

# Movements of an Amazonian performer- researcher amidst Amerindian laughter

Movimentos de uma performer-pesquisadora  
amazônida entre risos ameríndios

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## ABSTRACT

In this article, I map theoretical and poetic approximations that cross the experience of my performative map about epistemologies of Amerindian laughter in the Amazon. I develop it in three acts of writing, that involve the other geographies created by my embodied map, the concept of Makunaima Laughter and its grotesque, trickster and obscene characteristic among Amerindian comicalities, and also the becomings of the performer, in ontological instability.

Keywords: Map. Makunaima Laughter. Amazonia. Amerindians.

## RESUMO

*Neste artigo, cartografo aproximações teóricas e poéticas que atravessam a experiência de meu mapa performativo sobre epistemologias do riso ameríndio na Amazônia. Eu o desenvolvo em três atos de escrita, que perpassam as geografias outras criadas por meu mapa incorporado, a noção de Riso Makunaima e seu caráter grotesco, trapaceiro e obsceno entre comicidades ameríndias, além dos devires da performer em cena, em instabilidade ontológica.*

*Palavras-chave: Mapa. Riso Makunaima. Amazônia. Ameríndios.*

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She is sitting quietly on the stage. The people there are waiting to hear her talk at the table “Forest knowledge in Arts of the Scene research: theoretical and practical essays”, during the seminar “Epistemologies: transversality in the Arts of the Scene”<sup>2</sup>. She shares the stage with Patrícia Pinheiro<sup>3</sup>, Alberto Silva<sup>4</sup> and Wlad Lima<sup>5</sup>. Talks about research that dialogue with the forest from where these four Amazonian artist-researchers come. They bring the Amazon written in their bodies, although they also are in a learning and researching process on the knowledge deepening into the woods, while living in the urbane Belém do Pará. The audience, packed with other researchers, was coming back from a short break in the event. Rumors of conversation ceased in the Auditorium as soon as they saw what was on stage. The four, sitting, queued at a diagonal angle, eyed the audience. State of art. Wlad initiated the talk and announced the adventure of the other three, partners in the artistic scene in the city of Belém. Patricia follows. Later, Alberto. Then it is her turn. Pause.

I map epistemologies of the Amerindian laughter in the deep Amazon forest. I advance into the forest amidst writings of those who have already been in the territory: anthropologists, poets, among others. I also prepare to follow wayfaring myself, deepening the boundaries of the Amazon I know, being me a dweller of the urban contexts in the region. I map the laughs I find and the knowledge they inspire in my body, a body in creation, in research.

The map is in my body. I start from the assumption that my scenic creation is research and that I produce knowledge incarnated in my actions, using here the thoughts of Sônia Rangel (2009;2015), which I prefer to call, for this experience, of “*pensamento incorporado*” (“embodied thinking”), for reasons that will be further explained. My writing has a memorial tone, of the artist that understands, and makes visible and communicable its poetic and creation process, whose itinerary includes drawing the map itself in the body of the performer.

My reflections, in this writing, are map over a map. I try to map tangencies and transparencies with some notions and ideas I have encountered and invented, in the attempt of following the path of my research on Amerindian laughter epistemologies until here. Once again, I use the terms of Sônia Rangel (2009; 2015), for whom the author is the only one who is able to expose, from inside out the work, the choices and encounters with other artists and authors who get close to its own way of thinking the creative process and the poetic expression. The dialogue with these scene partners, as I like to call them, does not happen through discussion and explanation, but through attempts to understand the

2. The Seminar “Epistemologies: Transversality in the Arts of the Scene” occurred from 3 to 5 October 2016, in Belo Horizonte, MG, and was organized by the research group CRIA - Artes e Transdisciplinaridade (Arts and Transdisciplinarity), a laboratory of the School of Fine Arts of the Federal University of Minas Gerais, registered at the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq).

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poetic itself, from “tangencies” and “transparencies” inspired by theoretical and poetical meetings of research-creation.

That is what I do in this article, which is weaved in three writing acts. At each act, a body made only of flows and moments of encounter. Body-without-organs, which Antonin Artaud claims to be a way out of the judgments, prisons, and automatisms surrounding us, also enunciated and operated by Deleuze and Guattari (1996) to mean an exercise, a practice, an act of disrupting the self, experimenting yourself in a not-organic vitality, of opening the self to the flow. Writing ceases to be an organized organism, starting then to constitute of connections, assemblages, circuits, deterritorializations (RESENDE, 2009). At each act, the intensities pass through my process of creation in research, without an attempt of organizing, cleaving, or framing the experience in niches, but in an effort, an exercise, of communicating the crossings inspired by the poetic.

While going through each act, it is possible to follow through where my body, my map moves, accepting the invitation I do to the reader of following me into the woods. But is also possible to testify through where the body is freed, disrupted, opens itself, stops interpreting to start experimenting. It is impossible to enter the forest and get out unscathed.

### *Act 1: A performative map*

The *parakanãs* are a Tupi-Guarani folk found in the state of Pará, which lived in a forest area to the west of Tocantins River. By the end of the 19th century, a fight over women divided the group in occidental and oriental *parakanãs*, which then became enemies, with distinct habitations and lifestyles. In his ethnography, Carlos Fausto (2014) describes the ways of life and historical formation process of both groups. At a given moment of his writings, he cites that these subjects have a peculiar way of relating to the territory where they live, in a manner that, for the anthropologist, ‘territory’ would not be the best name to match the way the *parakanã* define the area they inhabit.

In the *parakanã* language, this area is named “woods” (-*ka’a*) preceded by a first-person plural possessive pronoun, forming the term “our woods” (*ore-ka’a*). The housing space is more than an abstract piece of land on which a collective exercises sovereignty. *Ore-ka’a* refers to “[...] a forest band which is known in everyday activity and recognized by the inscription of these acts, over time, in the physical space and in the collective memory” (FAUSTO, 2014, p.105). The ethnographer suggests the term “sylvantory”, whose

prefix refers directly to the strong and ancestral relationship with the part of the forest they chose to live in. Sylvantories are permeated by toponyms, names that the indigenous people attribute to places where past experiences that marked such folk happened.

The toponyms often keep marks of a circumstantial origin: for example, the oriental *parakanās* call *Jara'ira* the Lontra River, because there it would have died a man of that name; *Apinerenawa* is how they call an area on the basin of Direita River where the skull (*apinera*) of an enemy lies. The occidental *parakanās*, in turn, called a small watercourse on the basin of Pacajá River of *Jyohoa* ("big axe"), because there they forgot an axe certain day; the Pucuruzinho was known as *Inajy'anga*, since there they found a house covered with inajá straw. These names are deities restrictive qualifications that, through the recurrent use, became names of places, i.e. lexicalized as toponyms. A name appears to be a result, thus, of a long usage process of a location reference, frequently referring to past events (FAUSTO, 2014, p.105).

An artist-researcher that travels into the Amazonia, rehearsing her first attempts to enter the forest, slowly establishes relations with other experiences already lived in those territories. She does not inhabit this places as abstract pieces of land, but as parts of the forest that can only be known by its uses, its registers of acts arising from the ancestral experience of habitation, and its production of knowledge. 'Our woods' is the forest of knowledge and laughter that I share in this research, where I map the Amerindian comicalities in this deep Amazon forest.

My body, in discoveries inside the forest, composes a poetic, performative, strayed map of comic epistemologies, permeated by shamanism, ancestral knowledge, ways of relating to the territory and among ourselves, which are capable of generating new ways to understand the world. I make connections in my body, folds with other thoughts, and give them back in scene, creation map. I create in my body species of toponyms, landmarks, and relevant map points from my experience in the space, which later will go to the scene.

I recognize the possibility of working with a performative map in my doing-thinking research, from the correlations proposed by the artist-researcher Renata Marquez (2009) in her thesis. The performative map would be close to the dilettante navigation manual, close to desire, to loss, to the cartography existing along with space, acting on it, making it live, creating worlds. The experience counterpoints the fixed and deserted map, with well-defined ranges, which mounts back to the fixity of the vertical look that measures the territory safely and impartially. Here is not a

question of measure. In her analysis of artists that produce works understood as triggers of certain vectors of mutation in the space and its concepts, the author proposes that there another geography arises, one that is coexistent to the scientific discipline, capable of promoting the construction of poetic quality and day-to-day practices politics. These works are denominated portable geographies because they provide something mobile, shareable, which resembles a manual of navigation through the space otherness. In other words, everything the scientific objectivity neglects as experience knowledge. Such geographies provoke the immersion in these other day-to-day ecologies and in the creation of distinct spatiality.

Other toponyms in the territory of, and for the body. Other ways of thinking, accompanied by other body images. My performative map changes the bodily topographies that constitute me. Fernando Mencarelli (2013), writing about the cross-cultural experience of the Jerzy Grotowski's theater - in particular on the passage from the paratheatrical phase to the one which became known as Theater of Sources -, mentions that these topographies are mind maps generated by different culture substrates. And the distinct cultural crossings, as researched by Grotowski in his Theater Anthropology, pass through other conceptions, other bodily geographies. The encounter with practices of several cultures generates learning territories and perception enlargement. The cartography I do makes me wider, changes the geography of my body and as action in space it rewrites and returns other landscapes.

Performative refers to the idea of valuing the action itself, in addition to its representative value, its *mimesis*. Thus, the making is paramount, as explained by Josette Féral (2015), in her attempt to understand the performative as a mark of the theatrical artistic practices in contemporaneity. The actor appears as a performer, someone who puts the body, play, and technical competences ahead of the concern with meaning construction, in a manner that the spectators, when confronted with this making, are invited to find the meaning by themselves. The event takes place at the real, focusing on time and moment, always comprising the risk and the possibility of not being effective.

Something similar happens with the maps when imbued with performativity. They are marked by the ambiguity, loss of meaning, paradoxes, overlapping of meanings, terms which Féral (2015) applies to this kind of theater, but I propose to apply them to the maps-works of the artists with whom Marquez (2009) dialogues. Mobile maps such as the body, whose mobility and freedom challenges the division in organs, the formation of static

and stable knowledge, revealing their wildness - that does not fit in the bordering lines of the rigid scales, but that construct knowledge based on subjective relationships. Open meaning. A map that is not fixity, but thing-in-action in the territory.

I say, establishing my own cartography bridges, that what the *parakanã* are doing when mapping their territory by toponyms is to create for themselves a portable geography, performing the blank map on the forest they inhabit to become their sylvantory. They act on the territory and take it to themselves, triggering the collective memory, in my view, as a device of epistemic resistance. They substitute the vertical, instituted knowledge with another, produced in the experience of everyday and of their ancestors regarding the woods, renaming and thus reconfiguring the space. On the *parakanã* map, there is no Lontra River, there is *Jara'ira*. The habitation is not just any area, is "our woods".

My body takes similar effort. I continue to search for clues on the Amerindian laughter in the Amazonia and I create tensions, relations, performative folds of the knowledge emanating from that laughter. What I bring to the scene and the memorial writing is a body that is crossed by other epistemologies, a body of an urban Amazonia that, for the first time, look into the territory where it always lived. In this same body, there is encounter, experience, passage and production of knowledge performed with and from the forest, creating vital fiction and friction, coexistent between the forest laughter and the invitation to unwonted thinking, so to speak.

Thinking the portable geography is to juxtapose, in the same body, subject and passage, experience and knowledge, space and spatial practice. Portable condition triggers the autonomy of action and the freedom of creation of new vital fictions, practicing a micro-politics [...] of understanding and of proposing of ways to coexist (MARQUEZ, 2009, p.238).

Remembering the Deleuzian geophilosophy: "thinking is something that is done in the relation between territory and land" (DELEUZE, 1992, p.113). Land deterritorializes the territory. The latter, in turn, reterritorializes the land, in a continuous movement, whose beginning cannot be demarcated. I revisit this notion as a manifesto, which summons to experiment this deterritorialization of the body-knowledge, from the land, other lands, and generate displacements. From the Deleuzian geophilosophy is that the anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (BARCELLOS; LAMBERT, 2012) invites to live an experience with the thought, rather than staying at the own thought. Not thinking as the indigenes, to imitate them in impossible attempts to be what I am

not; but to think with this thought, through this epistemology, in a sort of experiment of thinking.

My map is an experiment of thinking and embodying. From the embodied thinking that develops with the indigenous thinking at the Amazon. I create, perform concepts, from the Amerindian laughter. These *epistemes* contaminate my ways of thinking.

It is not a matter of saying “look, the indigenes also have concept”. This would be ridiculous, the indigenes did not ask to have a concept, they do not want this honor. It would be pathetic to think that the great aspiration of the indigenes was to become philosophers; as if it were the most important thing in the world; as if everybody wanted to be a philosopher after growing up. But it is perfectly possible to think with the indigenous thought and trying to build concepts on it, based on it, the same way it is possible to create concepts based on art, literature, life experience, in certain aesthetics of the existence (BARCELLOS; LAMBERT, 2012, p.263).

Thinking, creating concepts through thought, let them go through my body. Would this be an effort that connects to Grotowski’s Theater Anthropology, and to other actions of modern and contemporary theater names who preceded him or followed the steps of his cross-cultural work, making an effort to search for new resonances, other impulses, to recognize the otherness as our uniqueness that enhances the human condition and constitute of another otherness? As stated by Mencarelli (2012, p.140), “The dislocated practice is not the original, located practice. The body which is modified by the encounter is also not the same body of ignorance. There are an extension and amplification of the experience”.

I keep performing my scene and my writings, with the thought-body that is constructed by the Amerindian thought, on the laughter map of the deep Amazon forest. The laughter that is knowledge and that invades me, amplifying me among snakes, ounces, and monkeys, creatures of the forest that populate me in becoming, and that summon *epistemes* ignored by the boundaries of the territory and forms of knowledge. This is what was going through that woman, me, to which I referred at the beginning of this article when preparing to communicate an experience among forest knowledge, accompanied by her partners in life and scene.

### *Act 2: Makunaima laughter and the becoming of the performer-researcher in unoccidentalization process*

Sitting on that chair, the tranquility I presented as I was about to speak at the auditorium was not to be trusted. The audience

watched me with suspicion. I felt myself on a stakeout, saving energy for the attack. On this state, I said the words of Davi Kopenawa (KOPENAWA, ALBERT, 2015, p.103):

The water women never took me to their home, never laid me down on their hammocks. They prefer the sons of shamans. So it is. Despite this, I never stopped seeing the *xapiri* in my dreams, ever since I was little, even without knowing who they were. It was only much later, as an adult, that I put my nose out to the older shamans so they give me their spirits. I felt this urge by myself. I thought it would be beautiful to see the real things and so, gradually, I started to fond the *xapiri*.

Days earlier, in Belém, at the closing of a doctoral discipline, I shared my writing with the same excerpt from the report of the *yanomami* shaman, in a challenge of writing and performative communication for that discipline. I considered that a rehearsal for what would come later, in the seminar. Davi Kopenawa refers to the look of the *xapiri*, the ancestral mythical beings of that culture, that are interested in some people in the community since childhood, for them to become shamans in the future. Early on, the child sees the *xapiri* in dreams and, later, decides whether it will follow the spiritual intent of being initiated as a shaman or if it prefers not to do it. Davi is not a son of a shaman, a condition that normally guides the interest of the *xapiri*. Even so, as occurs with some, he receives the affection of the spirits and also starts to get fond of them, deciding to go along that path. I chose the account of Davi Kopenawa because it resonates with my current condition as a researcher in the interstices of the Amazon rainforest.

I am no daughter of a shaman. I have never been taken by the water people, who lead the *yanomami* to the bottom of the river, place of the initiation, of the process of becoming another. Something close to the idea of becoming malo-body (CESARINO, 2011), a body that is maloca, inhabited by the immensity of spiritual beings, mediating the contact with the physical world. I am a clown, interested in laughter and in the Amazons where I inhabit and am a foreigner at the same time, considering the plurality of this territory. I've scoured in search of laughter that I already knew in previous research, looking for women active in the region, clowns such as me (FLORES, 2014). I have been on the edges, on the capitals. I could not get in, but I could see the inside of the place, of the thickened forest. Now, I feel like putting out my nose, my red nose, by myself, to the ancestral shamans of this place, so they give me their laughter.



The laughter of the spirits, wicked, grotesque, scandalous. The epistemic laughter, as it regulates and directs the ways of acting and understanding the community world, boosting a comical art in the Amazon. I put my nose for embodiment and performativity of the Amerindian laughter and its *epistemes*, my initiation process.

On that day, in the classroom before the seminar, I performed the putting out of my nose. I pulled out from my clothes the old red nose, my companion in comical antics as the clown Bilazinha, born eight years before in the body of the actress. With the nose in my hands, I stood up and handed my precious mask to Patricia Pinheiro, doctorate partner, and daughter of Tereza de Colares, Amazonian actress-shaman. “Patricia, please, hand it over to godmother Tereza”.

I participate, together with Tereza de Colares, of the sacred tea ritual she conducts with her daughter in her grange, located in the municipality of Colares, PA. Tereza is a performer and was initiated as shaman among the indigenous communities in the region. Today, her work at the grange aggregates an ever-growing audience, as we are all attracted to her affectionate and libertarian way of living and conducting the ritual. When I refer to sacred tea, I use a term that designates the sacramental beverage known in the Amazon by its uses in shamanic rituals of several indigenous communities, in addition to other rituals that give other sense to the beverage, such as Santo Daime and Barquinha. Ayahuasca and Daime are some of the names the tea receives, permeating the forest religions. The leaders of Santo Daime are called “Godfather” and “Godmother”, an affectionate pet-name the participants call them (ALBUQUERQUE, 2007).

In the ritual conducted by Tereza, the beverage is the sacred tea. She affiliates to Santo Daime, however, without following strictly their precepts. In the context of that performative act in the classroom, I remembered her as godmother and the oldest shaman with whom I am in contact. Whenever I can, I participate of the ritual in Colares with Tereza as someone who puts the body in the game, in the act. The forest revolves my body with the tea. Laughs, animals, and other learning are presented to my ears and eyes. All senses are altered. And the body, in performance, is stirred, unoccidentalized.

To unoccidentalize. To undo the cleavage between body and spirit. To direct outward the capitalists’ centers, producers of knowledge. Dismantling the myths that exalt the so-called “white man”. “To be free of guilt and assume the power of a superman” as suggests, finally, Maria Inês de Almeida, in an interview to Cleber Araújo Cabral and João Rocha (2013, p.179). Based on her

experience of literary creation along with Amazon indigenous communities, she explains that the indigenous textualities are extra-occidental, outside the Greco-Roman rationality logic, and are understood as a healing, communication process of the spirits with others. Thus, the act of unoccidentalizing itself has to do with the opening, in writing and living, to ancestry and community. A process in which the subject breaks with the tradition that puts it in control of the semiotic process, and understands that spirits become letters for a healing of the land and of the person.

Unoccidentalizing has to do with disorienting, leaving aside worn-out significances on behalf of the mystery of the possible, changing position and direction, as suggested by Jerusa Pires Ferreira (2009) in the preface to Maria Inês de Almeida's book. Reversing, dismantling, deconstructing to create new impulses that are also related to the preservation of the world and of nature, both forgotten by us. Is not a question of creating an opposition to the Western world, taken as only measure and scale. This is classified as problematic by Viveiros de Castro (2015), since the duality between East and West tend to maintain the centrality of the latter, keeping it a hegemonic measure which opposes the rest of the world. What creates the term 'unoccidentalized' and its derived verb, 'unoccidentalize', "[...] is the infinite replication of ourselves in others, and of others in us. The permanent switch-over between being, saying, breathing" (FERREIRA, 2009, p.14).

The sacred tea helps me in this process of unoccidentalizing a body which is accustomed to cleavages, dualities, rationalities, and worn-out significances. I walk in the forest as an Amazonian artist that knows the clown laughter, native from European cultures but that ignores the laughs coming from the woods. The popular wisdom says that a home saint does not work miracles. In this case, I still believe that what comes from home might not work miracles, but regarding the comical in the Amazon forest, I feel I am thrown at strong and comic intensities that operate important deconstructions and dismantles in the body. This is, I think, a healing, a reconnection process with the mystery of the possible in my dwelling territory. Unoccidentalizing to replicate me in the laughter of the other, and in their laughter in me. Alternations in creation, ways of thinking, in life.

To the audience in that auditorium, I could then declare that I had already handed over my nose, my red clown nose, to Tereza de Colares, days before. To hand over the nose meant to put myself in availability to the forest laughter, never to extinguish or positioning against the clowning art I practice for so many years.

However, it was urgent to ritualize my crossing in other comicalities. *Makunaima* laughter that emanate from within the forest.

My first encounter with the Amerindian laugh took place through the mythical figure of *Makunaima*, a being which is present in the cosmogony of the *Pemon* people, a term used to designate the four indigenous folks dwelling in the vicinity of the Mount Roraima. Namely: *Macuxi*, *Taurepang*, *Arekuna* and *Kamarakoto*. The narratives of these folks were brought to public from the work of the ethnographer Theodor Koch-Grünberg, responsible for bringing *Makunaima* to the German academic and scientific culture, as reported by Fábio Almeida de Carvalho (2009). *Makunaima* became *Makunaimá* and, after that, the German letter “K” was replaced by the Portuguese “C” in the work of Mário de Andrade. It was born *Macunaíma*, hero of our people (ANDRADE, 2012).

The “hero of no character” was identified again in the work of the modernist, whose greatest motivation was the project of defining a national character to the Brazilian culture (CARVALHO, 2009). However, *Makunaima*, the mythical being of the *Pemon* narratives, before passing through the look of the modernist, was already making his adventures in the myths by which he survives in the Amazon forest, and is far more ancient than the way most Brazilians got to know him. It is to *Makunaima* and his comic, mischievous, and creative behavior that I refer. His way of being and acting in the world is controversial, grotesque. He is not the only mythical being with these characteristics among the Amazonian indigenes.

The several myths where *Makunaima* appears, described by Theodor Koch-Grünberg (apud MEDEIROS, 2002), offer an explanation for the appearance of several things in the world, since the creation of animals such as stingray and snake, until the shape of tree trunks and the appearance of some so-called ugly breasts. One of the myths tells that *Makunaima* wanted to lay with a woman who, however, did not allow it and hit him. She was in love with *Kumaye-kima-moínele*, the “young man of the Samaúma tree”, and there was no point in taking her from him since she thought he was very handsome. *Makunaima*, annoyed, calls his brothers *Jigué* and *Ma’napé* to destroy the opponent. The idea was to tie the young man for him never to be beautiful again. And so they did it, tying the arms and legs of *Kumaye-kima-moínele*. That is why, according to the myth, the Samaumeira tree do not thicken on the bottom of the trunk, just in the “belly”. It is said to be a paunchy tree (*t-éwan-yen*). At that time, women had no breasts, and *Makunaima* and his brothers, not satisfied, tied each side of the woman’s chest to the extreme tip of the stem of each banana bunch, giving the conical shape of some women’s breasts.

Prankish, libidinous, wicked. Grotesque, comic. Sometimes, silly. In the mythical thought of the *Pemon* folk, Makunaima creates and destroys, becomes other things, he founds and confuses the world. Carvalho (2009, s/p) reflects on the counterpoint between the behavior of Makunaima and the white thought, exemplified in the German readers that came in contact with the record of its legends:

The reading of the migrant hero's exploits caused amazement to the German readers imagination that, facing it with its occidental sense such creature of weird, obnoxious, and full of tricks character, showing a total lack of ethics, must have noticed how different was that hero that could transform himself and other living creatures in anything he wanted, according to its changing and unreasonable desires.

Makunaima's strangeness and insolence juxtapose the morale of acceptable behavior and the image of many occidental deities. Amazonian *trickster*, as denominated by Lúcia Sá (2002), it is a figure that relates to a free spirit, averse to rules, crosser of boundaries, linked to cheating and deception, who reveals facets of the human personality and of the idea of deity, which is of fundamental importance in several rituals and cosmogonies of traditional folks. I turn my attention to *Makunaima* not only because of his way of being but also for the manner in which the resignification of his myth became known all around the country and has gained visibility through the work of Mário de Andrade. I should, however, draw attention to the fact that *Makunaima* and Macunaíma are distinctive beings; an effort already undertaken by other researchers, as Carvalho (2009) and Faria (2006). The Amazonian Makunaima is convened here as a territorial political strategy, and I use the term "makunaima laughter" to encompass other tracks of similar features for the comicality within the forest, in the cosmogony of other local indigenous folks. Throughout these woods, there are several others who are similar to *Makunaima* permeating the ways of thinking of the forest.

The anthropologist Joanna Overing (2000) believes in the existence of an epistemology of the foolishness, nonsense, comic between Amazon indigenous people. The laughter would be a vital component for the Amerindian communities, people who love the obscene humor, the joke, and which share similar attitudes to the ones of deities and mythical figures. Their daily lives and their understanding of the things are oriented by this way of thinking the world and the origins of what is in it, which is permeated by the comicality.

Els Lagrou (2009) dialogues with the writings of Overing, passing through several other examples of Amazonian mythological beings, among other ethnicities, that appear to be part of this epistemology of forest laughter. She presents examples that are situated between the sacred and the comic, from parts of reports of other anthropologists on other folks, in addition to the *Kaxinawa*, of Acre, with whom she develops her work. The grotesque is usually associated both to divine as to human, in a manner that laughable aspects, according to the author, are markers of creation, changes, conquest, and destruction times.

Ñañe, *Airo Pai* god in the Peruvian Amazon, walked the Earth tricking the beings he could find, turning them into animals. Although he is the supreme creator, currently he is always looking for his own benefits and behaves as a *trickster*, changing his appearance to fool those who seek him, being allied only of the shamans. *Wahari*, from the *Piaroa* narratives, has a long penis that he wraps around his neck. Women visited him in the game of swinging to the other side of the river until the huge penis found them and made love to them for several hours. The jealous husband of the wives finds out and cuts out the rival brother parts. By means of this funny narrative, it is explained also the origin of menstruation among those indigenes. Among the *Kaxinawas*, Els Lagrou tells about *Inka*, mythical almighty and cannibal god who devours his own leg after devouring all the women the *Kaxinawas* offer him. What ensures the laughter of the audience is this myth narrative, which is permeated by a lot of mime, according to the anthropologist (LAGROU, 2009).

In fact, Overing (2000) highlights that the attitude of the myths narrator, usually a shaman, is quite scenic, with traces of obscenity and parody, and full of irony. The words are always strong, interesting, funny. Much beyond solemn and wonderful tales about divine omnipotence and omniscience, what the anthropologist saw were performances that raise public delight, many laughs, and a pleasant understanding of the absurdity in human condition from the unseemly behavior of the creator gods.

Lagrou (2009, 2007) presents, yet, examples of the comicality inserted in day-to-day social arrangements and in ritual contexts of the *Kaxinawa*. To mention a few other examples of reports with such content, in Barcelos Neto (2008) I discovered a series of games that are part of the ritual to bring *Apapaatai*, among the *Wauja*, of the *Xingu*. The masks ritual, intended to cure diseases caused by the theft of souls practiced by the *Apapaatai*, is also permeated by lustful jokes between men and women, involving songs whose main theme are both genitals. Coelho (2014), in his

dissertation on the cosmogony of the Temb  folk of the upper Guam  River in Par , mentions that during the *Festa da Mo a* (Young Girls Party), a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood, especially for girls, but also for boys, there is a moment to verify if the initiated already have seriousness. A brown howler monkey is adorned with props such as skirt and necklaces and is constantly used by its conductor, on the last day of the party, to make the girls laugh. Its role is to test the seriousness, goofing around, “monkey play” as one of the informants describes. Everybody laughs, but they do not. Keeping the seriousness means being ready to the challenges of adulthood.

Each reporting context on the forest laughter deserves a specific look. Laughter of social arrangements, of rituals, of mythical narratives. I invoke them here as expressions of *Makunaim * laughter, laugh of the deep Amazon forest: grotesque, prankish, obscene. Comicality which is present in the attitude of divine figures such as *Makunaima*, that reaches the community through the myths narrator but also through the everyday life and their rituals.

The performativity of the mythical Amerindian narratives in the Amazon forest is a device of *Makunaima* laughter, triggered by shamans and disseminated in the communities daily life. Jerome Rothenberg (2006) and his ethnopoetic writings help me to think that the narrative of traditional people is a unit with their enunciation modes. It is about a poetic experience that encompasses the body movements, the way the voice is used, the place where it happens etc. The poem is composed of all the acts involved in storytelling, approaching the performance. I understand, thus, the Makunaima laughter as inseparable of the ethnopoetic performance that enables its existence in the bodies of the Amerindian subjects and their spiritual beings.

First of all, I am a poet & (living at the time I live in) a powerful performer of my own poetry. For me, it is better to *make* poetry than to *speak* of it. [...] The poetry becomes the sound - not the separate manuscript, the preparation or notation, but the sounding. Where there is no writing, the actual sound renews the poet, creates him every moment, because here there is no poem without performance (ROTHENBERG, 2006, p.92).

At this point, the audience listening to my talk in that auditorium startles to notice I take my blouse out on the stage. It is possible to see the transparent swimsuit I had all the time under my clothes, all written with what looks like some kind of writing, of unintelligible spelling. I feel my eyes opening in life, between fascination and threat. My smile is direful. Then, a shy and restrained

body, an hesitant look. And, without announcing what I am about to do, I start to narrate:

*One day, my brother Wahari and I had a party at our house. Many foreigners came, the house was decorated with great taste, painted and fragrant. All of our body parts were fragrant (giggles). Wahari was concerned about my honor and ordered me to be careful with the drinking. I liked the visitors a lot and drank with them. Their scent was so good! Even though, I obeyed my brother and remained chaste. Meanwhile, he started to drink all he could with the visiting women, and spent a delicious time with the guests on the back of the house, where there is laughter and loving encounters take place. Immense anger took me because of my brother's hypocrisy that night, and I started to refuse talking with him. The way the men spoke so nicely to me did not get out of my head. They said: "Come on!", and I had been foolish enough to refuse. I lied on my hammock and rocked back and forth, singing about my desire for men and about how much I wanted to "do monkey". Wahari, my brother, was furious with this and mocked me: "Why didn't you go with these men?". In his anger, he launched me and my powers to the Magic Mountain. And that is how, without knowing, he gave me exactly what I needed...*

I get up from the chair and now take out the skirt. My body writhes, bowlegged, docked hip, genitals stuck to the front. Open arms, in an arc to the side of the body. I walk the stage:

*Where I fell, I created the brown howler monkey, which won the animal shape it has today. I became the "Mother of the Monkey" and dedicated myself to making perfumes, which actually became the monkey urine itself, which I made for them. Thus I created the ill of the "Monkey Urine Craziiness", the sexual promiscuity ill. The crazy monkeys use their own urine as a love potion...*

I jump down from the stage to the spaces between the chairs, and wander amongst the people:

*I lead a wandering life. I visit a foreign group after another, creating my perfumes for them, making love and creating more monkeys. I spread my perfume throughout the world. Anyone can go nuts if using them, and then will suffer of the Monkey Urine Craziiness, making love to friends, foreigners, brothers or sisters.*

*And that is how the Piaroa of the Venezuelan Amazon explain the sexual promiscuity behavior of some individuals (laughs).*

I go back to the stage to the sound of laughter and to disbelieving looks from those who watched from the audience, which applauds. The narrative, adapted from a Piaroa myth reported by Overing (2000) passes through the body of the researcher who is a performer of her own poetry, her own poetic. I chose to communicate my research this way because all of my movement of the

cartographic trace of the Amerindian laughs in the deep Amazon forest is intended for scenic creation. The body is inspired by the performance of the myths narrator and in the performativity of the research that is there communicated. Poetic research, creation.

The scene was rehearsed two days before, in the classroom of the same discipline in which I handed out my red nose to Tereza de Colares. When narrating the myth in that rehearsal, before the scene in the seminar, my focus was on the sexually attractive body of Sheheru, sister of Wahari, who I assumed as the first person in my adaptation of the narrative. Spread legs, hungry look, seductive body. Seductive body of people who live in an urbanized city. Something was wrong. The first image I composed of Sheheru was marked by a certain occidental eroticism, as I was advised in the classroom, at the discussion after the performance. In the auditorium, however, the audience saw a woman working in other direction: the monkey play. A simian body that acquires its unstable shape progressively, without, however, mimic the monkey. Neither the monkey nor the woman. Something between, becoming.

Becoming-monkey of the performer, not the resemblance: “a becoming-animal that is not contented in resembling, to which the similarity, on the contrary, would be an obstacle or a stop” (DELEUZE; GUATTARI, 1997, p. 9). Nor is matching, not imitation or identification. As the Deleuzian becoming, what I have with Sheheru has to do with the pulse and desire for the other. More than looking like a monkey, I pass through the becoming. I do not abandon the previous state to achieve something defined, a real animal, but I pulsate in the block where it coexists the comic performer, the becoming, and this(these) other(s) that the Amerindian laughter announces.

There are many pulsating others in the researcher body. More than an animal, my becoming on the scene is a dubious entity from within the woods, which I activate with the mythical narrative. In my body, there are resonances of the Amerindian perspectivism of Viveiros de Castro (2011, p.894): “Humanity is, essentially, less a predicated of all beings than a constitutive uncertainty about the predicates of any being”. Each being in the Amazon has its own human perspective, such as us regarding other beings. The ounce sees the men as wild pigs and the blood of its victims as *cauim*<sup>6</sup>. Everything is a human thing, explains Viveiros de Castro (2011, 2015), or at least can reveal itself as such. It is necessary to be wary of what is seen because it is not possible to be fully sure that the other is in fact as we see it. Or better, it is always possible that the animal, artifact or person we see reveal themselves as another thing, in a manner that there is also a possibility of

6. Traditional alcoholic beverage in Amerindian indigenous communities, prepared with fermented corn or cassava.



existing another of the other, which never ceases to transform. And this other understands itself as human.

For the Amerindian thought, Viveiros de Castro says (2011, 2015) that, when revealing itself as something distinctive of what the visual ability of the observer can discern, the other, which is always dubious, also possess an own human perspective that it claims as sovereign. The being sees itself and the others of the same species as humans and sees all others as a variety of possible beings that are impossible to determine with accuracy.

The simian body of the performer-researcher in the scene is in a state of ontological instability, a term employed by Barcelos Neto (2008). Becoming-other, the inaccurate other of the monkey play act, which may be reveal at any moment another form of existence. Many are the existence possibilities inside the forest, and the transforming processes are fast. I look for such becoming and, through them, I embody the Makunaima laughter as epistemology.

#### *Final act: Epistemic embodiment - a guide to other navigations*

To map the forest laughter among Amazonian indigenous communities implies in assuming the stat of my body in creation, in performance, learning to assume other perspectives and to embody them. The act of incorporation becomes, here, embodiment. I use the term *incorporar* to achieve a better similarity with the anthropological concept of embodiment, as done by Els Lagrou (2007) when agreeing with the suggestion of Viveiros de Castro (1996; 2015). To this author, the Portuguese translations of the term 'embody' - *encarnar* (incarnate) and *incorporar* (incorporate) - are not suitable to the Amerindian thought, since here the notion of culture consists of the understanding of perception and action schemes that are prior to the nature, now arranged in a specific embodiment. Culture: unique, human perspective in multiplicity for each being, ancestral, existing in the mythical time. Natures: distinctive, form of animal, plant, artifact acquired later.

I embody the other in a shamanic epistemological operation that acts as the antipode of the objectivistic epistemology of Western modernity, as explained by Viveiros de Castro (2015, p.50) To the latter, knowing is to objectify, to remove the subjectivity, taking away of the object what regards the knowledge of the subject, on behalf of its own, for it to lose its unreal and abstract character. However, in shamanism, which is recognized by anthropologists as a way of acting and knowing or an ideal of knowledge, the operation goes in a contrary direction. The other is not objectified. Knowing implies in impersonating, "taking the point of view of

what must be known. Or before, of *whom*; because the question is to know “the *who* of things” (Guimarães Rosa), an essential knowledge to answer intelligently to the question of “why”.

In the performer-researcher, this act of embodying the other is generated by the desire for otherness that I feel as I enter the forest. I experiment other possibilities and perspectives of being, wayfaring inside the forest as someone who needs to feed, as someone who wishes to alter the composition lines of its own body, who wishes to unoccidentalize among Amerindian laughter epistemologies. I lend the proposition of Joana Overing and re-state for this research context. *Makunaima* laughter fulfills an important role in the Amerindian understanding of the world and, as a performer, I follow its tracks by letting it change me with the epistemologies that emanate from the forest while I search.

The thinking as experiment, from the forest, in performance, in act, thing-in-action, which comes to the eye of the other. An what happens to this map beyond my body?

What happens when the map becomes thing-in-action, beyond its function of being readable? Then the communicational property unfolds from a cartographic reading to a perceptual density or a spatial practice. As a private manifest, the usage of the map can be changed to a manual, a new reporting device, a guide to everyday navigations that go beyond its place-array. Cartographic misplacements are proposed by cartographers who are conscious of the power of speech, and critical to the authority, not even a little innocent, of the formation of a world thinking that is inherent to every map. (MARQUEZ, 2009, p.84).

The forest goes beyond. The territory unfolds in other possibilities, whose creation does not cease to happen. Available to the other, who attributes sense to it, it becomes a guide for other navigation, in addition to its place-array. Not a manual, but a device for other displacements. There is no innocence. I search for the criticality in the embodiment of the Amerindian laughter, I search for displacement, epistemic turn-overs, which resonate in other artists-researchers from the dilated me and the dilated spaces where I wander. Sheheru, when in scene, invites all to play as monkeys; while I live my own becoming. Double becoming, deterritorialization and reterritorialization (DELEUZE, 1992). Towards the Amerindian, so the *epistemes* arising at this encounter make connections with other bodies.

When Davi Kopenawa (KOPENAWA; ALBERTI, 2015, p.136) talks about putting the nose out for the older shamans, I realize he passes through a violent deterritorialization movement that is

part of the shamanic initiation itself. The most experienced, in the case of Davi is who he calls a great elder shaman, blows huge amounts of *yãkoana* powder, taken from the tree saps, on the nose of the initiated. The powder, considered the *xaipiri*'s food, has strong and long-lasting power, leaving Davi's body prostrate and sore. It is the powder "that makes the spirits words reveal and spread in the distance". The spirits take the image of the initiated far, in distant flights, and make them see unknown things. Over time, the initiated shaman no longer falls to the ground and can remain standing to sing and dance, to reveal things to the community, to heal, and to teach.

Handed out my nose, it is time to feel the body sore, to let myself fly in distant flights, to see unknown things. Time to prostrate, to fall from the verticality of thought and to experiment the wisdom of the forest spirits. Laughable, grotesque spirits. Time to unoccidentalize, disorient, perform the map of this flights, and compose other geographies. It is time to slowly get used to this travels and to return to the other cure clues, embodied knowledge.

In my writing actions, an invitation to leave the state of witness of my movements and to embark on the changes going through my body while crossing invented knowledge, performed on the map. Epistemologies that invite the reader to create to itself a body-without-organs, to unoccidentalize, and to propose crossings. Come closer. Not so close. I smell of ounce, have a body of a monkey, and slide as a snake. The becoming is intense and the desire to devour is almost uncontrollable.

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