



Paloma Bianchi's Choreographic Work *Hacia* as a Practice of Amerindian Perspectivism

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ABSTRACT – Paloma Bianchi's Choreographic Work *Hacia* as a Practice of Amerindian Perspectivism –

This text analyzes *Hacia* (2019) as a critical choreographic device facing the problem of disenchantment of the world derived from the separation between nature and culture inherited from Modernity/coloniality. *Hacia* puts into practice two notions of Amerindian perspectivism: one that recognizes the relational agency of all entities in the world; and another which raises knowledge as a process of subjectivation that implies bodily, sensory and imaginative dimensions. This analysis proposes a dialogue between the areas of anthropology and contemporary performing arts creation in Brazil.

Keywords: Choreography. Amerindian Perspectivism. Subjectivation Processes. Relationship Modes. Corporeality.

RÉSUMÉ – La Pièce Chorégraphique *Hacia* de Paloma Bianchi comme Pratique du Perspectivisme

Amérindien – Cet article étudie *Hacia* comme dispositif chorégraphique face au problème du désenchantement du monde issu de la séparation entre nature et culture héritée de la modernité/colonialité. Deux notions du perspectivisme amérindien sont observées: celle qui reconnaît l'agence relationnelle de toutes les entités du monde; et ce qui élève la connaissance comme processus de subjectivation qui implique inévitablement la dimension corporelle, sensorielle et imaginative. Le texte contribue au rapprochement entre les domaines de l'anthropologie et de la création scénique contemporaine au Brésil.

Mots-dés: Chorégraphie. Perspectivisme Amérindien. Processus de Subjectivation. Modes de Relation. Corporéité.

RESUMEN – La Pieza Coreográfica *Hacia*, de Paloma Bianchi, como Práctica del Perspectivismo

Amerindio – En este artículo se plantea una lectura de la obra *Hacia* (2019) como dispositivo coreográfico crítico frente al problema del desencantamiento del mundo derivado de la separación entre naturaleza y cultura heredada de la Modernidad/colonialidad. Se presentan nociones del perspectivismo amerindio como la de agencia relacional de todos los entes del mundo; y la del conocimiento como proceso de subjetivación que implica indefectiblemente la dimensión corporal, sensorial e imaginativa. El análisis contribuye al acercamiento entre la antropología y la creación escénica contemporánea en Brasil.

Palabras clave: Coreografía. Perspectivismo Amerindio. Procesos de Subjetivación. Modos de Relación. Corporalidad.

This article analyzes the work *Hacia* (2019), by Brazilian artist Paloma Bianchi¹. The work was presented for the first time in June 2019, at Reina Sofía Museum in Madrid, as part of the activities of the Master's program in Performing Arts Practice and Visual Culture. This choreographic work proposes a practice of subjectivation that highlights a possibility of decentralization in the Western conception of the human being from a corporal and imaginative dimension.

Bianchi's piece is an experience of approximately half an hour for only one person in the audience at a time. I situate the work in the field of choreography because the artist's work is structured on the basis of a series of textual indications and the creation of a sound environment that organizes, in addition to the flow of movement of the spectators' bodies, a mode of attention to the environment. If choreography is considered as writing movement patterns, this piece works as a choreographic inscription in the audience that, beyond the route through which it conducts the bodies, appeals to their sensory and imaginative capacities.

Hacia is also a practice of living arts in the sense proposed by Colombian researcher and artist Rolf Abderhalden (2018, electronic document), co-director of the company Mapa Teatro, when he says that living arts are "[...] laboratories of bodies, of voices, of texts and textures, of images and sounds; scenarios of chaos and conflicts; fields of forces, vanishing points; devices of updating and poetic-political montage, of thought-creation". The category of living arts is useful to think about the contemporary scene as it points out the opening towards a perspective from which the research from the artistic practice does not establish a disciplinary separation between visual arts, music and scene. This conceptualization of artistic creation as thought points to the specific materiality of the arts (voices, sounds, images, texts and bodies) to organize agonistic poetic devices as territories in tension from which questions and contradictions are proposed, showing the complexity of the relationships with the world that involve artists and audiences.

The bodies of the audience let themselves be choreographed; they access a marginal space of the museum that goes from one of the entrance doors for visitors to the basement of the Nouvel building, where there is a space for meeting artists and to storage materials. It is a place with little

movement, out of the spotlight of the museum's general audience that composes a particular choreography of (predictable) movements around the great iconic pieces of the art center. The audience of *Hacia* is not generalist: most people attending are involved in contexts of experimentation, research, training, communication and dissemination of contemporary artistic practices². Each person from the audience goes to the agreed location at the scheduled time after receiving an invitation by email and registering for a virtual attendance calendar. Nobody gets there casually. At the meeting point, the artist welcomes the spectators and shows the way down the stairs. On the wall next to the stairs there is a text hanging and, a little further, following an arrow and turning in a corner of the space, we have some headphones held by a transparent thread. In the printed text hung on the wall, the artist enunciates multiple possible ways of relating to the work. The path marked by the texts and signs inevitably leads the viewer to a closed aluminum door; behind it we find a small dark room with granite walls and a limestone floor (Figure 1).

The texts play in a poetic way to unveil without saying. One of the multiple possibilities of relationship with the work that are enunciated in the text is the *activation of an otherness*. Bianchi brings here a concept of otherness inspired by the theory of Amerindian perspectivism and developed by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro.

According to the Brazilian anthropologist, in the Amerindian vision of the world, all beings have a soul and, because of this, they are human. The condition of humanity expands not only to animals, but also to plants, geographical features, spirits and, as in the case of Bianchi's piece, to stone. The particularity of the stone would be, then, its different appearance as stone, its stone-body, because its soul, like that of the rest of the beings, would be human. What the artist proposes, in her own words, is to generate a situation where people may enter *into a different relationship with the world*³.

Various contemporary theories, approaches and conceptual tools share the interest in reformulating the modes of relationship of human beings with the environment from a critical perspective in the face of the naturalization of the categories human-non-human, individual-society, body-mind and nature-culture. In the expanded context of this debate, Isabelle

Stengers' research is situated within the concept of ecology of the practices, which values the multiplicity of singularities and ways of producing and being in the world. Donna Haraway places herself in the discussion when she points out modes of agency between humans and companion species. Bruno Latour gives his contribution to the debate with the concept of actor-network, for contemplating the principle of symmetry in the relations between people and machines. In addition to those, as we will analyze in this article, there is the Amerindian perspective of Viveiros de Castro, who proposes to observe the inversion of the categories nature and culture from the indigenous point of view as an opening to other forms of interaction with the world.

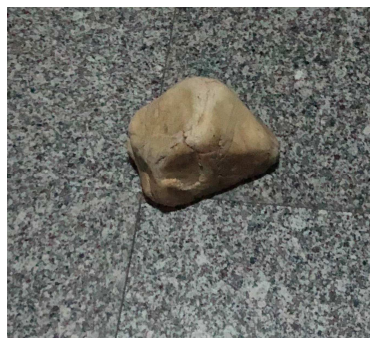


Figure 1 – Stone [Photography]. Photo: Paloma Bianchi (2019).
Source: Artist's file.

The Great Nature/Culture Divisor

The challenge proposed by Paloma Bianchi in *Hacia* reminds us that our presence in the world makes us beings in relationship. We share imaginaries with the ones who represent the world to us and, from those beliefs; we naturalize the horizon of possibilities in our social interactions. We assume situated worldviews, ways of explaining what surrounds us that are determined by material conditions, such as place of birth, historical moment, gender, age and social class. We live, love, work and dream in situated contexts; and just as we cannot get rid of our body without ceasing to exist, we cannot think of operating on reality without paying attention to the conditions in which our forms of relationship are produced and reproduced.

This perspective alerts us to the dangers of naturalizing the violence that invisibly organizes our social interactions. Some imaginaries of our

Western way of life, such as the idea of personal freedom associated with self-sufficiency and autonomy, come from the shared faith in economic progress linked to the expansion of the bourgeoisie as a ruling social class, the progress of industrial capitalism as an economic model in the colonial system and the triumph of the State as a form of government. These processes started in the 17th century and have to standardize the horizon of what is livable and thinkable to be consolidated.

Those imaginaries sustained by culture as a replica of colonial values expand in tension with others that simultaneously exercise resistance and escape. Silvia Federici (2010), in *Caliban and the Witch*, points out the central place of the body in this process of subordination to production and capital: “[...] the process that Michel Foucault defined as discipline of the body [...] consisted of an attempt by the State and the Church to transform the powers of the individual into workforce” (Federici, 2010, p. 179). Disciplining the body for work was the result of a slow transformation that, in addition to physical violence and repressive practices, required a change in mentality, an evolution in the way people thought about themselves.

Federici (2010, p. 181) describes the process of changing mentality that supports a vision that organizes the world according to irreconcilable binary categories: “[...] the conflict is now dramatized within the person, who is presented as a battlefield where there are opposing elements fighting for domination”. The reason-body, good-bad pairs are associated as opposite, leaving to reason and technique the control and dominion over the self and the surrounding world, relegating the instinctive and passionate body to the condition of space for the emergence and expression of emotions. The predominance of reason over emotion, of mind over body, of good over evil, thus becomes a hegemonic ideal in Europe, which expands throughout the world known by colonialism. In this context, Descartes and mechanistic philosophy are responsible for transferring the medieval struggle between good and evil, represented by angels and demons, to the interior of the person.

The cost of this change in mentality that disciplines us as bodies for industrial work is that of leaving behind (in Europe) a medieval conception of the world that makes invisible collective knowledge, body practices, learning and modes of relationship. The witches studied by Federici (2010)

are persecuted and exterminated because of their status as depositories of shared knowledge, and when this knowledge is not irreparably lost, it circulates clandestinely.

These changes in ways of being and relating, these transformations in beliefs and shared imaginaries are associated with the project of colonial modernity from an ideology that claims the goodness of reason and of scientific knowledge as a way to achieve freedom and individual autonomy.

The new ideological program born in the West needs to keep under control not only women in their reproductive capacity in the labor force, but also the indigenous populations found in the newly discovered American territories and whose individuals are not recognized as subjects of rights. These processes do not occur uniformly, but in forward and backward movements determined by resistances and tensions.

The general use of violence as a regulatory element ends up being imposed to promote the advance of these new forms of colonial capitalism and its associated beliefs. From the Modern Time that ended with the French Revolution and the independence of the United States at the end of the 18th century, we inherited another great division that continues to operate in our way of relating to the world.

In addition to the separation between body and mind, in Modernity there is a division between nature and culture. This anthropocentric perspective considers as nature everything external to the human being, including diverse beings and multiple territories susceptible of being appropriated and dominated by humankind and whose end would be, precisely, to be expropriated and to be at its service.

In the face of this nature, external to human beings, exploited and submissive, its antagonist, the culture, appears as that group of social constructions whose intrinsic value would be precisely in constituting itself as the expression of the capacity of human beings to organize themselves collectively by using technology. In their critical approach to modern naturalism, Daniel Ruiz Serna and Carlos del Cairo (2016, p. 195) point out:

[...] for centuries, Western thought underpinned a perception of nature that obeyed, first, an anthropocentric and then a rationalist framework, in which it [nature] had to be controlled to satisfy human needs.

This instrumental conception of nature separated from society and culture is part of that same normalization of the exploitation of beings and territories that constitute Modernity.

The relations between nature and culture that derive from this rupture between the natural and the social began to be questioned at the beginning of the 20th century in a specific way from ethnographic research. The stories obtained from the fieldwork with different indigenous communities have revealed how that schism naturalized in the West between the given and the built, between the natural and the social, has not operated in the same way in interactions of indigenous groups with the environment in which they lived.

At the same time that ethnography appears as a research method based on fieldwork, observation and the story that people made about themselves. In 1919, philosopher Max Weber, invited by the Free Association of Students of the University of Munich, gave a conference with the title *Science as a vocation*. In this meeting, he pointed out that the main consequence of the expansion of an imaginary in which everything could be controlled by reason and technique was inevitably the *disenchantment* of the world.

The increasing intellectualization and rationalization does not, therefore, indicate an increased and general knowledge of the conditions under which one lives. It means something else, namely, the knowledge or belief that if one but wished one could learn it at any time. Hence, it means that principally there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation. This means that the world is disenchanted (Weber, 1979 apud Rosa 2019, p. 199).

The vision of the disenchantment of the world as a consequence of the transformation process of the system of relations of human beings with the environment explains, in a poetic way, how the world literally “[...] stops singing [...]” (Rosa, 2019, p. 422) at the moment when “[...] it is known or believed [...]” (Rosa, 2019, p. 422) that everything would be under the dominion of the human being.

That change of mentality that was occurring progressively during Modernity shapes a new *ethos* as a common way of life of a group of individuals. Weber identifies this mentality with the *spirit* of Protestantism, which, in its harshest form, Puritanism, distrusts the body, pleasure and communi-

ty in a process that, as sociologist Hartmurt Rosa (2019, p. 422) points out, “[...] tends to replace relations of resonance with silent relations with the world”. The idea that Rosa suggests has to do with thinking the world in terms of resonance, thus questioning our forms of relationship with everything that surrounds us, giving value to other modes of interaction that could be incorporated from critical reviews of the separation between nature and culture.

This reconsideration of what is nature and what is culture has been proposed by the field of anthropology since the 1990s, long after the accounts of fieldwork with indigenous peoples had clearly indicated that the ways of interaction of these communities with other beings and territories were different from Western ways. This critical review questions the division between nature and culture as antagonistic dimensions, “[...] overcoming the traditional relativistic interpretations that assume the existence of a single, consolidated reality (nature) that is accessible through some historically and socially situated interpretative frameworks (culture)” (Ruiz Serna; Del Cairo, 2016, p. 196).

But is the audience capable of adhering to the proposal of relating to a stone? How does the choreographer inscribe, in addition to a specific movement, a type of attention and a way of being so that the audience brings into play the sensory and imaginative dimensions? *Hacia* distorts the expectations of the audience. The challenge is to move from confusion to the deployment of this possible relationship suggested by the artist, which implies an exchange based on the sensory, corporal and imaginative dimensions of the audience.

This work is part of critical practices that discuss the problem of disenchantment with the world by re-elaborating forms of interaction with what surrounds us. In this article, I point out how the sensory dimension in the spectator and the exercise of imagination, as defined by Patricia Reed (2014, p. 87), like “[...] the power of abstraction towards an alter logic that redistributes the constellation of life,” allow us to try modes of connection with the environment from which is possible to recover the enchantment of the world and its resonances.

To Know is to Subjectify: amerindian perspectivism as a poetic instrument

The operation that Bianchi proposes in her work and the approach that I propose in this article are aligned with the Amerindian notion of knowledge that Viveiros de Castro describes. To know means to subjectify, that is, to attribute intentionality and agency to what surrounds us. This attribution of agency implies that knowledge is generated from the relationship and that this relationship implies a transformation. In the article *The relative native*, Viveiros de Castro (2016, p. 32) explains it as follows:

[...] anthropological knowledge is also a social relation, since it is the effect of the relationships that reciprocally constitute the knowing subject, on the one hand, and the subject he comes to know, on the other. As with all relations, this form of knowledge brings about a transformation in the relational constitution of anthropologist and native alike.

Amerindian perspectivism as an anthropological theory questions the naturalization of the legacies of Modernity from its observation of Amerindian communities. The starting point of this thought is a series of ethnographic investigations with the indigenous communities of Alto Xingu, in Brazil (Lévi-Strauss, 1973 apud Viveiros de Castro, 2010, p. 27).

In proposing the idea of Amerindian perspectivism, Viveiros de Castro refers to an anecdote told by Lévi-Strauss in *Mythologiques* to highlight the differences in perception of themselves and others that existed between Europeans and indigenous communities in their first encounters back in the 15th and 16th centuries.

According to the French anthropologist, the Europeans were convinced that the indigenous people had a body, but doubted if they had a soul or not. While for the indigenous people, the approach was the opposite: they understood that Europeans had a spirit, but did not see clearly if they had a body or not. That is why Europeans were subjected to different experiments that caused pain; it was not torture, but a way to check if that physical appearance they presented as a body was a body in fact.

However, what could they be if they were not bodies? Well, for the indigenous people, they could be spirits or jaguars with human appearance that, at that time, occupied the position of predators. For the indigenous,

the common ground between all beings is humanity, because what we share is that condition of human beings and it is from that condition that some become animals, plants or stones. The human body appearance is not given. To be in the position of a human body in a world of relations between predators and prey means the one who has the human form occupies the position of predator, that is, the one who kills others to eat. The human body, for Amerindians, is not guaranteed by birth, they become human in contact with others; that is why they protect newborn babies to prevent the spirits of other beings from occupying their bodies (Viveiros de Castro, 2010, p. 50).

The shared condition is humanity, not animality, which assumes that everything around us is human and that, therefore, we live surrounded by predators ready to kill us. In this worldview, there is no external nature out there to be dominated, but rather nature is essentially a social environment, the shared space where interactions between predators and prey take place, knowing that these positions, those of predator and prey, are not fixed and that, depending on the situation, they may change.

One of the issues that Viveiros de Castro emphasizes about the Amerindian worldview is a way of knowing that is very different from the Western one. If, in our societies, what I do to know something is to objectify it, that is to say, to consider it outside and apart from me, to try to dismember it, to divide it, to distance it, to give it a place in the hierarchical, utilitarian and functional chain; in the Amerindian societies, knowledge goes through subjectivation, through putting oneself in the place of that which one wants to know.

Knowledge has to do with placing oneself in the position of the other. This approach is a challenge to the Western mode of knowledge that Viveiros de Castro (2013, p. 25) describes as follows:

[...] our ideal of Science is guided precisely by the value of objectivity: we must be able to specify the subjective part that enters into the vision of the object and not confuse that with the thing itself. To know, for us, is to de-subjectify as much as possible.

De-subjectify means to extract the capacity of agency and intention from everything around, to consider it as an object to guarantee the possibility of manipulation and control. On the contrary, if we place ourselves in

the Amerindian scheme of thought, the possibility of knowing implies subjectivity. In the text that the spectator reads while walking to the room where he or she will meet the stone, a type of disposition is suggested in relation to this approach when the spectator notices: “[...] *it is possibly a challenge/or an effort towards something / it is certainly a decision to get involved / it depends on the position in which one chooses to be*” (Bianchi, 2019).

Bianchi works considering the Amerindian conceptual displacement that understands nature as a relationship. Otherness, in this vision of the world, is a position that changes depending on the situation. The first consequence for anthropology is to assume that “[...] the incomprehension of [...] realities is due to a genuine conceptual otherness [...] that some realities are neither relative nor translatable to others, but constitute other worlds” (Holbraad in Carrithers et al., 2010 apud González-Abrisketa; Carro-Ripalda, 2016, p. 119).

From the position of a western spectator, the power of the scene as a field of experimentation of possible worlds goes through the operation of subjectifying the stone, by entering a world where stones have a soul. That world, in our context, is accessible in the environment of artistic exchange and, for the audience, it becomes a sensory and imaginative experience.

Assuming this approach and putting it into practice as a spectator meant for me to understand that the work presents an interruption, a state of suspension, a way of being *hacia* (towards) as a precondition for making effective the power of the situation in its relational dimension.

The Invitation of *Hacia*

The invitation to attend the piece was an email in which there was a calendar to be noted and a text that said: *This is not a game between subject and object / maybe it is a cooperation or a space for a meeting or a decision / it is certainly an invitation.*

This textual invitation operates on three levels: 1) offering a first conceptual approach to the framework in which the artist situates her work, 2) anticipating some of the possibilities of experiencing the piece, 3) and imagining a specific type of audience for the work, one capable of feeling inspired by the ideas of cooperation, encounter and decision.

In the operations of this emancipated spectator that Rancière (2010, p. 27) taught us to recognize “[...] it is a matter of linking what is known with what is ignored, of being at the same time performers who display their skills and spectators who observe what their skills can produce.”

This simultaneity in maintaining a state of active interaction and at the same time being aware about the way in which we elaborate meaning points out to the audience as a determinant in the operation of giving meaning to this choreographic piece.

Sustaining the Suspense

The artist welcomed each person individually at a meeting point near one of the museum entrances. There was no prior conversation, just a welcome and the indication to go down some stairs. In the first part of the stairs, hanging on the wall, a longer text by the creator (Figure 2), deepened the explanation. The beginning of that text said: *this is not an installation/ it is an invocation of the imagination/ maybe it is an invitation to concretion/ maybe it is a possible otherness/ or a space for engagement.*

This text, as well as the message in the invitation that the artist sent by email to each person of the audience, announced something that the audience did not know what it could be. The texts composed a story that worked by postponing certainties, multiplying the imaginary and sustaining the suspense. The spectator did not know what was going to find, but that something-someone that the text ambiguously anticipated and that he or she was supposed to find somewhere along the way, that *possible otherness* that is named is nothing more than the opportunity for an unprecedented relationship.

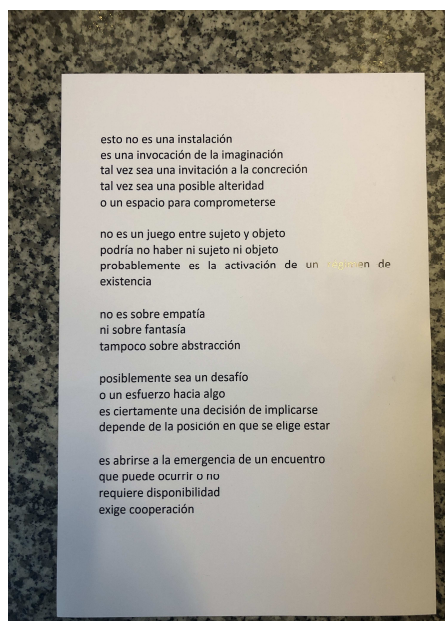


Figure 2 – Text on the wall [Photography]. Photo: Paloma Bianchi (2019).
Source: Artist's file.

An arrow on the wall indicated to turn a corner of the space in the direction of a small square of approximately three square meters in front of a closed aluminum door. From the ceiling hung a cable that was attached to headphones and a sound player. The player's recording indicated that you could listen to the audio tracks in the order and as many times as you wanted and that you could walk through the door whenever you wanted.

On the other side of the door was a smaller space, in semi-darkness, illuminated by a lamp hanging from the ceiling and surrounded by a black plastic filter that made a very tenuous beam of light fall on the surface of a limestone. The stone was on the ground, had an irregular triangular shape of approximately 25 centimeters long, 15 centimeters wide and eight centimeters high. It was soft, not very big, and was on a granite floor.

The music heard in the headphones was a binaural recording. Binaural rhythms are auditory stimuli at different frequencies for each ear. Research on this type of sound in the field of psychophysics says that prolonged listening facilitates “[...] the alteration of brain waves and states of consciousness” (González Velasco, 2013, p. 42). The sound called for a concentration of attention to situate the audience in a place of listening and introspection.

Being the Other on One's Own Terms: the inconstancy of the wild soul

That first artistic strategy in *Hacia* (which we related in the previous section) coincides with one of the methodological principles of the theory proposed by Viveiros de Castro, given that it begins with the suspension of one's own beliefs. *Hacia* exists when that emancipated spectator is involved in a reflective way in the proposal of relating to a stone. This implication cannot be univocal, it necessarily involves the particular sensibility of each person in the audience. I propose that in the exercise of suspending certainties the unexpected can appear and that this artistic work can be read from notions of the conceptual apparatus of Amerindian perspectivism⁴.

The strategy of suspending the flow of everyday life and the interruption of any expectation that would anticipate the meaning of the experience became concrete with the use of texts that work as a game of superimpositions with which the multidimensional capacity of the experience is suggested. The texts of a playful nature were arranged in such a way that, during the reading, they organized a paradoxical succession of possibilities in which each line amplified or contradicted the previous one. This procedure unfolds the senses towards the uncertain and the multiple. I suggest that these texts are inspired by what Viveiros de Castro (2018) calls the *inconstancy of the wild soul*. Referring to the observations that the Jesuits, in their evangelizing mission, made of the indigenous communities, that just as they received and obeyed the beliefs and norms of the colonizing religion, they also set them aside and returned to their own customs.

The lightness of Amerindian behavior, the ability to move between universes of disparate beliefs, was surprising and disturbing to the Jesuits, or at least that is how it appears in the texts of the religious that Viveiros de Castro cites as sources. For the anthropologist, however, this ability to transit from one *ethos* to another, from one behavior to another, is an essential element in thinking about the relationship of the indigenous people with otherness, with this *other* that, for the indigenous, were the Jesuits. Viveiros de Castro (2018, p. 192) explains it as follows: “[...] the problem then consists in determining the meaning of that compound of volubility and obstinacy [...], it is to understand, finally, the object of that dark desire to be the other, but according to its own terms, here is the mystery”.

To be the other according to one's own terms is an aspiration that makes sense in a society where what has value is interaction and exchange

more than the effort to preserve and sustain the customs, to maintain the identity⁵. Inconstancy as a form of interaction occurs when the relationship is prioritized over identity. The relationship of indigenous peoples with what they do not know is an operation of subjectivation, a process of “[...] being other in their own terms” (Viveiros de Castro, 2018, p. 192).

The Generation of Frameworks

So far I have described two of the artistic procedures used in the work *Hacia* by relating them to the ideas of Viveiros de Castro: the first one, the suspension of certainties as a way of methodological approach in which Bianchi and Viveiros de Castro coincide; and the second one, the multiplicity of imaginaries that the text displays and that are connected to the idea of the inconstancy of the wild soul and to the relational dimension that this idea brings with it.

In this work, Bianchi directs the attention and the bodies of the audience using some very simple spatial elements (Figure 3), but which, nevertheless, are decisive for inscribing the audience’s corporality in a state of concentration that convokes the sensory and imaginative dimensions.

Sociologist Erving Goffman investigated the way in which our experience is organized from constructions of the real that acquire sense when they are articulated between them⁶. A framework “[...] is a cognitive and practical device of meaning attribution, which governs the interpretation of a situation and the engagement in this situation, whether it is the relationship with others or with the action itself” (Isaac, 1999, p. 63):



Figure 3 – Headphones, cell phone, poster [Photography]. Photo: Paloma Bianchi (2019).
Source: Artist's file.

Following this approach, *Hacia* organizes an arrangement of spatial, sound and textual elements that generate a framework of the possibility of interaction with the stone. The piece choreographs the movement and the disposition of the bodies of the audience, taking them from a situation of uncertainty and curiosity to a place of listening, attention and introspection, to a protected, intimate and private space.

***Hacia* as a Practice of Subjectivation**

This artistic work points out possibilities of escape in the ways of knowing and in the forms of relationship by proposing to the spectator the interaction with a stone. In Western society, this relationship is only viable in spaces that accept sensory and imaginative experiences, such as the one that opens in the encounter with an artistic work. The operation of subjectifying the stone is unique, situated and partial. I include in the article the narrative of my experience as a spectator to show how the sensory and imaginative dimensions are rich spaces to search for interlacing of senses and new connections that expand, from the particular and the fragmentary, the possibilities of relationship with the world.

I sit down next to the stone and I feel like touching it, I caress its surface and I realize that it is cold, it is soft, but irregular. I look at it and it reminds me the head of a lamb, I imagine that, if it were in a cave, it would be an ideal volume to represent a bison or some of the animals that were hunted in prehistoric times. I take the stone with both hands, it is quite heavy; I turn it over to observe it from another perspective and, in this movement that involves the weight of the stone and the movement of my body holding it and turning it, I remember Jim Jarmusch's vampire movie, *Only lovers left alive* (2013). The protagonists of this love story that crosses time and space had to wear gloves to protect themselves from the extreme sensitivity of their sense of touch because, when they took off their gloves and touched something, they relived the entire past of what they touched, and their vampire body was struck by an accelerated sequence of images that left them exhausted. The vampiric touch evokes the succession of images of a phantom time, of a time contained in the inanimate. As I hold the stone in my hands, I imagine that, if I were Tilda Swinton, Jarmusch's vampire actress, I could relive the history of the stone through the images of the places where it was. I imagine that my stone bones resonate with this triangular stone. I hold the stone in my hands looking for that resonance with this concrete stone that I have learned silently, but

that with my imagination I have inhabited with nuances and stories. I leave the stone on the floor in the position I found it and decide to leave. I cross the door and the illuminated space outside the museum. To come out is to come out of the fiction. I leave the headphones on the hanging hook and walk towards the exit (Report by Diana Delgado-Ureña, Madrid, 2019).

This narrative, like other reports that Bianchi collected in informal conversations with the audience, shows a mode of interaction with the work that reorganizes the situation “[...] by attributing subjectivity or agency to the ‘so-called’ things” (Viveiros de Castro, 2013, p. 28). The operation of subjectifying the stone in order to interact with it places the spectator in an animist vision of the world, the same of the indigenous “[...] who believe that animals, plants, even stones, also have a soul” (Viveiros de Castro, 2013, p. 26). Some people felt an affinity with the stillness of stone, or pretended to be stone, others experienced an emotion of rejection, invented dialogues, reconstructed their past or invented their future.

The central question is to think of the exercise of subjectivation as a practice that experiments with the decentralization of anthropocentric hegemony. As Tim Ingold (2015, p. 225) said: “[...] Animism is not about restoring agency to objects; it is about bringing things back to life. It gives us room to breathe.” The operation of subjectivizing to know insists on the relational dimension of knowledge and on the assumption of the capacity for agency and interaction of beings endowed with a soul, such as stones, which, in the West, we consider far from the possibility of exchange beyond the context of art.

As a choreographic work, *Hacia* appeals to the corporal dimension of the audience in its sensory and imaginative dimensions, in its capacity to know through the operation of subjectivity. In this article, I proposed to think of the work as a practice of Amerindian perspectivism associated with two central notions of this theory: considering all beings endowed with agency for relationship and conceiving knowledge as a process of subjectivation.

The interaction between artistic practice and anthropological theory has the value of pointing out openings to try modes of exchange that from the corporal and imaginative dimension contribute to denaturalize the beliefs that organize the relations with the surrounding world. The decentrali-

zation of the human is one of the critical lines of action with respect to the assumptions of Modernity that invites us to recreate other interactions with what surrounds us. The choreography can inscribe the bodies of the audience in a pattern of movement and attention that creates states of sensory openness. It is from these displaced positions resonating in the body and imagination of the audience that other forms of relationship are practiced.

Notes

- ¹ Paloma Bianchi is a professor, researcher, dancer and choreographer. She has a degree in Performance from the School of Communication of the Arts of the Body of the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP). The interests of her doctoral research are linked to the notion of perspectivism in Viveiros de Castro and the Amerindian thought of Ailton Krenak and Daví Kopenawa.
- ² This is a sectoral audience between approximately 20 and 60 years old, that brings together young artists, professional artists with a longer career, together with researchers and people interested in contemporary artistic practices with training in the arts, humanities, social sciences and architecture.
- ³ Comments by Paloma Bianchi in an interview about the work conducted on October 9, 2019.
- ⁴ A qualitative research on the reception of the work that considers sociological variables of the audience such as race, class, gender and geographical origin could provide, from accounts, a broader consideration about if the piece manages (or not) to shake the modern/colonial tradition. In any case, such an inquiry is outside the scope of this article, which proposes a reading of the artistic procedures of the work from the notions of Amerindian perspectives based on my experience as a spectator, considering the research interests of the artist.
- ⁵ Viveiros de Castro makes his own the questions of the American anthropologist James Clifford when he says: “What changes when the subject of ‘history’ is no longer Western? How do stories of contact, resistance, and assimilation appear from the standpoint of groups in which exchange rather than identity is the fundamental value to be sustained?” (Clifford, 1988, p. 344).
- ⁶ This notion of the superimposition of frameworks that structure experience indicates that the reality we live in is built on a social agreement, on a dynamic agreement where part of the limits are inherited and part is updated over time.

This notion, worked on in research conferences with Professor José A. Sánchez, helps to think how in a shared space a common definition of what reality is generated, but also how that reality can change, coinciding with the fact that frameworks also transform, move, break and rise again.

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