
Writings about vocal poe[n]ographies

Escritos sobre poe[n]ografías vocais

Escritos sobre poe[n]ografías vocales

*Helder Carlos de Miranda*¹

*Patricia Ordaz Gusmán*²

*Elderson Melo*³

*Renata de Lima Silva*⁴

Submitted: 11/03/2019

Accepted: 13/07/2019

Published: 29/08/2019

Abstract

The present work intends to develop propositions about "vocal poe[n]ographies" and their possible methodological references. The writings were developed based on professional experiences and readings of different theoretical and practical proposals, which offer studies of voice, art and ethnography. In this sense, the work points out some possible paths on the development of vocal poe[n]ographies.

Keywords: Poe[n]ographies. Voice. Listen.

Resumo

O trabalho que aqui se apresenta tem o intuito de desenvolver proposições sobre "poe[n]ografías vocais" e seus possíveis encaminhamentos metodológicos. Os escritos foram desenvolvidos com base em vivências profissionais e em leituras de diferentes propostas

¹ Doctoral student in Cultural Performances at the Federal University of Goiás (UFG). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6003-3061>. Contact: helderdemiranda@outlook.com

² Master's student in Cultural Performances at the Federal University of Goiás (UFG). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4547-642X>. Contact: lic.Patyordaz@hotmail.com

³ PhD in Education from USP and professor of the Cultural Performances Program at Federal University of Goiás (UFG). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6249-1832>. Contact: eldersonmelo@hotmail.com

⁴ PhD in Arts from UNICAMP. Associate Professor at the Federal University of Goiás (UFG). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7551-1468>. Contact: renatazabele@gmail.com

teóricas e práticas, que propõem estudos de voz, arte e etnografia. Neste sentido, o trabalho aponta alguns caminhos possíveis sobre o desenvolvimento de poe[n]ografias vocais.

Palavras-chave: *Poe[n]ografias. Voz. Escuta.*

Resumen

El trabajo que aquí se presenta tiene el propósito de desarrollar proposiciones sobre "poe[n]ografías vocales" y sus posibles encaminamientos metodológicos. Los escritos fueron desarrollados con base en vivencias profesionales y en lecturas de diferentes propuestas teóricas y prácticas, que proponen estudios de voz, arte y etnografía. En este sentido, el trabajo apunta algunos caminos posibles sobre el desarrollo de poe[n]ografías vocales.

Palabras clave: *Poe[n]ografías. Voz. Escucha.*

Formers Poe[n]ographies

Embarca, morena embarca.
Molha pé, mas não molha a meia.
Viemos de outras terras,
fazer barulho em terra alheia.
(Brazilian folk tradition song)

The drum pulses the heartbeats. The body vibrates with the drum vibration. The drum vibration, pulsing with the heart, also vibrates in the voice. The voice reacts, creates shape, takes space and takes the other person. The voice produces vibrations in the drums, pulses with the body and takes the other's heart. It is not possible anymore to dissociate the voice, the drum, the heart, the body and the other one. The voice is now lived as one same thing. Together, they produce and emanate the experience.

In this paper, we propose to think the vocals potentialities in the Afro-Amerindian performances, in the meeting of two researches: one made from the Mexican culture and the other in the Brazilian culture. The meeting of this two experiences happened in the subject *Produção Coletiva do Conhecimento II* (Collective Production of Knowledge II), taught by the professor Elderson Melo de Miranda, in which it took place two experiences for the *Programa de Pós-Graduação Interdisciplinar em Performances Culturais*'s class. In one of them, was

made a ritual performance proposed by Patrícia Ordaz from her research with the *Wixarika* community and others traditional native communities in Mexico; the other was an experience from elements of the Angolan capoeira, taught by Helder de Miranda from his experience in the *Águas de Menino*, a space connected to the Centro de Capoeira Angola Angoleiro, *sim sinhô*.

The looking for sound and vocal expansions has been developed and inserted in the institutionalization of different ways to do. However, mostly, it just reproduces repertoires or researches that comes from colonizing studies and cultures. A critical and questioning position towards the compression of the voice is the search for possibilities of creation from the body, in experiences and investigations of scenic and musical laboratory processes that go through and cross different places, meeting folk traditions.

But how to develop a vocal creation lab based on experiences with popular or traditional culture? Could poethnographies point to clues to such a proposal? In this case, what would be vocal poethnographies? Which strategies, tools and methodological resources could make easier the progress of these vocal poethnographies?

In the course of this work some methodological clues are expected in response to these questions. We will treat the vocal possibilities from the daily life and rituals of the experienced field, also discussed by Silva and Lima (2014) as a space-time of investigative movement in the research field, which differs from ethnographic field research, as it values sensitive experience in the field based on the experience of the body and, also, in the creation laboratories, from the floating listening to the reproduction, creation and poetic reinvention, as possibilities for the development of vocal poetics.

The Experience

Mujer Maíz
Mujer de Tierra
Mujer de agua
Mujer del Sol
Los vientos del poniente

Son tus suspiros
De puro amor.
(GUZMÁN, 2016)

The experiment in the subject began with the chants under a tree that moved its leaves, sheltering the participants, in a collective, in a ritual performance. The bodies witnessed, observed and participated in the process and ritual experience that consist to dance, to sing and to drum in an amalgam of thoughts and expectations.

The experiment began with the chants while the participants met in the circle. The circle was arranged in space with sacred and blessed by shaman elements brought from distinct Mexico folk communities: *sahumador*, colored corns, percussion musical instruments made of butterfly cocoons, rag dolls, among others. All of them displayed in a straw mat forming an altar dedicated to the corns.

The drum followed like a wrist that embraced the environment surrounded by nature. This feature is very present in the Goiânia's *cerrado*, the local vegetation, especially in the UFG Samambaia campus, on the city outskirts. During the ritual performance, it was possible to perceive the songs of the cicadas and other various animals that followed the event in a symphonic sound of this spatiality.

Participants sang, danced and shared smells, food and prayers. There were speeches from the singer, Patricia Ordaz - Xochitzin, submerged in melodies that were recited at the time of the ritual. After being individually blessed with a chant, they went into a room where they were greeted with beats of berimbau and tambourine.

In the room, a body pulse that connected to the sound of the berimbau conducted the experiment. As a metaphor for the capoeira's *ginga*, which is the movement that drives the game, it referred to the balance of sea waves. At the end, in a circle, some *corridos*, characteristic songs of capoeira Angola were sung, experiencing some elements lived in the circle, such as choral work, vocal intensity, reference to ancestry and others.

The voice changed in the collective, placing itself in its greatest resonance when it spread through space, time and recognition of the other. The game allowed the body not to

generate blockages, were they thoughts or prejudices. The game and its placement in the movement allowed the agile mobility of the songs, which connected with the drum and the berimbau.

About Poetnographies

María no quiere cantar
 María no quiere danzar
 Ya no quiere comer
 Ya no quiere beber
 Que tiene la niña que no quiere ver sus pies
 Se avergonzó su corazón
 A Marina su nombre cambio
 Con su Tecpatl, el cuchillo un nombre matará
 Será de obsidiana o de jade puede ser
 ¿Padre Ezequiel que paso con esa niña?
 ¿no hay quien la lleve al Mictlán?
 Quien le puso fríos y desnudos los pies
 El que con dios habla y trae perdón con él.
 Marina no quiere cantar
 Marina no quiere danzar
 Que tiene la niña que no quiere ver sus pies
 (EL CANTO, 2013)

This paper discusses shapes, places and corporality, linked to the performative investigation of bodies and voices in relation to culture and nature. In the context of this study, by taking a look at traditional performances, we start from the experiences and impressions of the artist-researchers in their life and professional trajectories.

Considering that fieldwork is the primordial phase of ethnographic research, a set of different techniques can be developed, structured in sequences of actions, behaviors and events. This experience constitutes an axis of moving, accessing, relating, participating and observing as a unique lived experience.

In investigating popular and/or traditional cultures, the artist's look and listening differ from the anthropologist. While traditional anthropology seeks through the interpretation of the

collected data, to reach the reality of context, the artist who proposes to poethnography will reinvent it creatively.

About this approach, the artists and researchers Renata de Lima Silva and Marlina Dorneles Lima comment that:

The difference between the work of the anthropologist and the artist is not necessarily in the way the phenomenon is grasped in the field, since anthropology is based on different approaches and methodological tendencies, but in the way of interpreting the collected data. While the anthropologist will seek to achieve, as far as possible, the reality of that context, the dance researcher will creatively reinvent it. The intention is not to make it unrecognizable but to escape from the mere reproduction that can reduce the scene to a stronghold of stereotypes. (SILVA; LIMA, 2014, p.166)

The concept of dance poethnographies was initially developed by the researchers Marlina Dorneles de Lima and Renata de Lima Silva (2014) from a perspective of body events that reinvents the lived field. In our current research, and in the development of this work, we continue to try to extend this concept to a perspective of vocal experiences that reinvent the lived field.

Poethnography is understood as a crossroads between knowledge areas, especially art and anthropology. The concept is structured as a methodological and ethical strategy to research, develop and experiment poetics based on cultural experiences, which can be diverse.

About this, the authors (SILVA; LIMA, 2014) say:

The artist-researcher's view of folk culture, even if supported by procedures of anthropological research, is guided by the principle of "sensitive knowledge", that is, by aesthetic issues, whether technical, poetic and / or symbolic. (p. 154)

One approach strategy is to view this experience as an active and restorative pursuit of the culture itself. Taking into account this practice as a poetic investigation through ritual and performance, the authors relate the methodological proposal with the idea of restored behavior developed by Richard Schechner.

Restored behavior consists in

strips of behavior can be rearranged or reconstructed; they are independent of the causal systems (social, psychological, technological) [...] Restored behavior is symbolic and reflexive: not empty but loaded behavior multivocally broadcasting significances. These difficult terms express a single principle: The self can act in/as another; the social or transindividual self is a role or set of roles. Symbolic and reflexive behavior is the hardening into theater of social, religious, aesthetic, medical, and educational process. Performance means: never for the first time. It means: for the second to the nth time. Performance is “twice-behaved behavior.” (SCHECHNER, 1985, p. 36).

In addition, the authors structure as poethnographies in parallel with other concepts. The “limial body”, theatrical anthropology, crossroads, ethnocenology and performance studies are understood as facilitating mechanisms for the determination of the methodology.

In the fieldwork experience that we have been developing, there are unsettling questions about the voice, its use and its possibilities to be inserted in the scenic work. In vocal and creative processes, inspired by the displacement of space and time, provocations arise that re-signify the understanding of voice and singing.

These thoughts point us to several questions for a work such as this, which aims to listen, perceive and experience the voice: how to feel this voice? How to listen to it? Where do you listen? What should we listen to? How is this voice produced and what can it produce? How does it reverberate? How do you transform?

In the next topic, we will treat floating listening as a process or instrument of research investigation. This process is understood in this paper as one of the methodological possibilities for the development of vocal poethnographies.

Listening Floating

Angola ê ê
Angola ê Angola
berimbau é de Angola ê ê
atabaque é de Angola, Angola
(Traditional corrido from the Capoeira Angola)

Floating listening is understood as an integral methodological constant of poethnography. This means that during every poethnographic action the researcher may appeal to this methodological principle as a strategy intrinsic to the act of research. Faced with the tracks, senses, symbols, movements, sounds, music, we elapse to the fluctuation of being present in the here and now.

As a sensible listening, a floating listening submits to the senses a perception of the world through its multidimensionality and the affections it produces. Due to subject displacement, the daily-lived work field and the experience, the body must mediate the research act. Listening must be attentive and devoid of assumptions, each time it can present a new discovery, loaded at the same time with its “present past” without the “nostalgia for living” (BHABHA, 1998 apud MELO, p. 27).

About sensitive listening, Melo (2016) states that it is a way to follow a process through its records:

Cartography or sensitive listening is thus a way of following the process through its records and removing possible relationships from them for analysis, a way to follow the passages, to relate to the affective, imaginary and cognitive universe. It is a fragment map, which is in a tender production movement. (MELO, 2016, p.50).

Sensitive listening, like the cartographic process, is an experience of knowledge construction. It is structured as a process of constant analysis. It should not be linear in time; it needs an affective perception that enables the participating subject to follow the tracks, making connections in networks or rhizomes.

A living and moving investigation process accompanies sensitive listening. This means that the analysis is anchored in the sensitive process of interpretation and the researcher's ability to reflect on the lived field.

Lima (2016), in her doctoral thesis, proposes to go through a danced and poetized experience derived from field experiences. The intention is to build and reflect on the elements and devices that constitute the process of creation in an alterity. However, such construction must be based on an ethical posture that occurs in the translation of aesthetic matrices,

accompanied by reflections on their developments. These can be revealed in inventive cartography, weaving words, smells, tastes and prayers, interweaving the lived with thoughts and ideas loaded with diverse cosmogonies of the manifestations of traditional cultures.

Final Whispers

A água do rio invadiu a do mar
A do rio é doce a do mar é salgada
(Mestre Moa de Katendê's composition)

Voice and drum. Voice, body and nature. Voices and experiences. Sensations and purification. Appreciation and experience. Signifiers that generate meanings. Listening attentively and broadly. Alterity identified in the body and voice of the other. Similarities and differences. Collective body and collective voice. Ancestry, collective unconscious and vocal archetype. From Afro-Amerindian performances, these and many other issues emerged as vocal possibilities and experiences.

Ritual experiences evoked cultural and religious elements. During the event, the experiences meant and re-signified the cultural and affective memories of those present. We had a constant listening and active participation, which established liminality (TURNER, 2013) in ritual time, perceiving space, as here, and time, as now. The songs were recreated with the participants' intervention transforming into a collective voice.

The rhythms of songs empowered their bodies, recognizing knowledge that resembles others already known in childhood, adolescence, or adulthood. A voice that reconstructs spaces and re-signifies time. A time characterized by musicality, submerged in pulses, gestures, breaths, tones, frequencies, heights, and colors in the timbre of the voice.

In the chants are the signifiers of cultural language, the archetypes that link culture, religiosity and ritual. The evocation of the natural elements potentiates the voice in a resonance that conveys messages and points out new signifiers from experience and affections emerging from the collective unconscious.

These songs carried the experiences of the lived field in indigenous and mestizo communities in Mexico and capoeira Angola in Brazil as a cultural expression, which refers to a series of signs, symbols, signifiers and metaphorized meanings. Experiences changed people, time and space, inserted in a space in-between (BABHA, 1998), in which the participants' heartbeats were mixed with the sound of the drum.

In the circle formed by the participants, it was possible to hear the sounds their bodies emanated: breaths, songs, movements, speech, sounds of the body itself. Just as the sounds of nature accompany singing with a symphony of sensations and emotions, voices, drums and other sounds mingled with the environment. The song of the cicadas harmonized with our songs, often coinciding in entrances, exits, and pulse.

Lima (2016) points out a dialectic that composes a process of poethnography:

On the limial of inside and outside, past and present, we traverse space while being traversed by it. And at that crossroads a shout and a prayer ... In the name of the ground, the flesh of the holy spirit, amen! Crossing manifestations of traditional culture of African origin, which cross the São Paulo metropolis, we intersect with movements, images and sounds ... Which in turn cross us. Symbols woven into a complex woof between body and culture that generate other bodies and new cultures. (LIMA, 2016, p.224)

Poethnographies blur the view of the artist-researcher confusing his place of speech, being a subject who looks from the outside and at the same time from the inside. This is characterized by the artistic processes, which the artist / researcher presupposes a total immersion in the lived field, without dissociating experience, research, art and life. The subject must abandon the idea of neutrality, being guided by the principle of "sensitive knowledge" that "from the daily challenges, the body organizes its corporeality and performs its lived reality, as a body that creates culture and dialectically built by it" (SILVA; LIMA, 2014, p.155).

In experiences with folk traditions, voice is an expressive means of memory and ancestry. It acts in the recognition of our cultural being as a guiding thread of freedoms and resistances integrated in singing and in artistic and cultural manifestations.

The dialogue between the field of art and other fields of science such as Anthropology raises the importance of considering discussions about postcolonial ethnography. Lima (2016), points to a metamorphosis of the ethnographic look, situating traditional knowledge as a voice in the process of recognizing the other as different, by its historical and political conditions and a reconstruction of alterity.

As a critique of colonizing thought, we understand that poethnography can value and relocate new knowledge in the fields of art. Thus, new possibilities for vocal experiences can emerge through the relationship and encounters between artists, masters, shamans, healers and midwives, midwives, singers, revelers, laundresses, among others. Clutched in popular cultural manifestations and contemporary art that proposes studies of the sound expansion of the voice, thus conducted by our poetic intentions as researchers.

Referências

BABHA, Homi K. **O local da cultura**. Tradução Myriam Ávila, Eliana Lourenço de Lima Reis e Gláucia Renate Gonçalves. Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 1998. 394p. ISBN 8570411561.

LIMA, M. D. **Entre raízes, corpo e fé: poethnografias dançadas**. 2016. Tese (Doutorado em Arte Contemporânea) – Universidade de Brasília, Brasília, 2016.

MELO, E. M. **O Riso Invade a Educação: uma (des)proposta a pedagogia do cômico**. 2016. Tese (Doutorado em Educação) – Faculdade de Educação, Universidade de São Paulo. São Paulo, 2016.

EL CANTO de um recuerdo. GUZMÁN, P. O. Estado de México: Nadone Colectivo, 2013. Disponível em youtube. Disponível em: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0kJ-YW_z3Y&fbclid=IwAR2Cy1YexebpbuDyilx7E5ntM52l6CveGD54cIntlTG9CXiGH-uWUkMcmYo>. Acessado em: 11 mar. 2019.

GUZMÁN, P. O. **Chjoon Nijmé, Niwetsika o Mujer Maíz**: Propuesta Escénica para María Sabina de José Cela. 2016. Dissertação (Master Universitário em Estudos Avanzados de Teatro – Dirección Escénica) – Universidad Internacional de la Rioja. Madrid – México, 2016.

SILVA, R. L.; LIMA, M. D. Entre raízes, corpo e fé: poenografias dançadas. **Revista Moringa**, João Pessoa, v.5, n.2 jul-dez/2014. Disponível em:<<http://periodicos.ufpb.br/index.php/moringa/article/download/22452/12428>>. Acesso em: 11 mar. 2019.

SILVA, R. A. da. **Performances congadeiras e atualização das tradições afro-brasileiras em Minas Gerais**. Tese (Doutorado em Antropologia Social) – Programa de Pós-Graduação em Antropologia Social, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2005.

TURNER, V. W. **O Processo Ritual**: estrutura e anti-estrutura. Tradução de Nancy Campi de Castro e Ricardo A. Rosenbush. 2.ed. Petrópolis, Vozes, 2013. 200 p. ISBN 9788532645456