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Hardships of Inconstancy

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ABSTRACT – Hardships of Inconstancy – First, the article presents an investigation on the most remarkable features associated with the so-called Theater of Anchieta, in which translation, betrayal and adaptation strategies were employed in close harmony with the doctrine of the Society of Jesus. Secondly, the consequences and developments generated by that theater in the Colony are analyzed, especially the question of the indigenous *logos* and the emergence of the sanctities, which were movements of anti-slavery resistance.
Keywords: **Jesuit Theater. Anchieta. Spiritual Exercises. Perspectivism. Sanctity.**

RÉSUMÉ – Brûlures d'Inconstance – Dans le premier mouvement, l'article enquête les caractéristiques les plus notables associées au théâtre de José de Anchieta, dans lequel des stratégies de traduction, de trahison et d'adaptation ont été employées en étroite harmonie avec les préceptes de la Compagnie de Jésus. Dans un second mouvement, les conséquences et les développements promus par ce théâtre dans la Colonie sont concentrés, en particulier la question du *logos* indigène et l'émergence des saintetés, mouvements de résistance anti-esclavagiste.
Mots-clés: **Théâtre Jésuite. Anchieta. Exercices Spirituels. Perspectivisme. Sainteté.**

RESUMO – Agruras da Inconstância – O artigo efetiva, em um primeiro movimento, uma investigação relativa às características mais notáveis associadas ao chamado teatro de Anchieta, no qual as estratégias de tradução, traição e adaptação foram empregadas em estreita consonância com os preceitos da Companhia de Jesus. Num segundo movimento, são enfocadas as consequências e os desdobramentos promovidos por aquele teatro na Colônia, especialmente a questão do *logos* indígena e o aparecimento das santidades, movimentos de resistência antiescravista.
Palavras-chave: **Teatro Jesuítico. Anchieta. Exercícios Espirituais. Perspectivismo. Santidade.**

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> *Man is the only animal whom Nature has endowed with the gift of speech. And whereas mere sound is but an indication of pleasure or pain, and is therefore found in other animals, for their nature attains to the perception of pleasure and pain and the intimation of them to one another, and no further, the power of speech is intended to set forth the expedient and inexpedient, and likewise the just and the unjust* (Aristotle, Politics, I, 1253a, 1975).

Foreword

What should be done with the theater left by José de Anchieta and its cultural universe? How should it be classified in the wake of Brazilian theater studies? What to say about those sixteenth-century texts, written in strange and outdated languages, and which present little or no action on stage? What can still be said regarding those texts? Some possible answers can be formulated if we take into account that they generate both performance and theatricality, born of the changes surrounding catechesis. But also because they show, through their arrangements, several approaches and developments, forcing contemporary perspectives to revise notions that tend to analyze theater by its traditional constituents, too dated or outdated along the historical course. But above all, because the theater of Anchieta was the first document in Portuguese America to display the use of stage resources as an intercultural instrument. Therefore, there are several reasons to revisit that primal theater.

Primitive Stage

Whereas for Europeans meeting the forest peoples was a shock that reverberated over many of their centuries-old beliefs and values, inaugurating an era of redefinitions of their own concept of humanity, the same did not happen to the indigenous perception: their myths evoked a Land Without Evil, beyond the ocean, a place of permanent glory and happiness, inhabited by brave warriors who would one day anchor on their beaches. Therefore, if Indians brought about a fear of the unknown for white people, the forest peoples' thought was exactly the opposite. These are the contrary propositions that will be analyzed here.

Because it was immediately perceived as catechesis – the spiritual conquest of creatures that some people even doubted had a soul – the Jesuit theater was despised as an artistic fact, particularly until the end of the

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nineteenth century, appearing as a distant feature of the founding European presence. The artists of Brazilian Romanticism were the first to value the Indians as a prototype of the Nation. However, only those linked to Modernism looked at the original peoples in a different way, and so did modern review, in its eagerness to organize the national scenic memory. In this sense, Anchieta was elevated to the condition of pioneer and his dramatic texts were considered an early form of theater. According to Sábato Magaldi (n/d), Brazilian theater was born from the religious festivities carried out by the Christian orders that operated in the beginnings of colonization. Such festivities were compared, not totally without reason, with the Dionysian rites that fostered scenic art in the European continent: "Besides its undisputed historical value, we are pleased to think they have given us a hallmark similar to that of the auspicious beginnings of theater around the world" (Magaldi, n/d, p. 24). Décio de Almeida Prado, in turn, made a different appraisal of that work:

> The more we view it as a form of theater in the strict sense of the word, the less we can understand it and do justice to it. It is only in view of the conditions and purposes that guided such pieces that we may forgive their dramatic flaws and logical incongruities, born not of Anchieta's lack of intellectual qualities – since he had more than enough of those – but of his lack of interest in everything on stage that was not related to the work of catechesis (Prado, 1993, p. 48).

Both Magaldi and Prado produced admirable chapters on José de Anchieta, cleverly scrutinizing his small and fragmented production. The former sought to emphasize the dramatic elements found in those texts, overcoming the old habit of considering catechesis devoid of such elements. Prado did the same, but he ventured a little further, weaving historiographical and ethnological considerations. However, both failed to dedicate even a few lines to the indigenous peoples – performers and target audience of that production – showing that their interpretation was based on the text-centered tradition that used to characterize the reviewing job, leaving out the Other that inspired that theater. Such perspective, it should be noted, did not occur at the time. In the midst of the celebration of the Fourth Centenary of the City of São Paulo in 1954, the first full edition of Anchieta's theater was hailed by scholars not only with joy, but above all, as the legitimate redemption of a thread of the tradition that built, century

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after century, the largest city in Latin America, and of which the priest had been one of the founders. The edition advertised on that date by tupinologist Maria de Lourdes de Paula Martins was mentioned by both analysts, since it was the first time that it was possible to read the original passages, written in general language, in Portuguese.

The original writings are gathered in the well-known *Caderno de Anchieta*, a codex that contains two full drama texts and fragments of ten others, as well as poems and other minor writings, integrating the process sent to the Holy See by the Captaincy of Bahia in 1671, in an attempt to canonize the missionary[1]. In order to support the sanctification request, the codex includes the biographies written by fathers Quirício Caxa, Pero Rodrigues and Simão de Vasconcelos, corroborating the ascetic and beatific life of the Jesuit apostle, and highlighting some miracles attributed to him. As a literary document, the volume deposited in the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus (ARSI) has several issues: the handwriting from one page to another does not match, many letters have been erased and stained, there are clear *a posteriori* additions here and there and the author's signature cannot be found anywhere. It is known that the missionaries did not use to sign their writings, which were solely intended for evangelical work and without any literary ambitions. This helps to understand the multiplicity of handwritings, but raises suspicions that successive copies may have damaged the originals. Anyway, it is a five-hundred-year-old manuscript, which is the only source of the founding texts of theater in Portuguese America of the sixteenth century[2].

Subsequent analysts began, little by little, to revise modern considerations, raising aspects that had been little explored until then. Although Prado and Magaldi's apprehension highlighted the potentially scenic features of Anchieta's production, a new study, published by Joel Pontes in 1978, introduced a more comprehensive look over that dramaturgy. More demanding in terms of the possible dramatic yield, he aimed to highlight the scenic effects connected with the native populations, especially emphasizing their programmatic and doctrinal character, as another resource within the missionary work. Then, he identifies the catechetical messages aimed at the indigenous peoples, the appeals mixed with the various Christian practices implemented, and their resonance in the theatrical text. In *Na Vila de Vitória* (In the Village of Vitória), a work

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that alternates between Portuguese, Spanish and Tupi, the scholar analyzes those connections in detail: Fear, one of the personified allegories, says: "If you treated, every day / a little in your thinking / sadness without joy / sorrow without any contentment / hunger without ever eating / and fire without serene light / terrible thirst without drinking / night without dawn / Oh, what a pain! Oh, what a pity!"[3] (Pontes, 1978, p. 41).

This sequence of sentimental appeals connected to the pain and metaphors of deprivations that afflict sinners bears close correlation with the fifth *Spiritual Exercise* written by Ignatius of Loyola.[4] There, in the second Preamble, the officiant says: "[...] at least the fear of punishment should help me not to commit a sin"; and it continues as follows: "see with the sight of imagination the great flames and souls as if in igneous bodies"; "hear weeping, shouting, blasphemy against Christ"; "breathe tobacco, stone, sulfur, bilge, and putrid things with the sense of smell"; "Savor bitter things, as well as tears, sorrows and the worm of consciousness with taste" (Loyola, 1966, *passim*) – passages that reverberate as resumed in the verses of Anchieta.

This resource, according to Pontes (1978, p. 42),

> […] precious crutch of the establishment, removes the spectator from the fascination of representation and inserts them, without appeal, into the pages of catechism. [...] there is no conflict of any kind from the moment the sermons are set off. *Na Vila da Vitória* ends with an attempt to deceive spectators – an excuse to impose a sermon on them.

Such a critical approach indicates a new plateau regarding the founding theater, which was no longer considered as an Edenic emulation of a tropical Dionysianism, but emphatically as a rhetorical resource suited to its ends, appealing to the performative power of theater. In his conclusion about Anchieta, the analyst points out:

> […] theater is, for him, an enchanting and didactic action at the same time, staged for a new audience, unknown to the playwrights of the time, [...] some call him naive, but perhaps he was the opposite: too wise, although literarily unambitious. Wise in the sense of knowing well the spectacle-spectator relationship, which does not always include literature. Of dealing with his reduced sources thinking about the *moment* (and not *eternity* to which literature always aspires) and in the *Indians*, not in an abstract, timeless spectator (Pontes, 1978, p. 83-84, emphasis added).

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In 1980, the National Arts Foundation (Funarte) held several seminars to reexamine what was left of national and popular in Brazilian culture. An essay by Mariângela Alves de Lima was dedicated to Anchieta, but it was written for the scenic activities taking place in the Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs), within the *Pastoral Operária* (Workers' Pastoral), which gives it a specific *telos*: speculating how catechesis went through the centuries in Brazil.[5]

What distinguishes it from other analyses on the same topics is that it calls the reader's attention to the aesthetic components present in Anchieta's work, so that, although often obscured by a precise ideological intention, such spectacles also displayed several sensitive experiences. Specifically about Anchieta, she notes:

> But it is this stupefaction of the senses, this desire to 'overwhelm' the strange spectator, captivating them by beauty, that gives birth to something that is not only the idea of convincing, but a more unstable and ambiguous plane of artistic invention. At that moment, the Jesuit proposes and reveals himself fascinated by images that do not belong to his European experience. It is through this gap that the dances, the metric and the melody of the general language, the flute parakeet, several joking demons, old witches who chew corn to ferment it, and painted limbs join the show. Nudity and canopies made of ship sails come into play. The iconography, in particular, is so foreign to the European past that a religious man like Bishop Sardinha, who was far away from catechesis, was horrified by the behavior of men of the Church who would indulge in such follies. It is necessary to have lived and thought about the contact between two such different cultural forms to be sensitive, like Anchieta, to other forms of representation of beauty (Arrabal; Lima, 1983, p. 32-33).

Therefore, at the end of the decade, new perspectives regarding that founding theater emerged, shifting the gaze to other spheres, not only the pedagogical ones, but also including the spectators and the experiences of cultural interaction they made possible to infuse. Thus, perception and sensitivity phenomena also shine encrusted within the language, which makes the nature of the experience and its implications much denser.

Such analytical shifts have their avatars. In the 1970s, Anthropology began a reappraisal of indigenous cultures, and the anthropologist Manuela Carneiro da Cunha played an exponential role. After dedicating two academic theses to the notion of *ethnicity* – the recognition of the radical

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difference that separates white European and South American Indigenous cultures – Carneiro da Cunha founded and was the first president of the Pro-Indian Commission of São Paulo in 1979, and the founder of the Brazilian Association of Anthropology in 1986, organizations that not only stimulated studies in the area but also prepared the entire political path to support the section dedicated to indigenous peoples and their rights in the Brazilian Constitution of 1988.

Defenseless victims of the sixteenth-century colonial fury, native populations succumbed decade after decade in contact with whites and blacks, due to the spread of diseases for which they had no defense, the theft of their lands, slavery they could not resist, all the harms of a disproportionate and predatory acculturation that deeply destabilized their original cultures. After three centuries of continuous exploitation, in which the Jesuits constituted one of the links, the situation had not changed. Not even when the country gained the status of viceroyalty, in 1808, and the royal family was transferred to Rio de Janeiro. On the contrary. Now, due to the expansion of the latifundia and the imperial occupation that was necessary to establish the distance of the frontiers, exploring forests where the descendants of the autochthonous populations had hidden, predation became more intense. Thus, only in the twentieth century was the Service for the Protection of the Indian (1910) created, an institution that had an oscillating life and action. Only during the period known as *Estado Novo* (New State) did it experience some expansion, but only to return to the usual inactivity and be shut down in 1966 (Cunha, 2012).

The civil-military dictatorship was ruthless against the natives, especially during the years of its *economic miracle*, removing entire populations from their *habitats*, which were protected as reserves, and conducting and encouraging killings against the more resilient. In the early 1980s, the original populations of all ethnic groups did not exceed five hundred thousand individuals, but they used to total around seven million inhabitants in 1500, according to estimates. The numbers indicate the magnitude of the holocaust that was carried out, as well as its symbolic dimension – "America was not discovered, it was invaded"[6].

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Cultural Clashes

Because of such twists and turns regarding the dimensioning of the founding cultures, it is necessary to recall the turning points brought about by the twentieth century: from the ethnological reversion of Franz Boas (which inspired Gilberto Freyre to formulate the notion that Brazilian cultural formation was a syncretism averse to racism) to the revaluation of the African arts carried out by the historical vanguards. It is also important to remember that both German and Spanish stylistics submitted the baroque period to sharp depurations during their first decades. Structuralism – in which Lévi-Strauss's presence among us should not be ruled out – turned many beliefs that were still contaminated with the previous positivist leftovers upside-down, leading anthropological studies to paths that were unthinkable until then.

In this broad sense, a singular title should be highlighted: *Dialética da colonização* (Brazil and the Dialectic of Colonization), by Alfredo Bosi (1992). Combining analytical instruments decanted throughout the twentieth century, Bosi synthesized, by means of an intertwining of disciplines, what is most significant today to think about the origins of Brazilian society. "If we try to draw a common and more general meaning from the mismatches pointed out, we will find the dialectics of a complex composed of distinct social times, whose simultaneity is structural, for structural is the presence of dominants and dominated, and structural is their contradiction", stresses Bosi (1992, p. 62) when introducing his writing. This reinforces an understanding of structural racism, which is common in today's analyses.

As for the actions of the missionaries – and reviewing the role of Anchieta in the Colony – Bosi emphasizes that his effort was aimed at *translation*. Redondillas, quintillas and consonances, typical of medieval and troubadour poetics have resurfaced in the tropics with the proper adaptations, in an effort to reverse the imaginary of the other, but finding impregnable structural difficulties, such as creating a suitable signifier for *sin,* a notion that was entirely alien to the aborigines. Hence the similes forged in that theater: bishop became *Pai-Guaçu* (greater shaman), *Tupansy* came to designate Our Lady (mother of Tupã), *Tupãoka* was the name of the Church (house of Tupã), while *soul* was translated as *anga*, which in the

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original language designates both the shadow and the spirit of the ancestors, but it was another notion foreign to those cultures. Consequently, "the representation of the sacred thus produced was neither Christian theology nor Tupi belief, but a third symbolic sphere, a kind of *parallel mythology* that was only made possible by the colonial situation", according to Bosi (1992, p. 65, emphasis added), highlighting the irreconcilable epistemic duplicity then configured.

The symbolic violence carried out must be clear. By shifting original meanings to similes rearranged or converted to another logic and understanding, the missionaries attacked the world of indigenous representations, subverting them.

> The sacred circle of the indigenous peoples loses the strongly articulated unity which it maintained in the tribal state and is divided into opposite and irreconcilable zones due to the action of catechesis. On one side is Evil, the kingdom of Anhangá, which gains the status of a threatening anti-God, such as the hypertrophied Demon of medieval fantasies. On the other side, the realm of the Good, where Tupã is invested with creative and salvific virtues, in open contradiction with the original myth that attributed to him precisely the annihilating powers of ray (Bosi, 1992, p. 66).

All the original habits considered execrable were included in the realm of Evil, such as anthropophagy, drunkenness, polygamy, inebriation by smoking, indolence, evils brought together by Anchieta as fruits of *angaíb* (a soul that is perverse or leaned toward sin, according to explanations of the tupinologist Maria de Lourdes de Paula Martins). By contrast, the kingdom of heaven, beatification brought by the angels, saints and priests, consolation under the auspices of Mary, remission in Christ, and eternal peace at the right hand of God the Father, integrated the realm of Good. It was a Manichaeism unknown until then, which induced a comparative logic contrary to the integrative mental attitude of the indigenous peoples in which "one of the most powerful effects in terms of acculturation is the fact that the missionary links the *ethos* of the tribe to powers that are external and superior to the will of the Indians" (Bosi, 1992, p. 68).

Expedients like these make the theater of Anchieta an orchestrated sequence of acculturated representations, openly aimed at spiritual conquering, a goal that was also consecrated in other pedagogical endeavors of the Society of Jesus. Another remarkable and commonly overlooked fact

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is the way nature is portrayed. What used to be an integrated and vivifying space for the forest peoples, now becomes horrifying and the origin of everything that white civilization considered as a space of horror: beasts, monsters, venomous dangers, impure places, and irrational fears that strike during sleep. In *Auto de São Lourenço*, this abominable gallery of beings appears as part of the devil's entourage: *boiaçu* (big snake), *mboitininguiçu* (snake that hisses or rattlesnake), *andiraguaçu* (vampire bat), *jaguara* (jaguar or hunting dog) *jibóia, socó, sukuriji* (anaconda, snake that strangles), *taguató* (hawk), *atyrabebó* (giant anteater), *guabiru* (house rat), but also *cauim* (corn wine), among others.

Along with inebriation prompted by *cauim* and tobacco, monsters and visions are now considered temptations that may drag the Indian to sin and evil, diverting him from the priests and righteous Catholic principles, trapped by a menacing world inhabited by dangers and temptations. Whereas the Tupinambá worldview was originally perspectivist, these semantic shifts were precisely aimed at subverting its constituent elements, managing them under a Christianized and, above all, demonized *ethos*[7].

When the French Huguenots arrived in Guanabara to establish Antarctica France, they had the support of the *Tamoyos de Cunhambebe*, duly revolted against the Portuguese. The latter, in turn, relied on the strength of the *Tupinambá* Indians who obeyed Araribóia, making the confrontation between whites also a war among the autochthon tribes, divided by the distinct participation of religious men on both sides. That is why Anchieta was called there, in an attempt to reconcile with the *Tamoyo* and thereby favor the Iberians. After years of fighting, Estácio de Sá finally wins the fight and expels the French, founding the city of Rio de Janeiro. The episode was partly portrayed in the play *Na Vila de Vitória*, also known as *Auto de São Maurício*, which was written for an audience of whites and *mamelucos*. It is the most political text left by Anchieta, since the division of the world between Spaniards and Portuguese opens the speeches and the three languages are used, in an attempt to direct the messaging toward those populations.

Satan, who speaks Spanish to defeat Saint Maurice, stresses that he wants the city of Vitória to continue to obey Castile and Philip II. Fear and Soul engage in a dialogue in the second act concerning the perils that surround human destiny, each of them emphasizing the temptations they

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always have to face. Without having a more decisive dramatic confrontation, its long tirades seem more like summaries of sermons uttered in the Masses. Although it is an *auto* (short allegorical play), the text is similar to the exhortations that are typical of ancient morality. Good Government is the allegory that represents the political nature of the author, who was stuck to a stillness of thought, only accepting the will of God as sovereign in the episodes that represented the disputes of power in the captaincy of Espírito Santo. Such governmental power, it should be noted, was exerted according to the Manueline Ordinances, whose provisions were to be followed. The play culminates with a choir chanting to the sound of a harp that commemorates the relic of Saint Maurice, which motivated the whole text. *Auto da Vitória* shows the other side of the mission theater, which was aimed at the non-Indians and known as *teatro de colégio*. Regarding this kind of theater, Bosi points out:

> […] the allegory exerts a singular power of persuasion, often terrible due to the simplicity of its images and the uniformity of collective understanding. Hence its use as a tool of acculturation and its presence since the first hour of our spiritual life, planted in the Counter Reformation that united the ends of the last Medieval and the first Baroque period (Bosi, 1992, p. 81).

Indigenous *ars oratoria*

If in previous studies the Jesuit tactics of catechesis were considered in regard to their insidious content effects, which shifted ingrained cultural traces to new territories of subjectivization now committed to Christian ethics and faith, it is also necessary to inquire into the formats employed therein. "The rhetoric cultivated by the Indians, according to the perception of the missionaries, is at the base of the choice of teaching the doctrine in rhetorical format, aiming to train *Christian-Indian-orators-actors*. This is where the *mission theater* finds its place, in its double Aristotelian therapeutic role: being good not only for those who watch it, but also for those who make it", says the historian Magda Maria Jaolino Torres (2000, p. 49, emphasis added) regarding such aspects.

It must be noted that this new analytical level was only possible as an apprehension *a posteriori*, after the effects that unleashed the phenomenon had ceased, by investigating its genealogy, as proposed by Foucault, encompassing facts and circumstances that were unsuspected until then, not

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analyzed in previous studies. Jesuit theater was born in sixteenth-century Europe as an opposition to *commedia dell'arte*, the reign of joy and virtuosity for actors, but in which the most prominent social vices wandered recklessly. That is why it was considered dangerous, at a time when reformed Calvinists were casting their nets trying to catch vulnerable souls. Developed in the schools of the Society of Jesus, taking advantage of the rhetoric classes as a linguistic and oratory practice, the theater aimed to substantiate minds adjusted to trained bodies. They should be adapted to the set of Christian norms that guided them, and to bodies trained to use their voice and argumentative capacity calculated in the vivacity of faith. Such combination of abilities were considered powerful weapons for the soldiers of Christ in the war against the Reformation.

Its sources were authoritative: Cicero and Quintilian. Fertile grounds that established the *Ratio Studiorum*, fostered the *Constitutions* forged by Ignatius of Loyola, and served as a straightforward way to lead disciples endowed with an effective power: the use of speech. Since the beginning, the Jesuits realized the importance of speech among the Indians. Anchieta once wrote: "[…] like the Romans, they hold good speakers in high regard, and call them masters of speech, and a good speaker is able to defeat the other if he wants, as in wars, in which they can tell you to kill or not, and they can go everywhere, for they are masters of life and death, and people listen to them all night"[8] (Anchieta, 1933, p. 403, *sic*). Although he mistakenly believed those *línguas* (speakers, orators) were *preachers*, since his only reference was his own understanding, the priest found a similarity there. In addition, Father Azpilcueta Navarro, who arrived in Brazil a few years before Anchieta, and was already familiar with the habits and language of the natives, delivered his sermons using the same resources: he used to make faces and gestures while speaking, shouting and thumping his feet to impress the audience, in an exemplary use of what is rhetorically known as *actio*, action.

Azpilcueta initiated – and Anchieta broadened and extended – the use of *adaptation*. Recommended by Loyola, it consisted of constructing a simulacrum of the other, appropriating their way of being, in an attempt to capture their soul, but without giving up on one's own reasons and objectives. In Europe, *adaptation* was born as a variation of oratory style, but in Portuguese America it became a weapon, used to confront the

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speeches of the shamans and warrior chiefs, a sword drawn in the arena of struggle, "the controlled and conscious action of the effective actions", as Jaolino Torres (2000, p. 55) classifies it, in which what was to be captured from the other was their *temperament*, tone of voice, and expressiveness. These strategies confirm and broaden the notion of *translation* proposed by Alfredo Bosi, far beyond linguistic similes, to a mimetic anabolism that qualified the speaker as a true actor, the performer required by the theater of the mission: a Christian-Indian-orator-actor.

That is why it was continuously reinforced with the *curumins* (Indigenous children) who attended school, since they were more easily converted to new Christianized habits, and given their new position as recruited bodies and spirits, they should also be able to disseminate the good news of white life to the stubborn adults, since it was not enough to believe, it was also necessary to profess their new faith, according to the biblical teachings proclaimed by Saint Paul. Therefore, the Jesuits conducted "[…] a specific pedagogy, in which the *ars retorica* and the performing practice that was based on it, but not the same, played a role of the greatest importance", emphasizes the historian (Torres, 2000, p. 58).

Shamans and medicine men played a decisive role before the invasion of America, through their speeches and preaching, in which they encouraged a search for the Land Without Evil, *ywy mara eÿ*, located beyond the ocean, on the other shore. This fact explains the continuous migrations of those peoples across the continent, and also part of their notions related to the sacred, which they believed to be somewhere *beyond*. All these elements were important to explain why the reception of the whites who arrived in the caravels was interpreted as the arrival of inhabitants of the paradise they wanted, and the trinkets offered to them as valuable gifts sent from those praised lands.

Beings devoid of law, of faith and of king – as the priests repeated many times in their letters –, the forest peoples had no State. A tribe followed a chief whose single power, if it could be called that way, was that of persuading, advising, and pacifying conflicts, hence their great ability in the use of speech. Another trait they should have is generosity: giving everything that was asked of them, which is why they used to be the poorest and their ornaments the most rustic in the whole *taba* (indigenous village). Moreover, at dawn and at sunset, the chief was supposed to deliver a long

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and edifying speech to his people, encouraging them to be righteous, recalling ancestral myths, and highlighting traditions that awakened their memories and kept them alive. In an oral culture, the repetition of these speeches was very important to maintain group cohesion and structure their thriving imagination (Clastres, 2012).

Since these chiefs were considered *preachers* by the Jesuits, the theater of the mission knew well how to take advantage of their available and favorable example, developing them, but also twisting all their characteristics through the aforementioned *adaptation*. The indigenous performers of that theater found their artistic technique not very far from themselves.

Look, Think, Speak

Whereas voice can express pleasure and pain, only speech is able to set forth the expedient and the inexpedient – as Aristotle had already warned. Between one and the other is the *logos*, which means thought, intelligence, or calculation, depending on the occasion, when expressed as *discourse*. Whereas the *logos* of the colonizer is well known to us, since it has been disseminated through thousands of actions and in different formats, one must ask: what was, and still is today, the *logos* of the natives? How do the Indians express what causes them pain or pleasure and, above all, how do they measure what is expedient or inexpedient to them?

If the colonizers – merchants and missionaries – were welcomed by the forest peoples, who would do everything they asked, offer them women and lavishly supply them with Brazilian wood; if they quickly claimed to believe in God, imitated the Jesuits in the Masses, or learned the sacred prayers in a surprising way; then how to explain the twists and turns, the abandoning, the relapses into bad habits which they claimed to have been freed from? How did they reconcile pleasure with what was useful to them? Lack of memory was the explanation raised. As weak souls, they would forget what they were taught instead of retaining it, quickly alternating from one point to another. Although some time later they would return, to enter again in the same chain of consent, help and agreement with everything that was asked from them. Inconstancy was the term chosen to qualify such lability. In fact, the *logos* of the natives is inconstant.

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"The Jesuits recklessly separated the sacred from the profane, as if they had read Durkheim without understanding him very well", says the anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2002, p. 192). That is why he proposes, somewhere else, a change of strategy to check such inconstancy:

> […] Amerindian perspectivism, instead of being a possible object for a theory that is extrinsic to it [...] invites us to construct other theoretical (and practical) images of the theory. Anthropology cannot be limited to describing 'the native's point of view' in detail and pointing out its blind spots, thus seeking to encompass such a point of view within the observer's Point of View, as in the best critical tradition. The task that perspectivism opposes to this is the 'symmetrical' task of discovering what a point of view present in Amerindian cultures is: what is the native point of view on the anthropological concept of point of view? (Viveiros de Castro, 2015, p. 72-73).

Whereas *translation* proved to be the great obstacle faced to promote an understanding between cultures, as previously perceived in the considerations of Alfredo Bosi and Magda Jaolino Torres, what the ethnologist emphasizes here is that the "[…] good translation is the one that can allow other people's concepts to change and subvert the conceptual device of the translator, so that the *intentio* of the original device can be expressed, and thus transform the target language" (Viveiros de Castro, 2015, p. 87). Such reasoning is an introit to his considerations on *Amerindian perspectivism*, a new concept – or rather another way of thinking about the natives' thoughts – that analyzes the Indian's perspective from a radical reversal. Thus, "[…] the indigenous theory of perspectivism emerges from an implicit comparison between the ways in which different types of corporality (the 'species') 'naturally' experience the world as an affectual multiplicity" (Viveiros de Castro, 2015, p. 87). What it means: how the forest peoples value and measure their pain and pleasure, how they distinguish the expedient from the inexpedient, and what affections they use to separate the just from the unjust, building their network of meanings and significations, including their elements of value.

This new epistemological level derives from the turning point made possible by Roy Wagner (2012), who inaugurated the so-called *Reverse Anthropology*, through the processing of the Indians' point of view in relation to that of white people. "The anthropological concept of culture, for example, as Wagner argued, is a misconception that emerges as an attempt to solve intercultural ambiguity; and it is misleading because it is

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based on the 'paradox generated by the act of imagining a culture for people who do not conceive it as such themselves'" (Viveiros de Castro, 2015, p. 93). What is understood here is that the Jesuits analyzed the Indians not as Others, but as their opposite, the negative of themselves, which is why they should be catechized – returned and reintegrated – to the norms that governed their own *logos*. That is the anthropological misconception in evidence here. For

> […] a misconception is not a mistake, a deception or falsehood, but the very foundation of the relationship that implies it, which is always a relationship with externality. A mistake or a misunderstanding can only be determined as such within the same 'language game', whereas a misconception is what happens in the gap, the blank space between different language games (Viveiros de Castro, 2015, p. 92).

That is what can be seen in *the translation-betrayal-adaptation* made by Anchieta's theater, when he created a *logos* that had never existed before, a language full of misleading terms both in the original and the target language, such as *Tupansy, Pai-Guaçu* or *Tupãoka,* either in his theater or in his Tupi Grammar.

The current transversalization between anthropology and philosophy aims to achieve a permanent decolonization of thought, as Viveiros de Castro points out. Therefore, it is important to ask: which philosophy allows such transversalization? Any philosophy that considers and values the principle of difference.

If the theater of Anchieta is a continuous exhortation to good manners, God and the sacred powers of Catholicism, which are in a permanent fight against devils, medicine men and shamans who urge the Indian to persevere in sin, it is because it aims to create new souls or reconvert the deviant ones through the mimicry employed. But he did not expect – and was surprised by – the new representations the Indians undertook, fully returning the lesson they had refused to learn: the creation of the sanctity. But in order to explain what the sanctity was, it is necessary to refer to the original rites from which it emerged, and then resemanticized and resignified.

According to the testimonies of travelers who came to sixteenth-century Brazil (André Thevet, Hans Staden, Jean de Léry, but also frequent in missionary letters and in Gandavo's account), the original Indian rites

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were complex, led by shamans, centered around the Land Without Evil and the memory of death produced by the warriors who led their enemies to anthropophagic devouring. They occurred seasonally and their preparation could take weeks, mobilizing the whole tribe. Ronaldo Vainfas (1995) investigated them well, and all the details gathered here are based on his study.

Let us try and make a summary of that performance, highlighting its most significant ceremonial and theatrical elements. The ritual was announced from time to time by medicine men who would go from tribe to tribe. They were called *caraíbas* or *carais,* and considered to be links to the sacred. Therefore, they had free access even to enemy communities. The party began with the confession of the women (only them), after which they danced in frenzy and ended up lying on the ground, with their mouths foaming. In a special *maloca* (long house), which was completely emptied before the ritual, the warriors would gather, dancing and singing, each holding their own *maraca* (rattle) and carrying presents for the shaman, who would sit and smoke a thick tobacco cigar. They worshiped the shaman's *maraca*, a gourd molded as a human figure, adorned with macaw feathers and seeds, in which pebbles or corn kernels were used to make sounds. Constantly shaken by everyone, the *maracas* would induce a trance. Their power was absolute as instruments of communication with the dead, and with celestial and superhuman entities. They would help the shaman begin the speeches that exhorted the bravery of the warriors and their journeys towards the Land Without Evil. Gradually, the other participants who danced, trembled and simulated tumbles, standing as a compact mass in a circle, would be contaminated by the effluvia and enter the spectral world of that desired paradise. According to Thevet, the spirit manifested itself through peeps and whistling. Leaving the *maloca*, the cortege would then include the whole tribe, and the *maracas* were stuck to the ground between the huts. As the shaman continued his exhortations at the center of the yard, men, women, and children indulged in drunkenness, dance, and collective chants that could last for hours.

Whereas these are the general traits of the ceremonies, it is not the rituals themselves that are of interest here, but their unfolding, the interconnections made after catechesis and the Jesuit theater, when they acquired a new content that shifted them somewhere else, and they became

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properly known as a sanctities. It is essential to remember that after the friendly contact of the first decades, the Portuguese started to imprison the indigenous peoples to work both on sugar cane extraction and plantation, especially after the first Governor General was appointed. Particularly after Mem de Sá, the capture intensified, and some accounts mention that he destroyed more than 130 villages on the outskirts of Salvador. Whereas an "unjust war" was considered to be one that promoted killings to take lands and drive the remnants inland, a "just war" was the one that sent the Indians to farms and Jesuit-supervised settlements, which is the name given to the missions by the Spaniards. Over there, priests would gather crowds of Indians to facilitate and expand conversion. The indomitable Mem de Sá was granted a laudatory poem by Anchieta, called *De Gestis Mendi Saa* (The Deeds of Mem de Sá).

In a very short time the practice of the gathering the Indians in settlements proved to be a failure: there were many deaths due to illness, incompatibility of the Indians with sedentary life, resistance to follow habits, schedules, and the Christian conduct recommended by the priests, causing widespread unproductiveness. Moreover, there were frequent escapes and several resistance groups began to be organized, gathering indigenous and black fugitives. It was precisely in one of these groups that a "sanctity" emerged, an indigenous religious movement that was analyzed by Vainfas (1995). The well-documented process is linked to the visit of the Holy Office between 1591 and 1595, which was established in several cities of the Northeast. The main accused, Fernão Cabral de Taíde, was a Portuguese nobleman with extensive properties in the *Recôncavo Baiano* (coastal region in the Brazilian state of Bahia) who attracted to his land an indigenous sanctity, which he not only protected, but also joined.

The sanctity was called *caraimonhaga* or *acaraimonhag*, the Sanctity of Jaguaripe, which as others of the same kind, forged a syncretism between primitive autochthonous rites and the religious plays staged and Masses prayed by the priests, with the aim of creating a Land Without Evil, "amending the law of Christians", to make the natives become "lords of their lords", thus initiating an anti-slavery worship. Those who refused to participate were cursed. It was led by the Indian Antônio, an individual who was converted and baptized by the priests and proclaimed himself "god and lord of the world", sometimes calling himself Tamandaré, the mythical

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Tupinambá god who had escaped the flood, sometimes the Biblical Noah himself. Like the earthly *Caraíba*, he had several women and children. It is remarkable how such a syncretic figure – Antônio, Tamandaré, Noah – combined several existing mythical narratives, but personalized them in his image and similarity. He believed the Sanctity was the true Church and proclaimed himself pope, the only one capable of bringing his devotees to the Land Without Evil. In his particular pontificate he appointed bishops, vicars and sacristans, presided over baptismal ceremonies, and gave names of saints to everyone.

In the inquisitorial testimonies studied by Vainfas, there are many references to the Santa Maria (Saint Mary) female Indians in the Sanctity of Jaguaripe, sometimes referred to as *the pope's wife*, and sometimes as *everyone's mother*, an ambiguity that once again shows the peculiar cultural amalgam created there. One of them was the foundress of the new sanctity in the lands of Fernão Cabral de Taíde, which was the origin of the whole inquisitorial process, and a new territory for the celestial court integrated by Noah, Antônio, Tamandaré, the Tupi Pope, Saint Mary Mother of God, Mrs. *Tupansy* – repopulating the theater of Anchieta with another gallery of creatures and other stories, an exceptional example of reverse anthropology.

Rebaptism was the gateway to the sect, a necessary rite to "dispossess" Indians and blacks who had previously been Christianized. It was performed with a plate of holy water or a roll of tobacco. The *tugipar*, which was the name of the temple used by the sanctity, had a wooden cross and a large *maloca* in the yard, with an *uncertain* idol inside, *a figurative face with eyes and a nose, covered with old cloths*, according to the diffuse allusions of witnesses before the Holy Office.

It is beyond the scope here to analyze all developments involving the sanctities, but to understand how their existence derives from the Jesuit ritual and theatrical practices. It is possible to speak of miscegenation, bricolage, and frontierization – but, above all, carnivalization – with regard to the continuous dialogical processes of inversion, dethronement, iconoclasm and pastiche – even though the comic elements were absent, because the main structuring procedures were present[9]. It is also important to highlight the paradoxical paths – mythical, semantic, practical and pragmatic – that intercultural relationships can induce and foster, generating the complex network that constitutes the sociocultural fabric,

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especially when it happens in opposition to the *logos* pursued by the white European civilization.

Another aspect that should be mentioned is the repression of such deviations, associated with the Crown's need to maintain its religious and cultural identity. If the Portuguese rites, myths and customs were destroyed, the very idea of colonization would collapse, thus justifying the fierce combat conducted against all the heresies, pastiches and distortions carried out both at the personal and social level.

The sanctities provided, to a large extent, operational bases for all the prophetisms and messianisms embedded in Brazilian culture throughout the centuries, in their atavistic adherence to the anti-slavery and anti-oligarchic struggle. Closer to us, prophetic and messianic movements were spotted in theater, as in *Vereda da Salvação* (The Path of Salvation), by Jorge Andrade, 1964, which focused on episodes that took place at the São João da Mata farm, in the municipality of Malacacheta, Minas Gerais state. Three monks named José Maria were at the head of the events that occurred in Contestado, another outbreak of prophetism severely repressed in the final battle of Irani, in Santa Catarina, in 1912. This event was first adapted to the theater by Romário José Borelli, in 1972. And in this century, Messianism returned to the scene in five spectacles directed by José Celso Martinez Corrêa with the *Teatro Oficina* group, between 2002 and 2007, drawn from the monumental work of Euclides da Cunha, *Os Sertões*, evoking the onslaughts of government troops against the camps where Antônio Conselheiro used to preach.

They were all performances that reverberated remnants extracted from the theater of Anchieta, although in an elusive, tangential and entirely distorted way.

Notes

[1] The beatification would only take place in 1980, by Pope John Paul II, and the canonization in 2014, by Pope Francis.

[2] A more recent edition that was mentioned here is the versified translation, introduced and annotated by Armando Cardoso SJ, *Teatro de Anchieta* (1977).

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[3] In the original: "si tratases, cada dia / un poco en tu pensamento/ tristeza sin alegria / pesar sin ningún content / hambre sin nunca comer / y fuego sin luz serena / sed terrible sin beber / noche sin amanhecer / !oh qué dolor!, oh! qué pena!".

[4] The *Spiritual Exercises* are a sequence of devotional activities and programmed prayers to be developed by the practitioner under the direction of a minister, designed to reveal the power and immensity of the love of Christ. They were conceived and structured by the founder of the Society of Jesus, Ignatius of Loyola, as an indispensable practice for all the believers who truly wished to find divinity, first published in 1548. See Loyola (1966), *Spiritual Exercises*.

[5] The *Pastoral Operária* (Workers' Pastoral) was an initiative of the Catholic Church, during the Brazilian military dictatorship, to support the popular movements in their union struggles, developing both a theological and humanitarian action.

[6] The sentence, attributed to Francis Jennings, was taken up again by Carneiro da Cunha in *Índios no Brasil* (Cunha, 2012, p. 19).

[7] Perspectivism is any doctrine that claims that knowledge is partial (but not altogether false), limited and determined by the perspective according to which each subject sees the world. The ethnologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro forged the term *Amerindian perspectivism* to designate the *Tupinambá* cosmology. Such a concept will be explored below. The term *Tupinambá* encompasses all the ethnic groups inhabiting the Brazilian coast in the period of colonization that, despite their differences, spoke the same general language.

[8] In the original: "[…] fazem muito caso entre si, como os Romanos, de bons 'línguas' e lhes chamam senhores da fala e um bom língua acabam com eles quanto quer e que lhes fazem nas guerras que matem ou não matem e que vão a uma parte ou a outra, e é senhor de vida e de morte e o ouvem de toda uma noite" (Anchieta, 1933, p. 403, *sic*).

[9] In another direction, but within this same universe, Laura de Melo e Souza investigated several cases brought to the court, involving apostasy and, in particular, defilement of sacred symbols, such as crucifixes buried in sugar cans and feces; or substitution of the host for tapioca or pumpkin flour, among others. The novelty of her analysis lies in what she called 'divinization of the economic universe', in which, instead of the usual demonization of acts and gestures, an attempt is made to Christianize the profane elements, generally associated with indigenous cultures. For further details and in depth analysis,

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see Melo e Souza (1986), *O diabo na terra de Santa Cruz (The Devil in the Land of the Holy Cross).* Carnivalization, in turn, as a concept, comes from the work of Mikhail Bakhtin (1987), *A cultura na Idade Média e no Renascimento – o contexto de François Rabelais (The Work of François Rabelais and Popular Culture of the Middle Ages and Renaissance).*

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