

Poetnographies: *trieiros* and alleys between Afro-Amerindian poetics and the artistic creation

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ABSTRACT – Poetnographies: *trieiros* and alleys between Afro-Amerindian poetics and the artistic creation

– In this essay, we intend to revisit the *trieiros* and alleys that led to the notions of poetnography and the lived field, with a methodological approach towards the creative work in performing arts. In the act of revisiting, we also seek to observe the developments, update and discuss the conceptual and ethical challenges involved in the work with popular knowledge and Afro-Amerindian poetics from a decolonial perspective. The discussion is based on the authors' own production on the subject, but flirts with Performance Studies. A poetnographic research is presented so, not only as an artistic result, but as a process that reveals otherness, reinforces or problematizes identities, constructs or reconstructs imagery, in an inseparable confluence between art, education and politics.

Keywords: **Poetnography. Lived Field. Dance. Afro-Amerindian Poetics.**

RÉSUMÉ – Ethnopoétique-Graphie: *trieiros* et traverses entre poétiques afro-amérindiennes et création

artistique – Dans cet essai, nous entendons revisiter les *trieiros* et les traverses qui ont conduit aux notions de Ethnopoétique-graphie et de champ vécu, par la perspective d'approche méthodologique du travail de création dans les arts du spectacle. Dans cet acte de revisiter, nous cherchons à observer les développements et à faire des actualisations mais aussi à discuter les défis conceptuels et éthiques qui s'imposent du fait de la perspective décoloniale de ce travail de connaissance et de poétique afro-amérindiennes. La discussion est basée sur la propre production des auteurs concernant ce thème, mais flirte avec les études de performance. La recherche poétnographique est présentée, non seulement comme un résultat artistique, mais également comme un processus qui révèle des altérations, renforce ou problématise les identités, construit ou reconstruit l'imagerie, dans une confluence inséparable de l'art, l'éducation et la politique.

Mots-clés: **Ethnopoétique-Graphie. Champ Vécu. Danse. Poétiques Afro-Amérindiennes.**

RESUMO – Poetnografias: *trieiros* e vielas entre poéticas afro-ameríndias e a criação artística

– Neste ensaio pretende-se visitar os *trieiros* e vielas que conduziram às noções de poetnografia e campo vivido, como uma abordagem metodológica do trabalho de criação em artes da cena. No ato de visitar, busca-se também observar os desdobramentos e fazer atualizações, bem como discutir os desafios conceituais e éticos que se impõem frente ao trabalho com poéticas afro-ameríndias, em uma perspectiva decolonial. A discussão é feita a partir da própria produção das autoras sobre o assunto, mas flerta com os Estudos da Performance. Apresenta-se, então, a pesquisa poetnográfica, não apenas como um resultado artístico, mas como um processo que revela alteridades, reforça ou problematiza identidades, constrói ou reconstrói imaginários, numa confluência indissociável entre arte, educação e política.

Palavras-chave: **Poetnografia. Campo Vivido. Dança. Poética Afro-Ameríndia.**

Hearing the Silence, Seeing the Invisible (Introduction)

*The room is full, everyone
How do I get in now?
The room is full, everyone
How do I get in now?
I come in, everyone, I come in
With God and Our Lady
I come in, everyone, I come in
With God and Our Lady*

(Baía de Princesa, Maranhão/Brazil, Public Domain)

Hearing the silence and seeing the invisible could be about hallucinations, perceiving something that is not really there, or that does not physically exist. Although hallucinations, fantasies, and delusions are also of interest to artists in their craft of creating other realities, this is not the motto of interest on the subject. Hearing the silence and seeing the invisible here are related to a kind of acuity, or rather, recognizing processes of silence and invisibility. Nor do they refer to *giving a voice* to the poor and oppressed, it is a matter of deigning to recognize different identities, perhaps otherness, hearing dissonant voices, or whispering in the distance. But what are these voices at odds with?

Talking about difference, this essay understands it by resuming and reaffirming what Frantz Fanon (1968) announced since *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) about the violence of the colonial process, which established the rupture of the world in the relationship between colonizers and colonized, in which the latter were reduced to an anonymous mass to be exploited and expropriated. The voice and thinking of the Martinican thinker draws attention to the importance of perceiving racism as an agent of inequalities that operate in the different layers of life, including in the production and validation of knowledge, culture, education, and body and behavior standards.

A few decades later than Fanon, another dissonant body, that of a woman, raises the question of whether *is the underling allowed to speak?* In 1985, while narrating the story of an Indian who is prevented from representing herself because she is a woman and a widow, the Indian female author Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak points to the fact that this situation of

marginality is more strenuously imposed on the female gender, as “[...] the woman, as a subordinate, is not allowed to speak and, whenever she attempts to do so, she cannot find the means to make herself heard” (Spivak, 2010 [1985], p. 15).

It is interesting to think that the act of making oneself heard invariably implies an audience; that is, an attentive, interested, and perhaps silent listening. Thus, hearing silence means, first of all, recognizing one’s own deafness. Seeing the invisible is recognizing one’s own blindness. Discussions raised by as the likes of Fanon and Spivak help us recognize such deafness and blindness not as individual deficiencies, but as a consequence of the project of colonialism, that of according to Quijano (2005), arises with modernity and differs from colonialism, as it is not just about a political domination system and possible dependency, but a broader system of oppression that fosters unequal relations through the imposition of a racial/ethnic classification of the population and that operates in material, subjective and everyday dimensions (Mota Neto, 2016).

That said, this essay intends to portray a little of what we have seen and heard across *trieiros* and alleys that allowed us to unfold our *self* through encounters and reunions with Afro-Amerindian poetics. The idea of unfolding the self is very dear to us, as it appears as an alternative to blur the boundaries built from the colonial paradigm between the self and the other – whatever is not mE[uropean], is the Other, as ratified by Spivak (2010 [1985], pp. 45-46).

Contemporary French intellectuals cannot devise the type of Power and Desire that would inhabit the unnamed subject of the Other in Europe. It is not just the fact that everything they read – either critical or not – is trapped within the debate about the production of this Other, supporting or criticizing the constitution of the Subject as Europe itself.

The place we occupy as professors – the university – is sometimes perceived as a place of power that reproduces epistemological hegemonies, and our daily confrontations do not allow us to completely dismiss that impression. However, it is important to recognize (and defend) public universities as plural environments of criticism and resistance, of education and political confrontations. Thus, we speak of our self here as academics, education workers, artists, but also as women, mothers, Latin Americans – one with

strong Bantu African descent, and the other of the Tupi-Guarani indigenous people – with distinct life, geographic and academic paths; but both seeking to unfold our self from the encounter with Afro-Amerindian poetics.

Expressive traditional manifestations, cultural performances, ritual performances, crossroads manifestations, are some of the categories that we eventually used in the search for alternatives to avoid the excessive use of the term popular culture, both for understanding it as a slippery concept in the face of contemporary social demands and flows, as well as willing to seek understandings that are closer to and better characterize their artistic approach. Moreover, considering the words of researcher Jorge das Graças Veloso (2016):

For the narratives of otherness, cultural knowledge and practices, in their plurality, are recognized by their internal speeches, formulated by the makers themselves. Within this universe, where I recognize that the propositions of Ethnology, for the performing arts; Ethnomusicology, for music; and Visual Culture, for Visual Arts are located; each practice comprises an internal logic and unique constitutive elements that are particular to each. Here, as no generalizing thought is formulated, each manifestation is studied from within and from what they understand that is being done by their makers. [...] And the theoretical references are all those that make dialogs possible from this displacement of the place of speech, with a greater approximation of thinkers from non-European centers. Finally, setting myself within that last group, by acknowledging the other's right to exercise their own narrative, I raise the question of using lexicons specific to each activity and group of doers. Undeniably, any and all expressive human manifestations, whether traditional (old or new) or not, have their own lexicon, which is capable of handling everything that concerns them. I am not, therefore, denying their maker's right to incorporate definitions from other areas. What I mean is: what best defines the knowledge and actions of each cultural group is the lexicon adopted by them (Veloso, 2016, p. 92-93).

Regarding the criticism of popular culture as terminology, it comprises the masking of important contribution/participation/authorship of the African-descendant and indigenous population in these cultural processes, bordering a failed racial democracy discourse. Despite this concern, popular culture – or even popular cultures – as an alternative to identify a set of practices that constitute contextual experiences guided by orality, memory,

ancestry, affection, spirituality, experienced in daily life or in ritualistic practices of different identity groups that recognize each other as a community. This is because, despite our postures and paths to confront racism in all its forms, we concluded that elements were lacking to support alternative concepts and comprising our interest in demonstrations such as Jongo (practiced by some communities in the southeast Brazil), Capoeira Angola (practiced throughout Brazil and in many places worldwide) – practices with a strong black identity –, as well as the knowledge of midwives, *raizeiras*, and spinners from the Brazilian Cerrado, built in a confluence of ethnicities.

Although this conceptual and terminological discussion caused some anguish, the fact that we work not only with ideas but also with/about the body, affections, and movements, kept us unfazed in our journey, as it was clear that our search was (and is) for hearing the silence, seeing the invisible and, in an attempt to renounce subordination, to speak and be seen, to create and teach dance from there. Our discomfort settled within the idea presented by Silva and Falcão (2016) that the concepts do not fit in the terms and that, in turn, given their dynamism and drive, the practices go beyond the concepts.

The fact is that, in different societies, human beings are made, make, then remake culture through meaningful experiences, symbolically and emotionally shared, in an intense game of interactions, whose local and global references intersect in the ‘lived world’. In this game, the clash between tradition and modernity, the old and the new, operates under the same Manichaeic logic as the classic good-evil dichotomy, which does not account for the epistemological diversity of the world’s knowledge and its cosmoperceptions. For this reason, the perspective of Cartesian analysis that simplifies, decomposes, and breaks the characteristic features of manifestations in popular cultures down into elementary parts in an attempt to find conceptual homogeneity is inconsistent, as it fails to understand and explain the drive for life in cultural productions. A contemporary perspective of popular culture must, therefore, deny essentialist attitudes that once characterized it and incorporate identity constructions and affirmations (Silva; Falcão, 2016, p. 16).

However, a recent approach to the discussions on the idea of decoloniality, modernity/coloniality, and on the constitution of a decolonial pedagogy promoted our reunion with Paulo Freire’s (1921-1997) popular edu-

cation, as well as with Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals Borda's (1925-2008) work and its proposal for Participatory Action Research (PAR), which contributed to leverage Popular Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. Thus, like Mota Neto (2016, p. 44), we understand:

[...] that the decoloniality concept is understood, despite its diversity, as a radical questioning and search for overcoming the most distinct forms of oppression perpetrated by modernity/coloniality against subaltern classes and social groups, especially the colonized and neo-colonized regions by Euro-American metropolises in terms of human existence, social and economic relations, thought and education.

This essay uses some important principles from Paulo Freire's contributions regarding popular education in his different works and at different moments of his intellectual production. For, as observed by Mota Neto (2016), these aspects also configure a decolonial pedagogy, bound to a Third World educator's place of enunciation. In his journey across the world, from Northeastern Brazil to Africa, Paulo Freire learned from the different and captured the geopolitics of knowledge; he created and tried out a political-pedagogical proposal that values collective memory and resistance movements.

Fals Borda's conception, which can also be seen from a decolonial perspective, is organized from his socio-educational thinking, from an intellectual who thinks and feels, guided not only by instrumental reason but also committed to ethics and the objective situations of the oppressed (exploited). His method dialogues with the research field, structuring itself as a method of investigation, technique, educational proposal, and political action, which, according to Mota Neto (2016), makes a triad of investigating, educating, and acting together as thinking and feeling subjects. These strategies characterize participatory action-research.

Broadly speaking, Fals Borda's critique of intellectual colonialism implies the construction of a science of its own, later translated as the sociology of liberation, which he called rebellious, subversive, committed to fighting the battle against colonialism, with scientific methods that face the complexities of our reality in an interdisciplinary way while searching for social transformation. Among the general bases of his research proposal lay the critical recovery of the history and culture of the original peoples and

the respectful search for the sum of knowledge between academic ideas and popular experiences (Mota Neto, 2016).

The popular education proposed by Freire and Fals Borda's cultural synthesis helps us understand the importance of Afro-Amerindian poetics, as they value local culture, collective memories, silenced stories, in other words, the knowledge of the popular classes. For it is within these perspectives that educational action overcomes barriers between theory-practice, investigated subject-object, popular and scientific knowledge, plus many others imposed by coloniality. Thus, for us, the idea of popular gains new impetus as we approach education and social movements from a decolonial perspective.

The expression Afro-Amerindian also seems to meet our current need to determine (out from the title) a political place that values the African diaspora in Brazil and leads us to seeing, listening, and perhaps understanding something about the countless indigenous peoples in Brazil and throughout Latin America, taking this position as a step further towards the anti-racist struggle.

This Latin American awareness that the Afro-Amerindian expression seems to encompass and transpose the ideological barriers of the Brazilian national project, bringing us closer to different but very close realities, as commented by Zeca Ligiéro in his preface to the book *Performances Culturales en América Latina*:

While exploring these countries' innermost regions and learning about their African and Amerindian traditions, we could also notice our similarities through common resistance to the atrocities of Iberian colonizing countries, which educated us under the sword and the cross. However, many other waves of immigrants have later taken other nuances to each Latin country, adding new colors to each country's particularities, projecting a multi-ethnic and multicultural Latin America, where the most archaic and modern coexist (Ligiéro apud Koeltzsch; Silva, 2019, p. 15).

Thus, our interests and engagements in Afro-Amerindian poetics have led us through paths that unfolded the self in the sense of the construction and/or strengthening of our identities (each and collective). Here, we evoke the *triestros* and alleys metaphor as access roads to get to a certain place, which are either alternative routes known only to residents or the only ac-

cess roads – built by the population that occupies a given territory. We approach Afro-Amerindian poetics through *trieiros* of fields, Chapadas, and alleys across neighborhoods and hills, as insurgencies, and through these paths, we have met the notion of poethnography.

It is important to say that, a priori, we did not intend to build a creative methodology in the performing arts, just as it is not our intention to defend it as a ready and finished proposal with this essay. However, the fact that poethnography is being used in some academic studies in the field of scenic arts and cultural performances inspires us to dedicate some effort to build theoretical references supporting studies aimed at investigating Afro-American poetics, whatever the terminology one chooses. It is in this sense that we intend to revisit the paths that led us to this notion, observing its developments, how they support our studies and the conceptual challenges they establish.

Although this review exercise is largely healthy, as it allows us to mature and self-criticize, it poses a great challenge from the textual point of view, since, despite our proposal pointed to a conceptual construction based on our common experiences from the last decade, we must also consider that our artistic-academic trajectories were not the same and that the effort we undertake here is, above all, discussing our respective doctoral research projects, prioritizing their relationship, to the detriment of a deepening approach to each one. This is why we chose not to bring up each field experience in a dense way, as they can be accessed in Silva (2010) and Lima (2016).

Across Trieiros and Alleys

In 2014, we published the article *Entre Raízes, Corpos e Fé: poethnografias dançadas*, in Revista Moringa (UFPB), the first publication in which we used the term poethnography (Silva; Lima, 2014). We must say that the emergence of the notion was not due to a purely theoretical effort but in the exercise of finding words and ideas that accounted for what we were living and experiencing in scenic research laboratories. As already said, we are academics, but we theorize mainly from our artistic practice. More specifically in the field of dance, however, with special attention to its in-

terdisciplinary aspects, which promote important connections with music and theater.

We met at the undergraduate course in Dance at Universidade Federal de Goiás (UFG), where we teach, but it is also the spaces we built (or rebuilt) from there, namely the artistic company Núcleo Coletivo 22, the Research Group and Scenic Research Coletivo 22 (NuPICC), and the Águas de Menino project, focused on Capoeira Angola. Since the lines of this meeting have already been extensively explored in other publications on the trajectory and artistic production of Núcleo Coletivo 22, we will not map the paths taken for the development of the notion of poethnography from our academic production in the context of this essay. We thus emphasize the scenic investigation processes that we theoretically reflect are also experienced as part of our formative process. Such creation processes, in turn, feed our teaching practices, especially those that involve student orientation in creative processes.

Although there is no need to extend ourselves on the intricacies of our meeting at this moment, it is important to mention that our 2014 article was based on the fact that one of us was pursuing a doctorate in the line of Compositional Processes for the Scene at the Art Institute of Universidade de Brasília (UnB), and her study related both to the methodology of work in dance and some conceptual notions – referenced below –, defended by this essay's second author and published in Silva (2010; 2012).

Since Silva's doctoral thesis (2010), the procedures for scenic work have been discussed and investigated based on parameters provided by experience with traditional expressive manifestations, which we approach in this study as Afro-Amerindian poetics, to emphasize their aesthetic aspects and artistic quality. The notions of threshold body and crossroads appear as a key to understanding the relationship between ritual and performing arts. In this context, crossroads¹ are understood primarily as a space-time where *afrographies of memory* are inscribed in the body and by the body (Martins, 1997). In turn, the threshold body would be the corporeality of subjects inhabiting and signifying the crossroads. It is then a bodily state triggered by certain structures that establish the crossroads presented in Silva (2010) and founded on study and experience with Capoeira Angola, Jongo, Batuque, Samba de Roda, and Tambor de Crioula.

Based on her work, the understanding of crossroads as a ritual performance, and threshold body as an agency for body dramaturgy focused on some methodological procedures for the body preparation work in dance and theater, as well as for the processes of creation inserted in a context of the search for identifications with the crossroads; that is, to identify themselves (in the sense of recognizing themselves) and seek to identify themselves (in the sense of accepting themselves) as black, marginal, affirmative, and resistant poetics. Notions such as body installation, place-moments, inside and outside game, personal swing², developed from the conceptual web between crossroads and the threshold body.

The challenge that presented itself to the then-doctoral student in the dialogue with these notions was the fact that her field does not precisely relate to expressive traditional manifestations or performances of African matrix, as in Silva's case (2010). The context of the Brazilian Cerrado and the encounter with midwives and *raizeiras*³ suggested a field experience as intense as the crossroads had been devised in Silva (2010). However, in Silva (2010) the field is defined in very specific ritualistic performances instead of everyday performances:

Now, if the crossroad, as defined in Silva (2010), is precisely the place where past and present overlap and also where issues related to the sacred pervade, it could also be thought of not only as the time-space of parties and hobbies but also prayers, births, and blessings. The body on stage is not exactly a threshold body, nor is the scene a crossroad, but we would like to claim these identifications to the art, as they are reread and reinterpreted by the artist who can poethnograph the singularities and alterities of the women of the Cerrado through dance, building 'other crossroads' (Silva; Lima, 2014, p. 163).

On the other hand, thinking about the daily life in otherness as a crossroads phenomenon could result in the risk of spectacularizing poverty; that is, the difficulties and hardships faced by these communities in Brazil while being forced to respond to the adversities of life in a violently unequal society.

The intensity of the crossroad we sought to extend to another social context concerns the meeting. In Silva (2010), crossroads are defined as such to the measure that one participates in it within a contamination area,

and not just as a mere observer; that is, someone who is actually affected. Thus, we expand the idea of a crossroad into the notion of a lived field.

Another concern that afflicted us at the time of writing that article was the feeling that our colleagues in the Social Sciences were suspicious of our competence to talk about field research and ethnographic experience. Something that may be interpreted as a repression of ours gave rise to a question we focused on at that moment, which was how to distinguish the working methodologies of the artist of the scene in relation to those of the anthropologist.

The artist-researcher's view on popular culture, even if supported by anthropological research procedures, is guided by the principle of 'sensitive knowledge,' that is, for aesthetic reasons; whether technical, poetic and/or symbolic. It is this look that turns to the Brazilian Cerrado, more specifically the state of Goiás, in search of reasons to move your body and dance. A dance that evokes the bodies and stories of others and dialogues with the personal inventory. In other words, a dance that promotes the encounter, strangeness, recognition, and creation of danced poethnographies, in the sense of poetizing the existence and being of the woman who inhabits the Cerrado with her body practices, beliefs, and faith (Silva; Lima, 2014, p. 155).

It should be noted that we did not intend to undo the important feat of the meeting between Richard Schechner and Victor Turner to bridge the gap between performance and anthropology, which took place in the field of Performance Studies at New York University in the 1980s. Among other contributions, the authors developed the possibility of a point of view towards the ritual as drama and different types of performance as ritual. At that time, we intended to reflect and question the artistic work specificity based on its interest in the unfolding of the self. Thus, we have formulated some questions: What tools does the artist have? What should be their ethical attitude towards otherness? And, also important, what to do and how to do it based on the experience lived in the field?

In this debate, the idea of lived experience appears as a nodal point that makes us name the field research a lived one, with clear remnants of a phenomenological influence that allows for the understanding of the experience of the body in the world, starting from a sensitive aspect.

As argued by Merleau-Ponty (1996), in *Phenomenology of Perception*, sensation can be understood, first, as the way in which we are affected and, later, as I perceive the experience of a “[...] state of myself” (Merleau-Ponty, 1996, p. 23):

The phenomenological world does not comprise the pure being, but the meaning that arises in the intersection of my experiences, and the intersection of my experiences with those of the other, through the connection of each other’s gears; it is, therefore, inseparable from the subjectivity and intersubjectivity whose unity is formed by resuming my past experiences within my present experiences, the experience of the other into mine (Merleau-Ponty, 1996, p. 18).

From this perspective, the subject claims a living relationship of what they perceive with their body in the lived world. “Therefore, the sensations, the ‘sensitive qualities,’ are far from being reduced to the experience of a certain unspeakable state or *quale*, they offer themselves as a motor physiognomy, surrounded by a vital meaning” (Merleau-Ponty, 1996, p. 282-283).

From the lived world to the lived field, there is a passage in which sensitive qualities are emphasized, culturally constructed, and experienced in the states of crossroads in which textures and landscapes, accents, sounds are announced, and it is possible to feel the smells and flavors that add their contours to each context.

Thus, in Silva and Lima (2014) we present the ideas of poethnography and lived field, starting from the need to understand the artist’s work in the search for poetics and motivations for the body to dance from the encounter with otherness. At that moment we defined poethnography as “pieces of reinvented realities that bring in their midst identifications found in manifestations of popular culture and in performances that open up amidst everyday life” (Silva; Lima, 2014, p. 167). It is relevant to observe how the idea of poethnography runs through both ethnography as a research method and choreography as dance writing. Figuratively, poethnography is a pendulum between the reality lived in a given social context, with which the artist is committed ethically and politically, and artistic creation, which, in turn, is permeated by a creative autonomy that does not necessarily intend to reproduce the lived reality, but rather recreate it, hence the importance of this

lived field being linked to the unfolding of the self, in the light of decolonial thought, as a disturbing and critical formulation.

Other Paths

As the African proverb says: *The footprints of people who have walked together never fade*, in walking these trails that, in fact, were being built by our own walking, other encounters and studies unfolded. So, the perception that what was (and is) being built resonated and responded to the desires of studies that start from the place of experience and that operate poetics and popular knowledge as devices for the creation in dance was possible, as was Miranda's master's work case (2016), entitled: *Mulheres de Linhas: dos cantos femininos de fiação do vale do rio Urucuia ao processo de criação em dança*, held at Instituto de Artes da Unicamp. Said process also resulted in an article written in partnership with one of us and published in *Textos Escolhidos de Cultura e Artes Populares* (UERJ) magazine, entitled: *Linhas para tecer poe-nografias* (Miranda; Silva, 2015).

The study discusses the process of creation in dance from a sensitive and ethnographic point of view on the sociocultural context of spinners and weavers from Hidrolândia (GO) and the Urucuia River Valley (MG) for the investigation of danced poe-nographs. For Miranda and Silva (2015), the line and the whole spinning process appear as powerful metaphors for the dance fabric and reinforce the poe-nography's character as dramaturgy for dance while committed to the context.

In the notions of threshold body and crossroads, as well as danced poe-nography the line to be spun from this cotton found its 'wheel' and its 'loom', to weave a dance as a large and delicate quilt is woven. We are currently in this stage of 'weaving', perceiving in the cotton (the tradition of spinning and weaving in Minas Gerais and Goiás), harvested from the cotton plant (popular culture of the Cerrado), the potential to turn threads into wefts of a scenic work in dance, composed of danced poe-nographs. [...] Experiencing affections of the spinning and weaving wheel as crossroads manifestations; that is, viewing there a symbolic power derived from popular knowledge for the creation of danced poe-nographies is, as we see it, a way of making and reflecting the art of dance in its post-abyssal manifestation, recognizing in the body its discursive potential (Miranda; Silva, 2015, p. 77-79).

Quite conceptually linked to the text on the methodology of the work published in 2014, the 2015 article sealed the pairing between the poethnography act and the lived field idea, thanks to the reciprocity of the two areas and the interest of the authors in listening to the silence of women from the Brazilian countryside, who star both works.

In terms of poethnography technical procedures, it is observed that while Silva and Lima (2014) highlighted *thematic motivations*, Miranda and Silva (2015) pointed out the issue of *matrices*, discussed from theatrical studies since Silva (2010; 2012). In Silva (2010; 2012), matrices are understood as *meeting points* of a supposed harmony between the form of movement and the feeling; when body action reaches a plasticity that fills the eyes and, at the same time, is encompassed by the body of the organic actor. These matrices are recognized within a bodily state immersed in an intensity field (installed body) that leads the artist to escape personal buzzwords and resize their actions, creating nexuses of their own meanings. Through different alleys, Miranda (2016), continued the effort to reflect on the lived field and poethnography in a dialogue with Bakhtinian concepts in a master's dissertation. For practical reasons, we will focus on productions that involve only the authors of this essay.

Later in this triero, the thesis *Entre raízes, corpos e fé: trajetórias de um processo de criação em busca de uma poética da alteridade*, by Lima (2016), is defended two years after the first publication on poethnography, with special attention to the question of the lived field and highlighting some poethnographic procedures, such as personal inventory, semi-fictional narrative, place-moments, body installation, among others, which are not the subject of this work. We are currently trying to revisit some of these procedures, although under the light of new reflections.

Personal Inventory and Lived Field

The personal inventory is a research about one's self, family stories, and memories, as well as their actual historical and geographical contexts as a driving force for the process of creation in dance, although we do not want to draw too much attention to this denomination. It is important to say that this methodological proposal was part of one of the author's training while attending the undergraduate course in Dance at Unicamp be-

tween 1998 and 2001, where professors⁴ dealing with the contents of popular poetics proposed this challenge in the early years of education. This practice, which can be observed in many methodological proposals for teaching dance and drama in Brazilian universities, is dear to us as it seems to be a way to build an understanding of Afro-Amerindian poetics itself, instead of treating it as something exogenous. This challenge aims to search for remnants, hints of knowledge, and traditional practices, in short, *lasting reminiscences* (Farias; Mira, 2014), which can be easily found and assessed or buried by layers of prejudice that tend to produce silence and invisibility which can be removed in this process, or at least stirred and excavated.

The relationship between the research on the self and the lived field was crucial in Lima (2016), as the choice for the lived field was not made at random and was part of a process of turning inwards and to personal stories and finding women with strong Tupi-Guarani heritage who are silent or perhaps silenced. One of them gave blessings with embers. These memories, which already moved the researcher in some preliminary experiences in dance, stimulated the meeting with midwives, a folk healer, and *raizeiras* from the Brazilian Cerrado, especially in the states of Goiás and Tocantins, including indigenous villages and quilombola communities to see invisibilities, hear silences, stop blindness and deafness.

It is in this sense that the poetics of otherness constitutes itself in the warp of the poethnographing act, starting from the understanding that the body is defined by the ability for transformation and affectation, and not the translation of the other, moving towards otherness, launching itself towards the other in the exercise of understanding them, and opening up to the world, as affirmed by Correia (2009, p. 161), in the idea of “[...] being with the other [...]” as an exercise in otherness on the part of the researcher who experiences an educational process on their own, while listening to the other.

For this essay, we take into consideration the idea of the unfolding of the self, as previously mentioned, as a way of abandoning the idea of the *other* based on a mE[uropean], but without failing to recognize possibilities of exchanges and learning in the encounter with otherness. In this sense, we find something in Viveiros de Castro (2018) that corroborates this intention, when taking the Amerindian notions of *perspectivism* and *multinat-*

uralism to think of otherness as a problem of observing this *other*. The author makes a point of remembering that “[...] the wind turns, things change, and alterity always ends up eroding and causing the most solid walls of identity to collapse” (Viveiros de Castro, 2018, p. 27).

This way, midwives, healers, *raizeiras*, spinners, as well as the masters and mistresses of *jongo*, *batuque*, and *capoeira*, are not objects of study. They are interlocutors, and the research is not oriented to observe them to describe their habits but to get to know them in a relational way and, with that, expand our ability to being and be. This is something that brings us closer to the idea of *communitas*, discussed by Victor Turner from rituals of passage.

Communitas is an unstructured relationship that often develops between injunctions. It is a relationship between concrete, historical, idiosyncratic individuals. These individuals are not segmented into roles and status but perceive each other as whole human beings. It is a relationship between rational human beings whose temporary emancipation from socio-structural norms is a matter of conscious choice (Turner, 1974, p. 05).

If in Silva (2010) this state was the experience at the crossroads, with active participation in the learning within *Capoeira Angola* circles, among others, in Lima (2016) this state implied entering the forest with D. Flor at the right time, to find plants for a particular kind of tea, or cure diseases.

The lived field can also make us face the challenges of difference, imposing the barrier of being either from the inside or the outside, hence the importance of research on the self (personal inventory), getting to the field aware of your identity. Further on there is a look and attentive and sensitive listening so as not to force gatekeepers who do not want to open up. Being aware of your identity, however, also means understanding identity as something in constant construction and between crossings; to step into the lived field one must be porous and unfold the self; that is, reinvent oneself within the poetics of otherness. This reinvention happens through poethnography, brands tattooed on the skin because they represent affective learnings.

Yet, regarding the lived field, short conversations and the good old field diary are allies. There is the need to differentiate a lived field from a sightseeing tour, hence the importance of having a clear outline of what one

aims to research. Records (photos, videos, and sound) may also be used as tools, as long as these devices do not disarm the body and perception or raise as a barrier interrupting or weakening encounters that can promote dancing impulses.

In the specific case of the doctoral research systematized in Lima (2016), the focus was on the investigation of a creative process based on the knowledge and practices carried by women in the Brazilian Cerrado. Among the walks for the Exchange of Knowledge Extension⁵ Project between 2013 and 2014, respectively in the Kalunga territory in Chapada dos Veadeiros and, in Bananal Island, in the indigenous community of Santa Isabel do Morro, home of the Karajá (Iny) people, in the encounter with certain women these pieces of knowledge and practices were established: the practice of giving birth, blessing, caring, and healing. Although some records were made, the feelings and experiences that crossed the body were prioritized, for example, the experience of participating in the making of props for the feast of Nossa Senhora da Abadia, while having a friendly conversation and drinking cachaça. An experience that, impregnated in the researcher's memory, was later accessed in the creative laboratories, transforming itself into a place-moment, a concept that we will present later.

It is worth noting that these experiments of creative laboratories are part of the methodological path of the investigation and that, in general, they are collective processes, which include, in addition to the researcher who was in the field, collaborators who, in the case of the mentioned study, was the Núcleo Coletivo 22.

The time required to characterize a lived field is not something given *a priori* and will obviously depend on the type of research carried out. The most important is the ethical and political commitment to the community, as Greiner says (2019, p. 62):

The artistic creation is not bound to promoting social or political changes. But, in giving visibility to states of crisis, it makes explicit issues that are not always visible in everyday life. Thus, connections are established that can destabilize habits and beliefs and point out possibilities. It is in this sense that the state of otherness can be translated as a state of creation – an absolutely fundamental activism, especially within those environments most affected by the neoliberal logic that is nourished by the lack of interest in singularities.

Semi-Fictional Narratives

The return of the lived field is always a whirlwind, with many stories to tell, as well as emotions, anguishes, and anxieties. There is an effusive need to speak non-stop [...]. That is part of the work organization process to be developed in scenic laboratories, where these drives experienced in the countryside will be reflected in the body.

Both in Silva (2010) and Lima (2016), the resource of the semi-fictional narrative was used as a strategy to create or activate an imaginary about the historical-cultural context in which the lived field took place. The narrative is understood here as a resource of popular traditions to transmit knowledge and memories through the act of telling stories and as a first creative exercise. In Silva's (2010) case, the author who created Seu Firmino, and in Lima (2016), who created Dona Mélia, semi-fictionality is a result of them being fictional characters, yet they bring together historic, cultural, and geographic characteristics of the place; that is, their contexts are factual although the characters are fictional.

Perhaps the semi-fictional narrative itself could already be thought of as poethnography since both memory and subjectivity are present. In Seu Firmino's case, the author places herself as the granddaughter of this gentleman, who is a capoeira master and is over 400 years old. This relationship of kinship with the old reflects the centrality that older men (masters) had in their field of study and allows the materialization of a grandfather that the author did not have (but idealized), introducing aspects of her personal inventory.

Although it can be thought of as an end, the semi-fictional narrative is more of an access alley between the field and the written work, the field and other people who may not have had the opportunity to live the field but end up participating in the creation process and, above all, act as alleys for the artist-researcher to trigger their memories of the lived field.

In the specific case of Silva (2010), the narrative about Seu Firmino had both the role of replacing the dense description, so necessary for the validation of an ethnography in anthropological research, and activating the sensitive dimension. In Lima (2016), Dona Mélia is a synthesis of the old raizeiras, folk healers, and midwives of the Cerrado, conjugated from the

personal inventory in which the researcher's great-great-grandmother emphasizes her own Guarani indigenous descent. Thus, within her narrative, this old lady brings the tracks and noises found within the lived field and the research about the self performed by the artist-researcher, as a closure to the academic work, constituting itself as a synthesis metaphor of the conceptual notions that directed the research, as well as the trajectory of the investigation itself. Not by chance, the closing of the thesis occurs precisely with the meeting between Dona Mélia and Seu Firmino.

Place-Moments and Thematic Motivations

With the same goal of creating *trieiros* and alleys to access the lived field, place-moments constitute another important methodological tool, as they refer to the ways of organizing the experiences standing out from the lived field and that, in the laboratory of creation, act as key pieces for the poethnographic construction; that is, the dramaturgical fabric of the work. The process described in Lima (2016) is especially relevant for the understanding of this concept, as place-moments were configured as devices of creation, a “[...] practiced place” (Silva, 1999, p. 28), a place with a powerful ambiguity for the creation process, by being something that settles within the body and space-time.

Place-moments definitions are based on thematic motivations, which are actions or symbols directly acquired from the field and which are the gateway to the poetic movement (matrices). Concerning the process described by Lima (2016), the experience in quilombos and indigenous villages in the states of Goiás and Tocantins promoted thematic motivations such as the relationship with faith, herbs, midwives (and birth itself), everyday life, and festivities.

The physical presence of herbs, arranged on the floor and in a *coité* bowl, the smell exuded by them, and the act of macerating them is also a place-moment. That is, any place in the rehearsal room and specific moment when the artist-researcher (with the body installed) relates to that material (or those ideas), evoking memories of the lived field and unfolding them in poetic movement.

The passage from one place-moment to another requires the building of bridges and senses that are woven by the movement itself from the bodily

state established in the harmony between movement and feeling. “[...] However, both (movement and feeling) will be configured as points on a map in which a path is traced. Tracing the path is the link between one place-moment and another” (Silva, 2012, p. 151).

This point deserves further attention, as in such a process, especially because it encompasses an expanded lived field within everyday life, there would be the risk of incurring caricatures and mimetic forms overcome a few centuries ago by the art of scenic dance. Two points seem relevant to avoiding this path: first, that the lived field has, in fact, caused an unfolding of the self, in the sense that the actions are not imitations but reverberations of the artist-researcher themselves; and second, that devices and methods are available to assist the investigation of the actor (dancer/actress) regarding the creation of matrices, scores, and the whole dramaturgy of the show.

In our case, body installation has fulfilled this role. This term is first mentioned in Silva’s studies in a master’s dissertation in 2004 as a compilation of techniques, sensory experiences, and exercises included the training in dance and traditional manifestations. This work is later developed into a doctoral course, being systematized in Silva (2010) as:

The installation is perceived as a work of body awareness, of transforming the body (simply body or everyday body) into a differentiated body, in a process of allying the self with the image and feeling of self through exercises that trigger muscle tone, breathing, balance, and focus, separate from the everyday life. [...] The installed body is, then, a differentiated body; that is, a body that is sensibly prepared for an extra-everyday approach to body movement. Thus, the installation consists of some exercises, classified as primary and secondary, metaphorically named to facilitate the explanation, and also as an imaginary resource of body extension – the connection of internal and external spaces (Silva, 2010, p. 134).

In addition to technical exercises, the notion of bodily wholeness is fundamental from the very beginning; that is, relaxation, which should not only refer to the smoothing of muscle tone, but also of thoughts and emotions. Bearing in mind that primary and secondary exercises require a high degree of concentration, as such activity consists of an individual search for bodily self-awareness, and not just repetitions of standardized actions, demanding the total involvement with oneself (Silva, 2010).

In addition to the primary and secondary exercises, the body installation consists of other elements, of which we highlight dynamization, based on energetic⁶ training; and personal swing, based on capoeira. The personal swing would be a moving state of readiness, already triggering memories and crossroads identification; that is, an afro-referenced repertoire, yet open to each artist-researcher's subjectivity.

This means for the creation of matrices, built since 2010 with each new creative process, or even within the classroom, has been changing to meet the demands of each individual process or group. But it was within the investigation process dealt with in Lima (2016) that the body installation underwent interesting transformations while incorporating the archetype of an old tree, brought in by the thematic motivations of that lived field. Metaphorically, this body can encompass, at the same time, the old midwives, folk healers, and raizeiras of the Cerrado, and the old trees of the Cerrado that are reborn from the fires and take root in the earth, expanding their existence.

Although the body installation already carries its own images (root for the feet, an arching of the knees, a zipper in the pubic area, an arrow in the coccyx, nylon thread as the backbone, and waterfalls for the shoulders) they operated in the creation of a body state mainly for technical work and, *a priori* did not suggest an archetype as in Lima's (2016) systematized process. What we see here is that the research method is transformed from the research itself.

This is not to say that the only possibility for poethnography is through body installation. That is just our way. We postulate that the entire process committed and engaged with Afro-Amerindian poetics, from a decolonial perspective, constitutes a possibility for poethnographies. In an article published in 2017, we abandoned the complement *dances* and spoke only of poethnographies to analyze the scenic-musical assembly entitled *Por cima do mar eu vim*, from Núcleo Coletivo 22, as it is a piece of work operating in a very porous confluence between dance, theater, music, and ritual (Silva; Lima, 2017). From there we have identified an emergence of interest in vocal, visual poethnographies, and more [...].

The Trails that Guided the Walk

Although we chose to take the course of our own studies in this essay as an opportunity to organize and update our production, this walk through trieiros and alleys followed some tracks and footprints left on the ground and that must be emphasized. Both in Silva (2004) and Silva (2010), capoeira, especially Capoeira Angola (among the other black performances studied), is an important guiding thread for dance thinking and action, due to its ability to promote body awareness and mastery of movement, musical skills, play, and improvisation. But, above all, for the ancestral strength that it can evoke. This force, which may also be referred to as *axé*, or *nguzu*, to use terms from the Afrocentric lexicon, besides building a connection with ancestry, a subject widely discussed in Silva (2010), generates a sense of belonging and, consequently, of identification. Thus, the artistic-academic research carried out sought precisely to bring this strength and identification into the language of contemporary dance.

The studies carried out in the context of body preparation adopted the productions of the so-called Theatrical Anthropology and the ideas produced from Lume, Unicamp's Núcleo de Pesquisas Teatrais, as important theoretical (and practical) support, proposals that can be well systematized within Luis Otávio Burnier's speech: "The true technique of an actor's art is one that manages to sculpt the body and physical actions in time and space, awakening memories, dynamizing potential and human energies, both for the actor and the viewer"⁷.

The Performance Studies, as already mentioned, with their approach to Anthropology, open a safer way to discuss the issues of identity, otherness, field, and ritual that are very specific to the context of Afro-Amerindian poetics.

The idea of a crossroad, supported by the discussions of Leda Maria Martins (1997) and Eduardo Oliveira (2007), unfolds in the lived field but leaves its mark of an afrocentred⁸ and, therefore, decolonial cosmoperception. It should be noted that we do not intend to replace the idea of crossroads with the one of a lived field, as the first refers to time and space, while the second is an action, a way of doing and perceiving the field research, a sensible research methodology.

Endless Considerations: footprints on the ground

As a methodological approach to research in the performing arts, poethnography is undoubtedly tangent and crossed by decolonial pedagogy, which presents us with the urgency of an ethical and political commitment to human existence, the subjects of the lived field, the oppressed, the subordinate, also translated into the researchers' commitment to make artistic work, as well as its developments (workshops, videos, photographic exhibitions, among others), present within the spaces and communities in which the lived field is carried out.

Here, it is worth mentioning one of the experiences of returning to the community in Moinhos (GO), the quilombola community that is home to Dona Flor, an important interlocutor of the study produced by Lima (2016). At the end of the dirt road that leads us there, artists and residents mix for the ritual performance *Entre raízes, corpos e fé*, exchanges and conversations with Dona Flor around the fire, as well as other meetings, established a possibility for the unfolding of the self as an exercise in otherness and encounter with the knowledge that gives birth to Afro-Amerindian poetics.

What then would the contribution of poethnography be? First of all, poethnography is a theoretical-methodological reference for the construction of knowledge in art, especially from the invisibilities and silences resulting from the mechanisms of control, discrimination, and denial created by modernity/coloniality. Thus, poethnography invariably involves the act and effect of opening doors and windows to the world in search of listening to silences, seeing invisibilities, and also feeling and thinking through the encounter with voices, people, stories, dances, pieces of knowledge that you mean to recognize, learn, and strengthen. And of course, before leaving through a door or window like this, it is essential to look in the mirror.

In reviewing this trajectory of artistic-academic production, we can, in short, point to poethnography, as a *writing* of the body from the unfolding of the self through the lived field. This way, poethnographic research, together with an artistic result, reveals alterities, reinforces or problematizes identities, builds or rebuilds imagery, in an inseparable confluence between art, education, and politics.

Notes

- ¹ The discussion on the concept of crossroads is carried out from Leda Maria Martins' (1997)
- ² Cf.: (Silva, 2010; 2012).
- ³ Doctoral thesis subject: *Entre raízes, corpos e fé: trajetórias de um processo de criação em busca de uma poética da alteridade* (Lima, 2016) under development at the time of the writing of the article published in 2014.
- ⁴ Inaicyra Falcão dos Santos e Graziela Rodrigues.
- ⁵ An extension project linked to UFG that organizes a group of people to, during a walk, carry out cultural exchanges with traditional communities.
- ⁶ Cf. Burnier (2001) and Ferracini (2006).
- ⁷ Available at: <<http://www.lumeteatro.com.br/o-grupo>> Accessed on: Apr. 5, 2020.
- ⁸ “The Afrocentric idea essentially refers to the epistemological proposal of the place. As Africans have been culturally, psychologically, economically and historically displaced, it is important that any assessment of their conditions in any country is based on a location centered on Africa and its diaspora. We start with the view that Afrocentricity is a type of thought, practice and perspective that perceives Africans as subjects and agents of phenomena acting on their own cultural image and according to their own human interests” (Asante, 2009, p. 93).

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This original paper, translated by Marília Dominicci (Tikinet Edição Ltda) and copyedited by Roberto Francisco (Tikinet Edição Ltda), is also published in Portuguese in this issue of the journal.

Received on April 30, 2020

Accepted on September 29, 2020

Editor-in-charge: Celina Nunes de Alcântara

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