



From the Asphalt to the Forest: Cia. Livre's research on the creation of an epic and *perspectivist scenic language*

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ABSTRACT – **From the Asphalt to the Forest: Cia. Livre's research on the creation of an epic and *perspectivist scenic language*** – This article examines Cia. Livre's scene, which questions the constitution of Brazilian identity, relating the individual in the urban context and Amerindian thought. Since the performance *Vem Vai, o caminho dos mortos* (2007), transit between the forest and the asphalt has been identified, instituted in the scenic translations of anthropophagy, according to Andrade (1928), Campos (1992), and Nunes (1979), and Amazonian cosmology, based on theories of perspectivism, especially Descola (1992), Carneiro da Cunha (1998), Kopenawa and Albert (2015), and Viveiros de Castro (1996; 2002; 2015). It concludes by highlighting the company's decolonial strategy in the use of anthropology in order to imagine other humanities.

Keywords: **Contemporary Scene. Brazilian Theater. Epicization Processes. Amerindian Perspectivism. Contemporary Anthropology.**

RÉSUMÉ – **De l'Asphalte à la Forêt: les recherches de Cia. Livre sur la création d'une scène épique et *perspectiviste*** – Cet article examine la scène de Cia. Livre, qui problématise la constitution de l'identité brésilienne, mettant en relation l'individu dans le contexte urbain et la pensée amérindienne. Depuis le spectacle *Vem Vai, le chemin des morts* (2007), un transit entre la forêt et l'asphalte a été établi, institué dans la traduction scénique de l'anthropophagie, selon Andrade (1928), Campos (1992) et Nunes (1979), et la cosmologie amazonienne, basée sur les théories du perspectivisme, en particulier Descola (1992), Carneiro da Cunha (1998), Kopenawa e Albert (2015) et Viveiros de Castro (1996 ; 2002; 2015). Il conclut en mettant en évidence la stratégie décoloniale de la compagnie dans l'utilisation de l'anthropologie, pour imaginer d'autres humanités.

Mots-clés: **Scène Contemporaine. Théâtre Brésilien. Processus d'Épicisation. Perspectivisme Amérindien. Anthropologie Contemporaine.**

RESUMO – **Do Asfalto ao Mato: a pesquisa da Cia. Livre na criação de uma cena épica e *perspectivista*** – Este artigo examina a cena da Cia. Livre, que problematiza a constituição da identidade brasileira, relacionando o indivíduo no contexto urbano e o pensamento ameríndio. Desde o espetáculo *Vem Vai, o caminho dos mortos* (2007), identifica-se um trânsito entre o mato e o asfalto, instituído nas traduções cênicas da antropofagia, segundo Andrade (1928), Campos (1992) e Nunes (1979), e da cosmologia amazônica, a partir das teorias do perspectivismo, em especial, Descola (1992), Carneiro da Cunha (1998), Kopenawa e Albert (2015) e Viveiros de Castro (1996; 2002; 2015). Conclui-se destacando a estratégia decolonial da companhia no recurso à antropologia, para imaginar outras humanidades.

Palavras-chave: **Cena Contemporânea. Teatro Brasileiro. Processos de Epicização. Perspectivismo Ameríndio. Antropologia Contemporânea.**

The discussion presented here addresses the artistic processes of Cia. Livre, a São Paulo collective of which the author is a part, highlighting the creative path inaugurated in *Vem Vai, o caminho dos mortos* (2007) and continued in the scenic creations *Cia. Livre Canta Kaná Kawã* (2014) and *Xapirí Xapiripê, lá onde a gente dançava sobre espelhos* (2014). Other consequences could be highlighted in *Morte e dependência na Terra do Pau Brasil* (2019) and in the recent *Os Um e os Outros* (2019), works that will be cited here but commented on in future analyses.

Since *Vem Vai, o caminho dos mortos*, Cia. Livre observes the question of alterity, permeated by the assumptions of *difference* and *equality*, a dilemma already outlined in its previous works, but which acquires new contours focusing on contemporary Brazilian anthropology that Cia. Paulistana incorporates in its stagings. From 2007, the *enigmas of difference* emerge from contact with non-urban communities, highlighting aspects of the space inhabited by the group when confronted by the distance and proximity between subjects and cultures. How does this theatrical collective approach, which crosses traditional ethnographic territories, making a cross observation between the village and the unstable flow of the metropolis, contrasts with the hegemonic point of view around the Enlightenment subject? How does the theatrical scene, enriched by the perspective of native cultures, especially concerning the polyphony of the human person and cannibal thinking, face the founding axioms of the theatrical phenomenon in the West? Would these experiments serve a decolonial orientation, in the process of generating theatrical forms that imagine other humanities?

Acting continuously since 1999 in the city of São Paulo (SP), Cia. Livre is a collective of artists directed by director Cibele Forjaz, recognized as a representative of the group theater movement in São Paulo and widely awarded for its performances and performing arts research. In 2014, it received from the Municipal Council for the Preservation of the Historical, Cultural and Environmental Patrimony of the City of São Paulo (Conpresp), the emblem of heritage with intangible cultural significance for the city¹, demarcating its importance also for the community, in artistic, political, and social aspects. In their latest theatrical creations, especially from 2006, when the process that resulted in *Vem Vai, o Caminho dos Mortos* (2007)² was initiated, the group has been problematizing the conflicting

constitution of Brazilian identity through dialogue between the urban individual, its context and contradictions, and Amerindian thought, defined according to contemporary Brazilian anthropology.

This bias can be summed up as exploring the *transit between the forest and the asphalt*, a description that the group started to adopt empirically since 2007, to summarize its projects. Given the set of Cia.'s proposals, the conceptual synthesis intuited since that moment proved to be correct: the forest and asphalt can be understood as systemic spaces (geographic territory, place of in-progress power relations and arising from historical processes, and structures social and economic)³ and interrelated; true force fields that *Vem Vai, o caminho dos mortos* presented, and continued in *Raptada Pelo Raio* (2009), adaptation of Pedro Cesarino in partnership with Cia. Livre, for the indigenous myth *Kaná Kawã*, of the Marubo people of the western Amazon and *Raptada Pelo Raio 2.0* (2011) and *Cia. Livre Canta Kaná Kawã* (2014), two reinterpretations of the 2009 staging.

Xapiri Xapiripê, Lá Onde Dançávamos sobre espelhos (2014), a choreographic performance created in partnership with Cia. 8 Nova Dança about Yanomami shamanism, intensified the experience of corporeality in the space *between*, translated as the place of passage, of death, or skin change. Although not covered in this paper, it is worth highlighting the problematization of this transit in *Morte e dependência na Terra do Pau Brasil* (2019), a *site-specific* documentary theater, held at the Museu da Cidade de São Paulo (Museu do Ipiranga), about the Amerindians and the emergence of unofficial historical narratives. *Os Horácios e Os Curiácios*, by Brecht, was freely adapted and named *Os Um e os Outros* (2019), where the harmony between the two territories is questioned, with the accentuated conflicts of power surrounding the rights of the original peoples to the land. These shows exemplify the thematic focus on the Amerindian but the result of the group's research on the search for an epicizing scenic language concerning the material of Amerindian cosmologies.

On the epicizing tendency, this is based on a special appropriation by Cia. Livre of the Brechtian epic theater from its Brazilian *translation*. The basis of this investigation lies in the reinterpretation of the German director and theorist by the Brazilian group theater from the 1960s, more specifically, in the examples of Teatro de Arena⁴ and Teatro Oficina⁵, influential in

the stage production of the collective. The operators of this mixture are the use of narrative and music, promoting the breaking of the dramatic flow; the constitution of a *discontinuous* collaborative dramaturgy in terms of gender; the direct relationship with the viewer; the shift between individualized characters and choral interventions; and the mutation of points of view determining fluctuations in the modes of enunciation of actors and actresses. Finally, it is worth highlighting the concern with creating a theater that interferes in the social field, discussing hierarchies and inequalities.

As we want to analyze here, such poetic explorations take on another dimension, if examined through the lens of the constants and inconsistencies between anthropology and scenic arts, an intertwining that in Cia. Livre deserves the nomination of a *perspectivist scene*. The successive approximations of Cia. Livre to the interaction between theatrical creation and the culture and reality of Brazil's people came to constitute the dimensions of this scene. First, it required denaturalizing meanings about the space of the Cia. Livre artists themselves, i.e., the asphalt, or the physical limits of the metropolis and its people (where the group's artists are included), in addition to its singular imaginary world – knowledge, symbols, and stereotypes of the city experience, directly lived, observed and re-presented in the scene by the components of the theatrical collective. According to Agier (2011), although it is difficult to define the big city and its consequent forms of sociability, it is possible to know it based on its residents, its specific movements, its places of interaction, and its models of representation. We must also consider the contemporary Latin American situation, at the same time glued to European models and averse to them.

The contact with the forest, in turn, concentrated another subject of observation, analysis, and interpretation (Agier, 2011). This context, which cannot be called *regional*, since it crosses different regions of the country, differs substantially from urban processes, configuring a source that challenges and strains the so-called *global world's* boundaries. Thus, the group's view needed to be oriented towards a universe little known even to Brazilians, which is the space of the forest, its societies, its inhabitants (human and non-human – animals, plants, and *enchanted ones*), and ways of thinking and acting they practice.

Thus, a cross-observation was carried out between the village and the metropolis' unstable flow, enriched by native cultures' perspective. This shift of Cia. Livre between the asphalt and the forest, which crosses the traditional ethnographic territories (although defying the fields of anthropology and ethnology), brought about changes in the group's theatrical performance. Based on the challenge of understanding non-urban populations and, finally, the communities that Descola called *animists* – in which the author concludes that it is “[...] arbitrary to say that the categories of social practice [have] a logical advance on those that governed relations with non-humans” (Campos; Daher, 2013, p. 498) –, brought questions surrounding the separation between nature and culture and the ontology of the human (in his social practices). It can be said that the highlights of Cia. Livre's creative processes for the polyphony of the human person and cannibal thinking, in a prism that contrasts with the hegemonic approach of the Enlightenment subject, fostered the revision of the founding propositions of the theatrical phenomenon, according to culture theater in which the group was formed, among them, the principles of drama, fiction, mimesis, and representation.

Closer to the theatrical production of the 1980s than to the theatrical forms concerned with the previous contestation and political engagement, Cia. Livre recognized itself as heir to Teatro Oficina's investigations, which combined the Marxist agenda, the revolution of habits, the influences of the reforming masters of modern theater, and the search for a national scenic language, inspired by vaudeville and comedy theater. It was only in the construction of *Arena Conta Danton* (2004), a show staged at the headquarters of Teatro de Arena, at Rua Dr. Teodoro Baima, that the group turned to a Brecht's more in-depth examination, finding in his praxis support to reread *A morte de Danton*, by Georg Büchner. The themes of the French Revolution and the historical consequences of the proletariat's struggle, organized in the *tattered* form proposed by Büchner, in association with the need to recognize themselves as a historical subject, led Cia. Livre to meet the Arena generation, observing their aesthetic and political concerns critically. Cibele Forjaz (2005, p. 188-190) explains:

Giving voice to the cry of the disenchanting young revolutionary in the middle of Teatro de Arena seemed to me a coherent challenge. [...] The inspira-

tion was the Sistema Coringa developed by Augusto Boal and the Teatro de Arena group in shows like 'Arena Conta Zumbi' and 'Arena Conta Tiradentes.' It is worth noting that [...] based on the concept of the Sistema Coringa, we invented our way of telling this story here and now, incorporating in our work, empirically, the various influences that compose it.

Although with the use of different materials, it was based on the interests derived from the occupation process of the Teatro de Arena and the text by Georg Büchner that the group moved in the direction of the subjects and ways of doing that structured the next research, entitled *Mitos de Morte e Renascimento no Brasil*, resulting in the creation of *Vem Vai* and *Raptada Pelo Raio*. In a way, Büchner's concerns about revolutionary momentum, historical responsibility, and state terrorism resonate in the new proposal, in which the transition between life and death is the definitive transformation. The fragmentary exhibition, which characterizes the work of the German playwright, with scenes that sound almost independent, already incited a less cohesive dramatic form; a feature that was reinforced in *Vem Vai*, written through a collaborative process in which different voices are heard, updating myths due to the present time of Brazilian society. In the place of dialogue, the figure of the narrator is highlighted, causing the audience to reflect on the scenes and leading the temporal and spatial ellipses; a format that will be radicalized in the three versions that the Cia. made of the Kaná Kawá myth, the plays *Raptada Pelo Raio*, *Raptada Pelo Raio 2.0*, and *Cia. Livre Canta Kawá*.

Also, it is possible to see in *Vem Vai*, as happened in *Arena conta Danton*, the return of certain contradictions experienced by the extinct Teatro de Arena group, in an attempt to bring the *Brazilian people* to the scene, given the recognition of the complexity in defining this collective character, without erasing the differences that compose it and the disputes that forged this identity. Also, specific formal achievements of the 2004 edition, strongly inspired by the Arena's theatricality, proved to be productive ways to face the challenge of giving scenic material to Amazonian cosmologies. Among them, Cia. Livre embraced the explicit convention theater-game format (based, for example, on the live staging of characters by their actors and actresses); non-psychological performance; the choral formation (with characters played by different actors and actresses) and the frank coexistence between text and music, inflecting a non-illusionist scene.

However, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the result of choice in *Vem Vai* for the Amerindian universe must be explained more in terms of ruptures than continuities. Before that, Cia. Livre already used narrative and singing (promoting the breaking of the dramatic flow); the constitution of an *impure* scene concerning dramatic genres; the direct relationship with the viewer; the shift between individualized characters and choral interventions and the collaborative creation (the result of endless re-fractions). However, the suggestion of a relational perspective for traditional categories was a profound shift, caused by Amerindian myths and the thinking of the forest peoples. Therefore, at the center of the transformation of the Cia. Livre scene, which we saw in 2007, found not only unusual relationships between the elements of the staging but a more significant change.

As a medium for language, the western scene presupposes a unitary subject, described by the frame contours (in the general statement about the drama) and of the psychic unity (in terms of the fictional character), in correspondence to the fictional contract between scene and audience, which rules the theatrical phenomenon. For the actor and the actress, this contract is a game, according to Schechner (2002). This game drifts between the awareness of *not being* and the challenge of *seeming to be*, causing the spectators' admiration in the face of the mastery in the perception of the interpreters' ability to *be-not being*. In scenic practice, this has determined the cultivation of subjectivism and the valorization of vitalism (i.e., of the vital impulse that governs the presence of the creatures put on the scene). This valorization, it is worth remembering, does not correspond historically to an emphasis on the experience of subjectivity in more integrated terms. The valorization reproduces certain impasses present in the western bipartition between body and mind and the instrumentalized view of corporeality (Ludorf; Vilaça, 2010). The space-time of hegemonic western theater, in turn, is a cut that jumps from ordinary time-space, even if it mirrors it, inserting itself into the territory of culture and art.

The contact with Amerindian peoples' myths of death and rebirth indicated that this *subject of the scene* should be denaturalized and, why not, dethroned. The reading of Amerindian myths, still in rehearsing, was accompanied by the anthropologist, translator, and writer Pedro de Niemeyer

Cesarino, who also presented to Cia. Livre studies on the Amazonian worldview called Amerindian perspectivism, in the theories formulated by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (1996; 2002; 2015), Philippe Descola (1992), Manuela Carneiro da Cunha (1998; 2019), and Tânia Stolze Lima (1996), among other researchers. The experimentation of this specific view on the subject in the theatrical scene, therefore, depended on prospecting in areas not restricted to the performing arts, especially contemporary Brazilian anthropology, based on Amazonian ethnographic studies, on the Juruna (or Yudjá), the Yanomami, and the Araweté⁶.

Even though they are diverse peoples and different today than the inhabitants of these lands were before the Portuguese colonizers' arrival, they have historical-cultural (symbolic discourses and practices) and socio-political ties between them. Also, they share the same reality of resistance and struggle for their original rights in the face of an accelerated process of extermination (increasing since the 16th century). In this process, the remnants of Brazil's original peoples still face a historical erasure, which is associated with a series of physical and symbolic violence, permeated by mistakes of translation and misunderstanding of their realities.

This is the example of the Araweté (Tupi-Guarani people, living in the region of Pará), studied by Viveiros de Castro, who has been in contact with non-indigenous people since the 1970s when they received this name from an employee of the National Indian Foundation (Funai) who met the group in the first *attraction expeditions*. The name was assigned to them, even though they call themselves *bidé* (which means *we, the human beings*). The term refers, however, not only to this community (the Araweté, as opposed to the non-Araweté), but also to indigenous people of other ethnicities (as opposed to non-indigenous people), or even to all humans (as opposed to other non-humans, animals, and enchanted collectivities).

The self-denomination of the relational and mobile foundation is a strong indication of this specific and distinctive way of thinking in the European Western notion, which the concept of perspectivism contributes to elucidate. Roughly speaking, perspectivism is a “[...] indigenous conception according to which the world is populated by other subjects, agents or people, besides human beings, and who see reality differently from human beings” (Sztutman, 2008, p. 32). All these subjects are entities endowed with

a point of view, or their perspective, which determines the coexistence of different conceptions, equally real. This principle indicates that all beings see each other and are seen as equal, varying only the clothing or the envelope that gives them the contour.

This distinction was one of the first to cause heated discussions in the group, motivating the holding of *devouring workshops*, in which the concepts studied collectively were worked on in small scenes, proposed individually or in pairs and trios, by the actors and actresses. The space of Casa Livre, headquarters of the group, was occupied by proposals in which an actor or an actress became several, using masks, dolls, mirrors, projections, and all sorts of elements that defy the unity of the body and unfold the figure. The room doors and the columns supporting the space became partitions, organizing the scenes in parallel frames (Figure 1), making different plans coexist in one, separated by the rehearsal space's physical resources. In creating the scenography, some of these resources were replicated, as so fundamental they became.



Figure 1 – Parallel planes and the narrator's action. Raquel Anastásia, Lúcia Romano, José Eduardo Domingues, Henrique Guimarães, Eda Nagayama, and Edgar Castro, in *Vem Vai, o Caminho dos Mortos*, presentation record, SESC Paulista, 2007. Photo by Roberto Setton.

Source: Cia. Livre's archive.

Still, according to perspectivism, if everyone is a person, but we see some as a jaguar, or paca, or human, it is because the beholder's position

determines the definitions about the other and the interactions with him. As relationships are governed by predation and kinship relationships, these interactions vary between being prey, being predator, or being similar (i.e., neither prey nor predator, but relative, subject to more intense contacts and affinity/marriage exchanges). Thus, a human sees a jaguar as a predator and a paca as a prey. In turn, the jaguar sees the human as prey (therefore, as a paca) and, if attacked, it will be the paca and the human jaguar. The paca sees the human as a jaguar and sees itself as a human. The status of the living is, therefore, relational, and not based on an essence (human or animal), constituted from a continuous substance (humanity or animality), or specific attributes (the rationality and ability of language, in the human case, for example, as opposed to animal irrationality). There is a *background humanity* and, therefore, all beings have human sovereignty.

Once again, the created scenes provoked the notion of focal character and the corollary of the closed character, distinct in its psychological unity. Masks, animated objects, props, and the expressiveness of the body sought to make explicit the transition between the statutes of the human and the non-human, while the narrator was led to occupy a privileged place, for being able to represent schematically to all the characters, without ever needing to be “[...] entirely each” one (Rosenfeld, 1982, p. 13). All stylistic resources were evoked, returning to the staging principle common to Brecht and other playwrights; it is up to the narrator to preserve some sense of unity.



Figure 2 – Coupling to create the figure of the warrior after cannibalism. Cris Amêndola and Edgar Castro, in *Vem Vai, o Caminho dos Mortos*, presentation record, SESC Paulista 2007. Photo by Roberto Setton.

Source: Cia. Livre's archive.

Viveiros de Castro will define that the way of living and negotiating between beings in Amazonian society is becoming-other (Viveiros de Castro, 2011); i.e., that in these societies, there is a need for something different, for the OTHER, for the perpetuation of the I, since the I does not exist as an isolated and a priori attribute. Although inexorable, this need is not soothing but risky, as this OTHER is not always a counterpart, and even when it appears to be, it can reveal a hidden aspect and behave like a predator. In this way, all beings share a *cannibal being*, varying who will be the food and who will devour each interaction. According to Viveiros de Castro (2011, p. 894):

Such uncertainty is not just about the 'objects' of perception, and it is not a problem of attributive judgment; still, less is it a 'classification' problem. Uncertainty includes the subject, i.e., includes the condition of the human actant subject who is exposed to contact with the radical alterity of these other people, who – like everyone – like everyone.

This precariousness of the human condition (since what Viveiros calls human immanence or a background humanity) exists in the world, which is

always about to become something else, also affects us, humans. If we can become food at any point, the world becomes the stage for the enemy's immanence, depriving our presence of the centrality that would justify Western ethnocentrism. In its place, there is a unique cosmocentrism, in which there is not a multiplicity of cultures (one from each entity, according to their point of view) and one nature/world, but one culture, in which the point of view is multiple. Nature and culture are no longer disparate statutes but become one, woven by the dynamics of mutability.

Cannibalistic relationships (and constant danger) also extend to interactions between humans and spirits, whether they are *gods* or dead. Thus, the encounter with a human-looking being can also be the encounter with an animal or a spirit – there are no possible assurances since everything is appearance – as Viveiros de Castro (2011, p. 896) says, “[...] apparition [...]”, or a misleading perspective. Still, things cannot be two simultaneously – there is an ontological separation that limits, for example, that we are human and animal, or alive and dead. When states join, this is dangerous and can lead to illness and even death. Some behaviors, for this reason, cannot be sustained unless it has already passed to the *other side*: for example, eating raw meat, bleeding, puts the human on the edge of becoming a jaguar. Also, as two different species cannot be people-human simultaneously, no one can be too careful, especially in interactions between people (one of the people can suddenly forget about it and stop being...). Some mythologies (such as those of the Ye'kuana, from Venezuela) distinguish beings from the eyes they have, which see differently – hence we never know for sure what the OTHER sees.

Metamorphosis as a condition of existence will also put aside the definition of Western identity, constituted by the term ME (indivisible, governed by a psyche of continuous contours and one) in a prominent place, from which the non-ME (the OTHER ME, from a lower *class* than ME), in a model of relationship that is given by similarity. For Amerindian thought, the relationship model is processed based on alterity, i.e., only when non-alterity is perceived does identity proceed; as summarized by Viveiros de Castro (apud A Filosofia... 2005, electronic document):

If our relationship model is the similarity, to the point that difference is just a lack of similarity – identity is first –, then the real relationship is the sub-

ject's relationship with himself. My brother is already a second-class 'myself,' an 'other me.' From then on, third-class, or fourth-class, relationships extend until the outer darkness of enmity and non-relationality is reached. Conversely, in the indigenous world, identity is an absence of difference; no difference is an absence of identity. The first relation is the difference relation. If the brother-in-law is a second-class brother ('brother-in-law,' 'beau-frère'), the brother would be domesticated in the indigenous world brother-in-law, a brother-in-law who has emptied the difference. Fraternity is the end of relationality, not its origin.

These principles also affected the group's esthetic communication, destroying the understanding of Aristotelian conflict, conceived from the intensification of circumstances surrounding the dramatic situation, in the face of the shock of wills between the characters and the unexpected events. Not only in *Vem Vai* but also in the consecutive versions of *Cia. Livre* for the Kaná Kawā myth, the characters face positionality as one more element to guide the development of situations, as or more important than the dispute between the protagonist-antagonist functions, which usually moves the plot in the traditional dramatic model. Added to this is the danger that specific interactions can mean, and that is not due to a psychic trait or motivation of the character, as in the Aristotelian scene, but to the very relational rule that Amerindian thought suggests (as exemplified by the experience of multiple identities between the warriors, defeated and victorious, after the death and ritual devouring of the former), in a configuration experienced in *Vem Vai* (Figure 2). In both cases, the scene is sustained in the game between the actors and actresses, a strategy that reduces the ME's eloquence, transferring the source of the action to the OTHER (or, to the interaction).

Amerindian subject's presence as a theatrical character and the absorption of his way of thinking as a key to the understanding and use of narratives and other materials of non-Western origin in the creative processes of the group expanded the possibilities of the real, breaking with a unique and stable reality, determinant for the western sense of representation. If the co-existence of different plans of understanding about encounters and interaction situations makes it difficult for a single real to be fixed (whereas the others would be unreal projections or imaginations), all appearances are, therefore, misleading.

In addition to this multiplicity of plans of the real, what Viveiros calls polyphony of the human person: each entity does not have only one *ME*, but various coexistent *ME*'s, gathered under the same skin. While in the West (as in Descartes' view), a person is a result of the union between body and soul, in a "[...] material continuity and a discontinuity of the interior of beings" (Nobre, 2016, p. 285), in Amerindian ontology the person is multiple, without his leading (or true) *soul* being able to control the others. For example, for the Kaxinawá, there are two souls (an approximate translation for the term *yuxin*), the true soul (of the body) and the soul of the eye. In turn, the Marubo people have more than four homunculi within an individual, but none of these doubles would be reducible to a single soul. According to Werlang (2006, p. 172):

According to the Marubo, for each *yora* – a self-denomination without ethnic specificity –, there is a series of self-constitutive 'souls.' For each 'body,' there are several souls that, in their integration, define the concept of humanity implicit in *yora*. For every human *yora*, there is the 'soul on the left side' – *mechmiri vaká*, which is a potential *yochi-* –, a 'double-animal' and disease-causing agent, and there is, of course, the 'soul on the right side' – *mekiri vaká*, a potential 'spirit' or *yové*.

However, to ensure the physical integrity of a person, these diverse *ME*'s must remain together since only shamans can manage the departure of one of their *yuxin* on quick trips without suffering immediately. As a mediator between worlds, the shaman can experience human polyphony as a resource for his healing activities, with shamanism being a religious practice established through this transit of the shaman's *people* in different worlds. One of your *ME*'s trips can be propitiated, in the ritual situation, by the ingestion or not of substances (in general, tobacco, or *cauim*). Music, songs, instruments, and movements can also be used to facilitate transit/trance. The shaman can also receive other bodies, whether from the animal, human or cosmic beings, building *networks of relationships* through these trips and the songs he sings. Even though an ordinary person cannot come and go between worlds, all of humanity lives in constant liminality, in a transmutability that brings them closer to this exclusive perspective of the shaman. In Werlang's terms (2006, p. 176), "In fact, not only shamans – but all those who actively participate in festivals – adopt different bodily perspec-

tives, i.e., they transform their bodies by acting on them and making them act, incorporating affective dispositions rather than different souls”.

The group’s experimentation with the shamanic function came up against the attitude adopted to investigate actors and actresses, which did not include the use of substances or the imitation of trance. So, if the transformations embodied by the shaman or by the festival participants, commented on by Werlang (2006), could not be experienced on the scene by a non-indigenous and non-initiated actress and actor, the narrative, in a way, allowed to evoke the temporal and spatial trips that the shaman who sings the myth makes present. Thus, instead of explaining an inner psychological movement through the text, or even *emitting it well*, the actors and actresses had to attach certain qualities to the act of saying, among them, awakening the magical power of words, producing *realities*. At the same time, it was necessary to give up the commitment to individual authoriality (common in the field of Western arts), since the shaman is much more a radio, which listens to the songs of others and repeats them, than an author or protagonist of the songs that he utters. Throughout the attempts, we verified that there was not always a specific pedagogy in the shamans’ songs; many times, they cannot even be understood by the people who listen, except by other shamans. In this case, the work with the singing texts accepted that its apprehension would occur in the porosity of “[...] its vague internal elements [...]”, as Quilici wants (2015, p. 122).

Undertaking a *shamanic use* of the text, which is defined by saying without evoking the substitution process on which the represented word depends (Okamoto; Antunes, 2013), was a constant challenge for Cia. Livre, in order to give flesh to the narratives and their images. Rather than representing an absence, this word seeks to create things and worlds in the here/now, which motivated the investigation of the evocative power that words bring, supported by explorations of the form of myths, in their repetitions, sounds, onomatopoeias, and rhythms. The treatment of the text, in this way, went beyond the limits of realistic dramatic speech, incorporating elements of lyric and epic enunciation (which allows mergers and separations between the narrator and narrated). This duplication of voice between narrator/narration materialized not only in the shaman figure, who in *Vem Vai* was one of the characters, but spread through the different plays. This

duplication leads to the possibility of constant transformation of the actor/actress-narrator as several human characters (in *Vem Vai*, the indigenous, the rich playboy from Brasília, the mother of the dead young man, etc.), non-human (in *Raptada Pelo Raio* and in *Kaná Kawã*, the birds of the way, the Ray-People, etc.), and supra-human (in *Xapiri Xapiripê*, the dancing spirits).

In this path, more than the continuity of the figures, the actors and actresses of Cia. Livre sought a high degree of mutability, “metamorphosing” (Okamoto; Antunes, 2013, p. 147). This constant change in the envelope that perspectivism deals with refers to something close to a performative game, in which the figure is drawn intensely, without the extensive accumulation allowed by the drama’s causality. According to Chevalier (apud Elizéon-Hubert, 2016, p. 113-114):

[...] to break with the representation, break the narrative, prevent the illustration, release the figure: stay with the fact. This suggests an act of presenting, releasing the presence under the representations, and goes towards discovering disparity and singularity; It also breaks the representation of the ‘same’ and the expected.

In the game constituted by the elements of the scene and the interpretation, the action’s preponderance was being eclipsed by the state of reaction and by the permeability to the unstable. The strategies adopted by Cia. Livre have diversified over the years, from dealing with non-Western Amerindian sources: advertising directly to the public, *opening up* the mimetic game (when, for example, actors and actresses call themselves by the first name, or when they wear their costumes in front of the public, or when they call themselves the *people of the Paulistas*, in reference to Avenida Paulista, address where the play was being presented); grotesquely imitate the current stereotypes about the character, exposing the affecting common sense and social opinion (when, for example, actors and actresses put pieces of masking tape on their faces and *make noise*, announcing themselves as false natives: the grotesque false representation denounces the precariousness of representation resources and the impossibility of imitation); and explore the coexistence of two qualities of state, or even of two diverse figures acted at the same time by the actor and the actress, demonstrating that mutability is the rule, and not the constancy of a single entity (when, for ex-

ample, the actor and the actress crosses an object of the space and, with a body part on each side of the object, behaves like a jaguar with its legs, and like a person, with his head and voice). In the scenic version for the notions of Amerindian instability and parallelism, the body couplings and masks (facial and body) allowed us to suggest the multiplication of the body unit and the collapse of its contours (Figure 3 and Figure 4).



Figure 3 – Resources for the multiplication of the figure: doubles of the Ray-Man. Paulo Azevedo, in *Raptada pelo Raio*, presentation record, Casa Livre, 2009. Photo by Cacá Bernardes. Source: Cia. Livre's archive.

Another resource that Cia. Livre used was to build double characters, which prevent the completion of the traditional character's individualization process and, consequently, their identification with the audience. When two actors, characterized identically, perform actions mirrored in different places on the stage, the idea of a double is activated, which in Paiter Suruí, Bororo, Krahô, Marubo, and Guarani cultures, presents himself when an entity is defined from his competitor. In Jon Christopher Crocker's terms (apud Carneiro da Cunha, 2009, p. 58), the double shows that "[...] both social identity and physical identity emerge through specular processes that build it, processes that make a Bororo never be so much himself as when he is 'represented' by a totally different self".



Figure 4 – Interaction between doubles, using the mask. Edgar Castro and Lúcia Romano, in *Raptada pelo Raio 2.0*, presentation record, Casa Livre, 2010. Photo by Cacá Bernardes.
Source: Cia. Livre's archive.

However, it was in partnership with Cia. 8 Nova Dança (group coordinated by choreographer Lu Favoreto), in the show *Xapiri Xapiripê, lá onde a gente dançava sobre espelhos* (2014), that Cia. Livre experienced approach ways that expanded adopting the *performative* key to solve the deal with Amerindian eschatology scenically. *Xapiri Xapiripê* evoked the images-spirit dos Xapiri, ethereal elemental entities that communicate with the Yanomami shamans in the rituals of *yākōana* (a substance that alters consciousness), exploring these presences and their dynamism in a hybrid show between theater and contemporary dance. The recourse to the performative was activated by focusing on bodily action and the incarnated experience at the very moment of the scene, to the detriment of the dialogued word and psychological interactions. The encounter “[...] with the audience not mediated by fiction [...]” (Quilici, 2015, p. 103) started to indicate another purpose for the show, which would, in an ideal instance, transform both performers and spectators (Figure 5).



Figure 5 – Devouring and transforming bodies. Lúcia Romano and Raoni Garcia, in *Xapiri Xapiripê, lá onde a gente dançava sobre espelhos*, presentation record, SESC Pinheiros, 2014. Photo by Adriano Milan. Source: Cia. 8 Nova Dança's archive.

The friction between vocabularies, which in the direction of Lu Favoreto and Cibele Forjaz, were constituted through improvisation and experimentation of bone structure and body systems (with mobility and spatial exploration characteristic of contemporary dance), generated extreme tiredness, accumulated in the extended time of two hours of performance. This approach was in collision with visuality and gestural resources and narratives of the visual, physical theater (also demanding in terms of physical availability and energy). The effort and intensity changed the body and the quality of the presence. In turn, it allowed them to overcome the barriers of meaning, so glued to the textualities (of the texts, which completed choreographies, and of the dance itself). The activated perception channels favored access to the ritual trance's material and subjective views, in its sensory density, without the need for imitation.

Continuing the investigative interests of the previous shows, *Xapiri Xapiripê* also addressed the destabilization of the condition of the human subject in the face of contact with the radical alterity of Amerindian cosmologies. In the confrontation with the multiplicity of people, the loss of the *centered subject's* sovereign point of view was themed, especially at the

moments when the *undoing of the face* motivated the choreographic construction⁷. The face mask, fundamental to the dramatic theater, related to the identity and expression of character and emotions, needed to be destroyed in order for another being to be born. The undone face, reacting to the obligatory manifestation of subjectivity by the face, where the signs of frequency and psychological and social recognition are inscribed (Deleuze, 1996), has become a way to erase the persona, allowing its dissolution into becoming-animal and becoming-spirit (Figure 6 and Figure 7).



Figure 6 – Undoing the face. Lu Favoreto, in *Xapiri Xapiripê, lá onde a gente dançava sobre espelhos*, presentation record, SESC Pinheiros, 2014. Photo by Adriano Milan.
Source: Cia. 8 Nova Dança's archive.



Figure 7 – Bird people, without human face. Lúcia Romano, in *Xapiri Xapiripê, lá onde a gente dançava sobre espelhos*, presentation record, SESC Pinheiros, 2014. Photo by Adriano Milan.

Source: Cia. 8 Nova Dança's archive.

Members of the Teatro Balagan group, another São Paulo collective involved with Amerindian sources⁸, report that the group members' departure for an experience with the Paiter-Suruí, in Pará, led them to an exciting appreciation of another idea of experience, mirrored in the dynamics between hunting and hunter in devouring as a way of existing and *acting* (Thais, 2016). Like for Balagan, for Cia Livre, cannibal thinking has become more of a strategy for *making* the body and experiencing alterity (Figure 6). The performance – understood by Balagan as a hunt and by Cia Livre as a kind of game of mutability and duplication (Figure 8) – abandoned scenic strategies traditionally related to representation, also finding support in the valorization of a sense of performance based on the program of the *theaters of the real*, in the refusal of illusionism. In Okamoto and Antunes terms (2013, p. 144-145), actors of the show *Recusa* (2011), the direction determinations about non-performance indicated:

- 1) to base the actor language in the full experience of things; 2) remain 'in the relationship,' especially with the forces of nature (or more broadly speaking, of all things: matters, beings, becomings); 3) find a use of the word that, more than representing reality (placing itself, therefore, as an equivalent to it, in the 'place of'), evokes its forces, its agencies; 4) find actions that, more than synthesize and define circumstances, situations and

conflicts (as is seen in a dramatic theater tradition), only indicate them, pointing out worlds, instigating the viewer's imagination and, therefore, including their perspective in the game.

In *Recusa*, butoh was the technique used to make the body available in its materiality and, at the same time, to present it in synthesis with the elements of nature (pertinent to the questioning of Western ethnocentrism by Amerindian *cosmocentrism*) (Okamoto; Antunes, 2013). In *Xapiri Xapiripê*, the choral construction and the exploration of the possibilities of the dance movement, based on the Motor Coordination Method, by Piret and Béziers (1992), caused the dip in the psychophysical body, in a perceptive and wide-awake state, inviting dissolution of a more stable individuality, in favor of the constant mutations between human-animal-vegetal-enchanted. The *experience*, reported by the members of Balagan, was also carried out by Cia. Livre, during a field visit to the Guarani M'Bya, a relationship that had already been nurtured previously. However, even the *field* did not propose removing examples or the direct synthesis of elements for the composition of scores or any other type of fixed structure, but only the permanence in a state of coexistence and perception. Later, in the rehearsal room and in the show itself, the body was vectorized to generate the crossings and make them tangible.

Pedro Cesarino defines the transformation of myths into scenic material as a translation process that, for Cia. Livre has involved an attitude of anthropophagic devouring. In this respect, however, theater and anthropology depart and complement each other, preserving their different methods and purposes. While the concern of the actors, actresses, and other members of Cia. Livre, in their shows, has been to know the original sources to swallow them and, thus, constitute other ways of expressing the world and themselves; Cesarino's concern with the collective was to problematize the translation "equivocities" (Cesarino, 2018, p. 276) inherent to the project. Viveiros de Castro (2004) defined in the article *Perspectival Anthropology and the Method of Controlled Equivocation*, the diversity of languages and cultures, supporting very different conceptual frameworks, prevents a satisfactory *translation* of the speeches. However, it is possible to establish relations between them, exposing the resources of the invention that their language and tradition offer (as Walter Benjamin did when he called transla-

tion as a practice of strangeness) and without totalizing concerns, to account for the event as a whole.

Aware of this, Cia. Livre supports the understanding of anthropophagy as a strategy of approximation and strangeness, necessary stages for the generation of a third level, from contamination with other references and the transformation of this *mixture* into something else. In the collective's understanding, the construction of poetic parallels with the Amerindian worldview is combined with Brecht's epicizing praxis, meeting the group's position on the revolutionary sense of the scene, in contact with the social environment. Epicization ensures the space of intersection between language and culture while preserving the other's place without undermining it. Cibele Forjaz (apud Small, 2008) summarizes:

Because it was important to us this idea of 'the Cia. tells', which already came from Danton. Because it is very delicate for you to talk about such a topic. What are you going to say? Are you going to say 'for'? It can't, right? Or am I going to say what I understand 'from'? So the most, as artists, that we can say is: we eat this material. And what we are bringing here is our material, in which we recreate what we understood from that. The life we are changing is ours. We cannot speak for anyone.

The epicization party, deepened in *Vem vai* and the following shows, was, therefore, fundamental for clarifying the artists' points of view, explicitly stated in the scene, and the attention to the *place of speech* (Ribeiro, 2017) of the original peoples. Therefore, Amerindian culture did not enter into the usury relations of contemporary times, being respected as a non-Western worldview and consecrated in its singular value, without the cooperation of the group's westernized voice. Simultaneously, the epic served to provide further visibility to Amerindian thought, also explaining the reason for its invisibility, namely, the domination agenda of hegemonic European cultural and social forms. The epic helped to present this discourse dispute and talking about the other without speaking for the other. Cesare (2008) comments on the group's processes in *Vem Vai*:

Staging cannibalizes, by the fictionalizing principle, our conventional ways of dealing with cultural differences. The performative narrative of death stresses the individual's relationship with his doubles beyond our usual perspective and breaks our view of indigenous culture (Cesare, 2008, electronic document).

Cesare's criticism (2008) recognizes how much the previous experience of Cia. Livre in the Teatro de Arena's occupation led its members to relate the treatment of the theme of national formation, which was of interest, to the experiences of Arena with the national-popular and later experiments of the collective directed by Cibele Forjaz around the narratives of the peoples of the forests. Cesare (2008) recalls that the classics' staging were a useful route for the Arena to be located in the *here-now* of its reality, while Cia. Livre radicalized this objective, going in the direction of what is beyond the western canon – oral sources belonging to non-Western epistemologies. Therefore, the efficacy in the critical interpretation of the group's reality also encompassed the destitution of the hegemonic narrative, which gives the national reality and the problem of the *real* a determining version. Then, the unmasking carried out could include excluded versions, which claim a more multiple, pluriversal reality, by suggesting a relational view for traditional categories of *person, nature, culture, and supernature* from the concepts of perspective (or point of view) and anthropophagy.



Figure 8 – Multiplication of figures, with the use of dolls, body mask, and projection. Lúcia Romano and Edgar Castro, in *Cia. Livre Canta Kaná Kawá*, presentation record, Casa Livre, 2014. Photo by Cacá Bernardes.

Source: Cia. Livre's archive.

When Cia. Livre enunciates subjectivities and modes of understanding categorized as dissidents, but which are in fact rivals, it also operates “[...]”

epistemic and aesthetic displacements” leading to “[...] emergence of decolonial works⁹, i.e., works that call modernity into question in its monological and monotopic version” (Bisiaux, 2018, p. 645). The decolonial option finds in the Amerindian worldview categories of thought that do not relegate the rationality and ability of language only to the human case, articulating *human sovereignty* that extends to all entities. What Mignolo (2017, p. 10) calls “[...] historical-structural knots [...]”, considered universal, but which are forged in “[...] colonial and imperial difference” (Mignolo, 2017, p. 10) is dismantled. The dominant theater has collaborated to spread the idea of nature as something outside of human beings, and it is also up to it to *decolonize* this knowledge.

It should also be noted that, alongside the shows, the company develops other activities, which explore aspects relevant to the decolonial perspective in public actions. Through this set of activities, Cia. Livre has been exercising transformations in the theatrical language and in the status of the western subject evoked by the theater, whose foundation is presented on stage in specific understandings about the drama, the dramatic character, and the actor’s representation. Thus, it is opposed to the normative terms of the colonality of being, typical of modern rhetoric, and causes openings towards other living ways.

Notes

- ¹ Secretaria Municipal da Cultura da Cidade de São Paulo. Conpresp registers 22 independent theaters as intangible heritage. Available at: <<https://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/cultura/noticias/?p=16276>>. Accessed on: June 03, 2019.
- ² *Vem vai o caminho dos mortos* reread the Amerindian myths, crossing through 5 spaces, corresponding to five movements (stations): Symbolic Death; Warrior cannibalism; Funerary cannibalism; Vem Vai, The Death-Path, and Heavenly Cannibalism. A part of the human body also corresponds to each space, as if the public devoured these parts. It is like ritual cannibalism, with each rereading of a myth. The creation of *Vem vai* was carried out in a collaborative process with the actors, actresses, and the crew, signed by Newton Moreno in dramaturgy, Cibele Forjaz in the direction and theoretical guidance in Pedro Cesarino’s anthropology studies. More about the work, in Small (2008).

- ³ For the Brazilian geographer Milton Santos, the variables of this system would be the spatial form, function (or activity, in fixed superior and inferior), structure (social relations), process (historical temporality), and totality (structure-related production modes), aspects of this geographic-spatial system. In his terms: “Space reproduces the totality through the transformations determined by society, production modes, population distribution, among other needs, perform evolutionary functions in the economic and social formation, influences its construction and is also influenced in the other structures in a way that makes it a fundamental component of the social totality and its movements” (Santos, 1979, p. 10). For the author, therefore, space is created through the use of territory by the people.
- ⁴ Founded in 1953 in São Paulo, Arena has established itself as an experimental group with a left-wing orientation, in search of a theater about Brazil and the Brazilian people. This was the field that the staging of *Eles não usam black-tie* (1958) established, alongside the Dramaturgy Seminars. The Teatro de Arena ended its activities in 1972, in times of great political repression, after the Civil-Military Coup of 1964, but remains a reference for a theater concerned with the national reality. being the birthplace of artists (Augusto Boal, Zé Renato, Fernando Peixoto, Dina Sfat, Dulce Muniz, Paulo José, Myrian Muniz, and Vianinha, among others) and important scenic practices.
- ⁵ The Teatro Oficina Uzyna-Uzona was created in 1958, at the Faculdade de Direito do Largo São Francisco (in São Paulo), by director José Celso Martinez Corrêa, along with other artists, among them, Renato Borghi, Carlos Queiroz Telles, Amir Haddad, Moracy do Val and Jairo Arco e Flexa. In the beginning, its works explored the path opened by the Teatro de Arena, starting with *O rei da vela* (Oswald de Andrade’s play premiered by the group in 1967). Its vision of the national context is consolidated, practicing a singular fusion of Stanislavskian performance and Brecht’s political and social assumptions, the tradition of Brazilian music theater, and the countercultural attitude, in the tropicalista bias. It will extract from Artaud the proposals for a libertarian and aggressive corporality and ritual theater, in close connection with the audience, that has unfolded in more than a dozen shows until today. See Patriota (2003).
- ⁶ It is essential to mention that these are only three ethnic groups, among the two hundred and fifty-six indigenous peoples remaining in Brazil (Povos..., 2019), distributed in demarcated and non-demarcated indigenous lands, with

about one hundred and fifty different languages, adding up 324,834 individuals living in cities and 572,083 living in rural areas (Povos..., 2019).

- ⁷ The theme was taken up again in 2020 by Lu Favoreto and Cibele Forjaz, in the experiment *Desfazer da fuça, desfazer da face*. Available at: <<https://www.facebook.com/ciaoitonovanadanca/videos/268166624428677/>>. Accessed on: June 18, 2020.
- ⁸ The two companies from São Paulo moved into Amerindian perspectivism through different paths and reasons. Cia. Livre was dedicated to the theme of national identity in a scenic research project on the ideas of Brazilianness and miscegenation based on the myth of the three races (white, black, and indigenous). The theme was added to Cia. Livre's interest in epic theater, of Brechtian derivation, and forms of ritual theater. Cia. Balagan (directed by Maria Thais Lima Santos), in turn, came from investigations about the narrative form and the relations between the human and the inhuman, which gave rise to the shows *Recusa* (2011) and in the study processes of *Os Gigantes da Montanha*, by Pirandello, and staging of *Cabras – Cabeças que voam, cabeças que rolam* (2016).
- ⁹ Ballestrin (2013) also adds that the decolonial reflection does not include Portuguese colonization's specificity, as it has a central focus on Hispanic America. Still, he cites the Brazilians Darcy Ribeiro, Milton Santos, and Gustavo Lins Ribeiro as exponents of this thought in Brazil.

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