the conjuncture between the personal and the cultural environment, between the subjective and the objective, and constitutes itself in the path between the gesture of the drive and the material and social environment. It is in the intertwining between the gestures of the body, nervous centers and symbolic representations that the imaginary gains corporal anchorage whose basis is the connection between primary motility, the unconscious and representation.

Representation originates from an anthropological trajectory that results from constant exchange, at the imaginary level, between the subject's subjective and assimilatory impulses and the objective intimations that arise from the cosmic and social environment (Durand, 2002). In this path, it is

the affirmation in which the symbol must participate in an indissoluble way to emerge as a kind of continuous “back-and-forth” movement in the innate roots of the representation of the *sapiens* and, at the other “point”, at the various interpellations of the cosmic and social environment. In the creation of the imaginary, the law of the “anthropological trajectory”, typical of a systemic law, clearly shows the complementarity that exists among the *status* of innate aptitudes of the *sapiens*, the distribution of *verbal* archetypes in the “dominant” structures and the pedagogical complements required by human neoteny (Durand, 2001, p. 90).

In the lives of the students in the study, the expression of their languages – gestures and written diaries – were reverberations of marks printed on their bodies, where the anthropological trajectory of the *anthropos* was subsumed.

In this context, gestures play the role of protagonists of the movement of interaction and symbolization of humans in the world. Thus, gestural language becomes a potent trigger of images that words often cannot express. As a result, “the ‘whole body collaborates to constitute the image’ and the ‘constituent forces’ at the root of the organization of representations seem to be very close to the ‘dominant reflexes’” (Durand, 2002, p. 50).

It should be highlighted that Durand considers gestures the origin of the imaginary. In his book *As estruturas antropológicas do imaginário* (2002, p. 41), he refers to Bachelard to show that

the axes of fundamental inventions of imagination are the trajectories of the human animals’ main gestures towards their natural environment, prolonged by *homo faber’s* primitive institutions, both technological and social ones.

This means that the construction of our gestures is based on experiences in the social, cultural and historical environment in which we are inserted, and by the subjective movement of the human being’s relation *with* and *in* the world, resulting from symbolic thought. It should be emphasized that people carry traces of past gestures from both their personal and *anthropos* trajectories. As a result, anthropology of the imaginary affirms that “any gesture calls its material and looks for its utensil and that all the material extracted, that is, abstracted from the cosmic environment, and any utensil or tool, is a vestige of a past gesture” (*idem*, p. 41-42).

The union between gestures and representations takes place through the “*scheme*”,⁸ which is the dynamic and affective generalization of the image, and promotes the junction between the unconscious gestures of sensorial-motility, the dominant reflex and the representations, considering that the outline, or that is the dynamic and functional skeleton of the imagination, constitutes the main classes of image formation. The “*schème*” appears as “the ‘presentificator’ of gestures and unconscious drives” (*idem*, p. 60). Teixeira and Araújo (2011) pointed out that it

8 Durand finds this term in Sartre, Burloud and Revault d’Allonnes, who got it from Kant.

is through corporal motility that Durand identifies the human being's first language, the verb, which is, in fact, nothing more than every human being's corporal expression.

The imaginary expressed by the motility of the body reveals the fundamental dimension in the constitution of the concept of the biographical body, since it makes us think about the body as a rational and non-rational source of impulses for action. Because it possesses senses, emotions, feelings, affections, images, symbols and values resulting from each subject's anthropological trajectory, it carries the vestiges of individual history and of the history of humanity, as well. These are the sources of the reservoirs of human imaginaries!

With these considerations, and returning to the image in the diagram, the relation between the imaginary and the biographical body is carried out by a driver idea that aggregated the other dimensions that integrate the constitution of the concept. In other words, without a specific experience – the exercise of corporal biographization through dramatic improvisation – there would be no evocation of memories of life experiences and, consequently, it would not be possible to try to make this imaginary visible and in turn, problematize the biographical body.

ON THE RELATION BETWEEN THE IMAGINARY AND THE BIOGRAPHICAL BODY: AN EMPIRICAL SAMPLE

To exemplify how the convergence between the imaginary and the biographical body occurs in the analysis, we present an empirical sample. This sample is the result of the analysis of the work on corporal biographization through drama improvisation mentioned at the beginning of the text. At this moment, a convergence may be observed in the symbolic interpretation of gestures and writings produced by the research subjects. We focus on the last step of the analysis, that is, the mytheme, as the result of the convergence of the empirical data, which reveals in this writing the mark of the connections between the theoretical fields of the imaginary and of the biographical body.

It should be emphasized that the idea of “mytheme” is based on Durand (1996) who uses Lévi-Strauss' definition of it as a thick constitutive unit, a type of “atom” that is fundamental to the construction of the mythical discourse. “It is the smallest unit of the mythic discourse that is redundantly meaningful, that is, repetitiveness” (Teixeira; Araújo, 2011, p.63). It cannot be reduced to a single word, or even syntax, because it is composed of a semantic group that encompasses the signified word, the attribute and the verb. Thus, we understand mytheme as the grouping of words that somehow play the mythemic role. According to Durand (1996, p. 256), the mytheme “is the smallest meaningful element of a myth, characterized by its redundancy, its *metabole*”; it is constituted by a “package of relations”, imbued with signification impregnated with condensed filaments. In this study, the mytheme represented the latent meaning subsumed in the memory inscribed in the body of each student.

Therefore, we present the mytheme of student *Cm*⁹: THE WISH TO FLY IN THE CAPTIVE-BODY.

To reach the mytheme, hard work of analysis was needed that involved the realization of gestural analysis, based on the video recordings, to perceive the “voice” that emanated from the body through gestures, from the perspective of hermeneutics. The analysis of each student’s Diary of the Experience was carried out to look for symbolic images in the writings that reveal the dimensions of the biographical body as pregnant nuclei that helped think about the corporal biography and its relation with the imaginary. From the pregnancies that emerged from the analysis of the video recordings and the symbolic images of the diary of the experience we grouped meaningful repetitions into nuclei that had the same symbolic sense associated to the scriptures of the body. This allowed us to enter a symbolic field of meanings, significations and representations, triggered by a set of fragments, short sentences, utterances (Peres, 1999) and visual images.

From these analyses we found the nuclei that led us to *Cm*’s mytheme. They are the following: free body *x* imprisoned body, repression, reverse/serve/care for the other in conjunction with the symbolic images of a bird in a cage and of imprisonment. They express the desire to fly in the captive-body, *Cm*’s mytheme.

This mytheme aggregates the dualism of the antithesis found in the student’s life. The idea of captive is related to an enslaved, apprehended, jailed, imprisoned, dominated being.¹⁰ These attributes characterize the experiences in *Cm*’s developmental trajectory. They resulted in an inner imprisonment that led her to serve and make herself available, whether to others or to a certain situation. However, this mytheme was converted into a captivation that encompasses the idea of attracting, enchanting, seducing, receiving esteem or sympathy, transforming the morbid side of the imprisoned being into a being who cares for the other and has learned to find satisfaction in this act of donation. This donation always directs its gaze outwards, rather than towards herself.

The meaning that encompasses the mytheme is associated with the heroic attitude that *Cm* took on in her life to deal with the imprisonment that conditioned her to a certain way of acting and caused her to accept this condition. The heroic structure revolves around the constant struggle of the hero against the monster, hyperbolized through antithetical symbols that involve the struggle of good against evil through the combat of darkness against light and in the fall from ascension,

9 It should be highlighted that four students took part in the research since they accepted the invitation that was sent by e-mail to two groups of pedagogy students. Their, *L.*; *Cm.*; *M.*; and *C.*, were used in this study.

10 Sources: on line dictionaries: Michaelis and Aurélio.

for instance (Durand, 2002). It is inserted in the diurnal regime¹¹ of the images, associated with a dominant attitude and involves verbs of action, separation and segregation. This structure is centered around a character that fights the monster with her weapon.

It may be perceived in *Cm*'s gestures, during the exercise of corporal biographization, that the repression experienced in her life represents the monster she now must fight to live. This is because this repression led her to assimilate a way of acting in the world, connected to a body that is serving something. It results in the idea of imprisonment, related to the body imprisoned by a situation in life, but that in its expression in another context, as in the encounters, demonstrates the desire for freedom.

The sword, in this universe, may be seen as the symbolic element connected to the mytheme and which is conjugated to the struggle of the hero against the monster. In Chevalier & Gheerbrant's dictionary of symbols (2009, p. 392), a sword represents courage and has two functions: destruction and construction. The symbol of the warrior, it is also associated to holy war. It is also linked to justice, in conjunction with the image of the scale, freeing the good from evil and striking the guilty.

Therefore, the sword is seen as the attitude that *Cm* took in her life to be able to overcome difficulties and adapt to what was imposed, in a latent hope that light would prevail over darkness. The sword separates the figure of the "pain" caused by the imprisonment that she feels and that is connected to servitude so that through this act of serving she can find comfort – represented in the compassion for the other through her courageous acts – which she needs to go on with life. The *wish to fly in the captive-body* always encompasses a look from the inside out, that is, there is no space to show her own desires, will and necessities. Whenever there is a contrary movement, there is a prohibition that is believed to be tied to a request that comes from *Cm* herself regarding what she has to fulfill, preventing her from going on, causing her to stop and go back to the previous state.

It can be seen that the exercise of corporal biographization through drama improvisation was an opportunity for this student to freely express her desires, by looking at herself, and led her to face another monster: the fears that involve her and may be the reasons why she remains in and accepts her imprisonment. As if the confrontation with herself represented her biggest enemy.

Thus, based on her (re)presented memories, we observed in *Cm* the register of repression that was inscribed in her biographical body. This repression is determinant in how she acts every day and was related to a docile, lovely and expressive body – as an antithesis of a body that could be rigid. It should be emphasized that this repres-

11 In the study carried out by Durand in his book "As Estruturas Antropológicas do Imaginário" (2002), the dynamic logic of image composition is organized in two regimes – a diurnal one and a nocturnal one – which are produced in the anthropological trajectory as a result of the conjunction between the psycho-physiological and the socio-cultural aspects, unfolding in three polarizing structures: a heroic, a mystic and finally a synthesis of the two.

sion was associated to the fact that *Cm* did not want to remember her childhood, a strong indication that this phase was influential to what she has become.

Cm's mytheme combined with those of the other students' (which are not presented here) symbolically revealed that the body is a living scripture of experiences that were significant in a person's life. These experiences are gradually recorded in the anatomy and have repercussions in the physical, cognitive, emotional and psychic dimensions that make people similar to, but never equal to each other.

SOME FINAL REMARKS

By proposing a specific discussion about the imaginary and the biographical body we sought to give visibility to the body as a bearer of relevant knowledge that should be contemplated in the educational context, specifically in teacher education. In particular, this study sought to conduct an exercise of intertwining art and the body to think about education and teacher education.

Since the body is a "humble dwelling place" (Josso, 2009) that houses the history of a human being whose gestures echo the singular and plural history, we affirm that the body should be contemplated and listened to as a subtle and sensitive material, which is as important as pragmatic and utilitarian materials; which has yet to be unveiled by artistic languages or, at least, other rationalities should be used beyond the hegemonic and instituted ones.

What we mean by this is that the embodied memory, whether it is made visible or not by gestures, may be the result of how we assimilate life experiences in agreement with our biological and ancestral heritage. This assimilation, invariably, may not be associated with a conscious process but, directly or indirectly, what is meaningful remains within us, in different forms, such as joy, sadness, fear, security, health and sickness and other possible manifestations.

This all constitutes the scriptures of the biographical body, which, in this study, was problematized through mythemes as representatives of the reservoir of the imaginary of each student. These mythemes somehow present the basic images that emerge from their narratives and the possible relations with the way that they interact in their environment.

Therefore, the body may be compared to a "clay scripture" (Crema, 1998) which reveals our most concrete text that is being constantly rewritten. As intimations are presented to each person, new scriptures are added to the biographical body, attributing other tones to the gestural repertoire.

In this sense, gestures are the expression of the imaginary in the scriptures of the biographical body because they are the result of how memories inscribed in the body reverberate in the way that each student has grown in her developmental trajectory and in the way each student interacted in the exercise of corporal biographization.

Moreover, gesture are, genuinely, the imaginary according to Gilbert Durand (2002), because this imaginary is universal and atemporal. The immediate language of the gesture, based on commitment and readiness for the here and now, triggered the narrative of the self. This generated corporal mobility in the academic space and

allowed making visible a set of elements, such as images, symbols, beliefs, values, feelings and affections that are part of the corporal biography of each student.

We also emphasize that an embodied memory dwells in the body; which is constituted in knowing how to be and do. It may or may not be made visible through gestures. What is important to know is that it is there as a process that may or may not be conscious, but is certainly meaningful. We thus understand that, in gestures, we find the clues that cause subjects to (re)act in the context in which they live as a gateway to the scriptures that compose the imaginary reservoir of each human being.

It is important to emphasize that the proposal for the exercise of corporal biographization without words led the subjects in the study to a perceptive shock, as Machado da Silva (2006) described it, which in a certain way was made easier by the use of theatrical language, which ranged between direct and fictional language as motivation for actions. The students, by presenting themselves as characters of their lives, (re)presented events that we consider fundamental to their developmental trajectory. We state this because, if they were not, they would not have come to light.

By placing the body in focus, other perceptions emerged and, then, the biographical and developmental element gave way to the possibility of contacting a type of knowledge that emanated from itself and conjugated lived and inherited histories. This movement may have triggered valorizations, wishes and projects, enabling the body to feel/live. Isn't it also important to address this content in early teacher education? We believe and affirm that it is, because when they were given this importance, for some moments, they allowed breaking with paradigms that attribute status to the supremacy of reason. This allowed embracing the subjectivity involved in human behavior. In this way, the symbolic universe of actions of each person is released, from the individual to the collective, which has repercussions on each person's choices and their attitude in the context in which they live.

We call this all scriptures of the biographical body, which in the development and completion of the study were problematized as founding and emerging images of narratives of the self as well as narratives of the other.

This allows perceiving that the investment in what had been unknown and a bit unusual has become just another tool that contributes to (auto)biographical research concerning the biographical dimension of the body. Moreover, what was developed provides a methodological possibility to insert the body as a bearer of knowledge needed to promote a more human approach in the educational context where different languages may talk.

Therefore, the contribution of the imaginary (and the arts is one of its sources), as a theoretical field, to the concept of biographical body provides an approach that extrapolates only an individual history but leads us to think about collective connections that dwell in us and that we grasp as the values that were instilled in the students throughout their lives.

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