



The sap of the dream and the metamorphoses of memory

By Renata Tupinambá

Colony cast a spell to put our dreams to sleep in darkness, eating our tongues, holding back the fluidity that connects our blood to the uterus, the trunk of our mother; they believed we wouldn't be able to listen to which of our ancestrals inhabit our flesh again. The rite is the first act for the healing, a movement for an ancestral reconnection of what has never been interrupted and to the metamorphosis. Each place has its history and a murmur of voices.

To respect and honor everything the forest gave birth to is also what the educator and filmmaker Carlos Papá proposes in the philosophy of cosmology from the ancestrals of his people, a way of inhabiting being part of the web and not apart from it through the pollution of a system focussing on the exploration of natural and human resources which results in ecocide.

Bodies merge with other bodies, rooting each other, faces, hair and skins in connection. It's a ceremonial dance when two indigenous women dialogue in



silence, their looks could truly see themselves at the abyss of origin and the spirits are bathed by the affection flames. Ritualizing is like dreaming, living culture under the atemporality of memory. The indigenous artists Zahy Guajajara and Sallisa Rosa sing for the memory in their Rite, showing how it originates in what it lives and is kept in mind. Ancestry is alive in the sap that feeds a big tree.

Lily Baniwa, in Episode 8 of “Paraskeué: podcast for life!” podcast, directed by Naine Terena and Flávio Fêo, shows that her life’s trajectory is survival, which she learned about through the canoe that was capable of taking her to places, connecting the history of each sacred land in multiple territories, as “each part of Brazil has an ancestral memory”, she highlights. The necessity of the indigenous art being valued and not lowered shows that nowadays the empowerment of creators from different peoples has been growing with the artist productions.

The first experiences with indigenous actors in Brazil happened through the Jesuits, who would use even the areas in the churches as a stage for their doctrinaire dramaturgy of strengthening Christianity and the project of erasure of cultures. Theater was used as a tool for domination and indoctrination; the history of conflicts between indigenous villages and colonizers were intentionally misrepresented, always praising the colonizers and their religion. The presence of Catholic saints among the characters, along with their bios, was one of its main features.



Auto of Saint Lawrence is one of the best known works by José de Ancheita. Staged for the first time in Niteroi, in the year of 1583, got not only the indigenous peoples as their target audience but also young priests, being instructed on how to use catechism. In Niterói, a city in Rio de Janeiro, the Saint Lawrence of the Indians Church is considered the foundation monument of the city; it was built over an indigenous cemetery, which became known as the cemetery of caboclos.

By the end of the 16th century, the village around was part of the sesmaria of termiminó indigenous leader Arariboia, which he received in March 16, 1568 after helping the Portuguese to expel the Tupinambás and other indigenous peoples taking part of the Confederation of Tamoios, allied with the French. This confederation was the first indigenous movement known in the country. It was an articulation of the elders and the oldest ones – that's why Tamoio, from the Tupi language amuya, “the oldest ones, the ancient ones”, ta'mõi, “grandparents”, as a council of elders joined by leaders of the indigenous peoples who made up the articulation, most notably the Tupinambá. Moreover, leaders like Aimberé are included in the Auto of Saint Lawrence within an Eurocentric perspective of history.

A letter written by Father Gonçalo de Oliveira, in 1570, had already announced a first chapel, made of rammed earth, on the top of the hill in Saint Lawrence of the Indians Village. This first one has multiplied across many other states as a way of controlling and extinguishing the villages. Indigenous people were catechized, received Christian names replacing their real names, and lost their right to the land once they were not considered indigenous peoples anymore.



Their culture, their language and their history were being run over by colonial speech, and theater was used with violence for the deflation of memories in the areas, contributing to the invisibility of the indigenous peoples.

When actress Lilly Baniwa, in her interview, talks about the canoe which teaches a lot and guides her path, she also strengthens the history of her people, of her aruak language in the northwest Amazon, whose ancestral crossed the Earth and like a lightning fell on the ground turning into a snake-canoe, clearly shows that the catechism wasn't capable to erase these old memories from the elderly ones with Christian allegories and Portuguese conquests narratives. Researcher Jaime Diakara, from Dessana indigenous people, sharing this knowledge says that each living being is a canoe, life being transformed.

The experience that actors and actresses live today in the resumption of protagonism in history brings a strong movement against coloniality, changing what many understand or learned as being Brazil. To present their works ahead of traditionality, they face difficulties in performing roles not linked to the past or to the portrayal of "índio" and "índia" [in Portuguese, term used by colonizers to describe the indigenous peoples as a way to reduce their plurality], as if for many writers they were people devoid of experiences beyond the fact they are from different cultures.

To break the colonial spell that fastened spirits in empty abysses, snatching their real names, it's crucial to make the metamorphic cultural project visible which can only be shown in artistic processes and bring all memories spread



by the leaves, stones, animals, herbs, medicines, trunks of trees, birds, wind, places, elders and families in the eternal dialogue with the ancient ones. To get in touch with the living organism of creation is to open doors to receive and also to build new memories which are not hostage of linear time.

The viscerality and depth experimented without the coloniality stigma of thought can't find any sense in the superficiality that the topics are being approached in another non-indigenous subjective experience. Its reading, performance and creation emerge from the vitality in the emergence of existing weaving ancestry.

