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Dissident Memories: *Our Odyssey*, by Christiane Jatahy

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Abstract

The text analyzes the spectacles *Ítaca [Ithaca]* (2018) and *O agora que demora [The now that's delayed]* (2019), created by the director Christiane Jatahy. Recognized for the creation of a performative, hybrid and political theatre, the artist transits between cultural and geographical frontier zones. Based on assemblages and repetitions the artist's performative practices relate to certain proposals defined by Rebecca Schneider, especially the conception of "archives as act" and embodied modes of memory.

Keywords: Embodied memory. Testimony. Archives as act.

Memórias dissidentes: *Nossa Odisseia*, de Christiane Jatahy

Resumo

Foram analisados no artigo os espetáculos *Ítaca* (2018) e *O agora que demora* (2019), criados pela encenadora Christiane Jatahy. Enquanto teatros performativos, híbridos e políticos transitam entre zonas artísticas, culturais e geográficas de fronteira. No uso de testemunhos de refugiados e na criação de arquivos documentais os dois trabalhos se relacionam a alguns pressupostos definidos por Rebecca Schneider como atos e modos incorporados de memória.

Palavras-chave: Memória incorporada. Testemunho. Arquivos performativos.

Memorias disidentes: *Nuestra Odisea*, por Christiane Jatahy

Resumen

En el artículo se analizan los espectáculos *Ítaca* (2018) y *O agora que demora* (2019), creados por la directora Christiane Jatahy. Como teatros performativos, híbridos y políticos, transitan entre fronteras artísticas, culturales y geográficas. En el uso de testimonios de refugiados y la creación de archivos documentales, las dos obras se relacionan con algunos supuestos definidos por Rebecca Schneider como actos y modos de memoria encarnados.

Palabras clave: Memoria encarnada. Testimonio. Archivos performativos.

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This text analyzes the diptych *Nossa Odisseia [Our Odyssey]*, made up of the spectacles *Ítaca [Ithaca]* (2018) and *O agora que demora [The now that's delayed]* (2019), created by the director Christiane Jatahy and Companhia Vértice de Teatro. The artist is representative of the new generation of Brazilian collectives, recognized for the creation of a performative, hybrid and political theatre, which transits between artistic, cultural and geographical frontier zones. The company is characterized by a cross-media collaboration that juxtaposes image, sound, movement, space, and text, with an emphasis on the in-betweenness of the live and the mediated. Based on assemblages and repetitions and working through theatre and cinema the director combines screen technologies and testimonies. The artist's performative practices relate to certain proposals defined by Rebecca Schneider, especially the conception of "archives as act" and embodied modes of memory (Schneider, 2011).

Schneider is linked to the lineage of performance studies that distances itself from the field of anti-art and critique of representation. Especially in the late 1980s, a number of artists who worked in this field emphasized the live experience of performance in the present moment, without mediation. Defending ephemerality and the impossibility of reproduction and repetition, performers such as Marina Abramovich, Vito Acconci, Gina Pane, and Chris Burden opposed to institutions like museums and the art market. The exchange between performers and spectators, carried out in real time, the risk of the situation of explicit exposition, the challenge to the limits of the performer in body-art, and the defence of the ephemeral and irrecoverable experience had as its premise the impossibility of repetition (Glusberg, 1987; Goldberg,1988)[2].

[2] The cultural performance studies analyses various aspects of social life. It has a counterpoint in the studies focusing on the performance art, initially developed by Rose Lee Goldberg, *Performance Art. From Futurism to the Present* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988) and Jorge Glusberg, *The Art of Performance* (New York: New York University Press, 1980) and continued by Josette Féral, Théorie et Pratique du Théâtre. Au-delà des Limites. (Montpellier: l'Entretemps, 2011) and Érika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008) among others. Despite having emerged almost simultaneously in the countercultural context of the 1970s, the two fields of research differ. Performance art cannot be separated from the aesthetic practices that began to develop in various corners of the world at this time, such as happening, action painting, live art, conceptual art, and body art. Interested in bodily experience and the artist's action in extreme situations, performance art aims at destabilizing the everyday life through transgression and rupture, promoting artistic actions marked by difference. Glusberg stresses that the artist's body is the preferred means of performance, and its original and inaugural gesture must be prioritized. This is the same approach as that of Goldberg, for whom performance is an artistic medium of expression that must take place in the present, live, in a space shared between performers and spectators. Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked. The Politics of Performance*.

The assertion of performance as an immediate experience centred on living presence has been made explicit in the work of several scholars, such as Peggy Phelan's *Unmarked*, published in 1993. Especially in the chapter "The ontology of performance: representation without reproduction" Phelan argues that performance art is a specific practice because of its unrepeatable character, which cannot be reproduced or recorded. "Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance". (Phelan, 1993, p.146). For Rebecca Schneider, this conception is centred on a metaphysics of presence, which fetishizes the particular moment of the presentation (Schneider, 2012, p.71).

From the beginning of the 21st century a number of artists have begun to practice the re-performance, whereby they reproduce their previous works based on the documentation of live performances. This is the emblematic case of Marina Abramovic in *Seven easy pieces*, reenactment of performances by Bruce Nauman, Vito Acconci, Valie Export, Gina Pane, and two of her previous works, *Lips of Thomas and Entering the other side*, all originally presented in the late sixties and seventies. Abramovic justifies these repetitions by stating that "the only real way to document the performance art piece is to re-perform the piece itself" (Abramovic, 2007, p.11).

In the immediately preceding period, Richard Schechner is responsible for a social turn in the analysis of performing practices. Anchored in Victor Turner's anthropological research, he argues that restored behaviour is the basic notion of performance studies (Schechner,1985, p.36). He proposes the "twice-behaved behavior" model to underline that all events are made up of citational acts that incorporate something that had previously happened. For Schechner, the "twice-behavedness" of all communicative behavior is necessary for social action, and reenactment is a vital mode of collective memory.

Following a similar path, Joseph Roach links performance to the practice of repetition and transformation as he considers it to be a non-original event that always replaces something that already exists. For Roach, performance is the process by which the conditions of collective existence take shape (Roach, 1996).

In the same period, Philip Auslander shares a similar position in emphasizing performative repetition and refusing the binary distinctions between the live and the mediatized. In *Liveness. Performance in a mediated culture* he argues that the immediate does not precede mediation but rather derives from the relationship with it. "The live can exist only within an economy of reproduction", he observes (Auslander, 1999, p.53-54). Auslander states that the documentation of the live performance is generally used for the creation of re-performances and therefore the live cannot be separated from the recorded. (Auslander, 2012).[3]

Based on certain conceptions of Auslander, Rebecca Schneider develops the notion of "hail" or "gestural call", which she uses to support the idea that the performance has an extended register and establishes a suspended time as an echo, which anticipates the reception of the spectator or participant in the presentation. The hail is, therefore, relational and expanded in time and space since the boundaries of liveness are open to a cross-temporal exchange, guaranteeing an interval where the response can be included. According to Schneider, the hail "carries with" the live event as well as anticipating the response that is part of it. Performance as hail or gesture circulates in the encounter between performers and spectators (Schneider, 2017, p.77-79).

Schneider's studies are undoubtedly responsible for re-inscribing performance in a culture of repetition. She avoids the antinomies of presence and absence, starting from the supposition that all performance is non-original, citational and remaining and that it is possible to relate it to a new archive mode. Following Jacques Derrida, she recovers the etymology of the word "archive" from its use in Greek culture. In fact, Derrida shows that the meaning of the traditional archive comes from arkheîon, the home of the magistrates who command, guard,

[3] Philipp Auslander, Liveness. Performance in a Mediated Culture (London and New York: Routledge, 1999) investigates the first appearance of the term "live" and the meaning associated with it in an internal BBC manual from the 1930s. He argues that the term "live" was used in broadcasts to inform BBC listeners that the programme was not recorded but was taking place at that moment. It therefore differed from the practice of reproduction, with which it contrasted.

Michel Foucault's genealogy focuses on discontinuities and ruptures, prioritizing marginal themes and contrasting with the traditional perspective of linear organization of historiography. One of the Foucault's fundamental ideas is the notion of counter-memory, resulting from the reactualization of events that are recomposed differently, with the initial elements repeated but rearranged. For Foucault, counter-memory activates the past in a different way. The rearrangement aims to problematize the facts, allowing a new construction of history. Michel Foucault, Archéologie du Savoir (Paris, Gallimard, 1969).

protect, and determine the form of organizing, reading, and apprehending strictly material and quantifiable documents. Thus, the archons who hold political power also have the right to make and represent the law, as well as to keep official documents. Derrida concludes that the function of archiving is patriarchal and there is no political power without control over the archive and memory. European traditions characteristically preserve the official memory of culture and guarantee the double relationship between conservation and institutions. (Derrida, 1995, p.12-15).

Based on this argument, Schneider concludes that the writing of memory linked to traditional archives is necessarily flawed as it is a mode of government against peoples whose memory is not supported by the material document. Colonial archives are a good example of the use of documents as weapons of the Empire to devalue the local knowledge of colonized peoples, generally recognized by performative practices such as orality, live recitation, and repeated and ritual gesture. These "embodied modes" of transmission" are "vanishing ways" of archive production that are able to bring memory to the present, through a confused and eruptive reappearance: "performance plays 'sedimented acts' and spectral meanings that haunt material in constant collective interaction, in constellation, in transmutation" (Schneider, 2011, p.102-143).

Diana Taylor defends a similar assumption in remembering that European cultures favor literature over orality, or, according to her terminology, the archive in detriment of the repertoire. She believes performance is a way to remain through repetitive bodily acts, which she calls "repertoire", and distinguishes from the "archive", made up of written documents that disregard the performance practices involved in mnemonic body transmission. Geopolitics historically aligned European colonizers with the archive and hegemonic power, while the "primitive" colonized were associated with living performance, oral traditions, and body-based ways of memory which constitute counter-hegemonic means of narrating history. For Taylor, the colonizers do not recognize the performance of the colonized as a valid indicator of history (Taylor, 2003).

Schneider also values the body-based ways of memory that are presented in live speech, repeated gesture, ritual action and other devalued forms of

performance, which she considers "archives as acts". "The memory can be housed in a body", she argues, remembering that bodies are sites where past and present negotiate the live transmission of memory. A testimony or an encounter between performers and spectators are embodiments of collective memory that question the traditional notion of the archive. Schneider recovers Foucault's terminology to value the "counter-memory" that is manifested in embodied acts able to perform counter-hegemonic archives (Foucault, 1969, p.129; Schneider, 2012, p.141).[4]

As can be seen, Schneider's argument changes conventional notions of archiving by showing that performance can function as a type of corporal transmission of memory, which reverberates and resonates in the spectator. (Schneider, 2012, p. 75). In this sense, memory does not disappear but rather remains in the sedimented acts that are made explicit in the immaterial elements of life, haunting collective interactions. Performance can therefore be considered an instance of embodied knowledge that allows a replay of the past. What the spectator witnesses are the acts of the reworking of an incomplete past, which is in movement in the present, and engages in a kind of negotiation with the future (Schneider, 2011, p.35). The spectator will cross various historical moments that connect past, present and future without respecting a temporal linear sequence. He experiences multiple sites layered with "multidirectional memory" that enable the creation of a "complex crosshatch" oscillating between past and present (Rothberg, 2013; Schneider, 2011, p.35).

Our Odyssey

Christiane Jatahy's works are the result of a dissident stance towards traditional archival culture. She creates archives during the presentation, both in terms of the hybridization between live performance and recorded images, with the use of cinema and video, and through the recourse to testimonies and the

[4] Michel Foucault's genealogy focuses on discontinuities and ruptures, prioritizing marginal themes and contrasting with the traditional perspective of linear organization of historiography. One of the Foucault's fundamental ideas is the notion of counter-memory, resulting from the reactualization of events that are recomposed differently, with the initial elements repeated but rearranged. For Foucault, counter-memory activates the past in a different way. The rearrangement aims to problematize the facts, allowing a new construction of history. Michel Foucault, *Archéologie du Savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969).

embodied memory of the performers. In her productions, individuals are living archives of text, behaviour and experience (Martin, 2013).[5]

This hybridization between live performance, testimonies, and recorded images is a constant in Jatahy's work. The testimony already appears in *Conjugado [Interconnected]*, premiered in 2004, in which she uses interviews with lonely women, living in small single-room apartments, to create a dramaturgy in which the boundaries of the documentary and the fictional are deliberately blurred. The impulse to be situated between performance and testimony reappears in *A falta que nos move ou todas as histórias são ficção* [*The lack that moves us, or all stories are fiction*], from 2005, later filmed in 2008, in which friends of the same generation evoke, in autobiographical confessions, family memories and the loss of people close to them. In these works Jatahy investigates the threshold between the fields of theatre and screen technologies, which are important in future creations like *Julia*, freely conceived from August Strindberg's *Miss Julie*, in which she develops a concept of live filming. Built on an intense dialogue between the languages of theatre and cinema, the show includes films made previously and live images recorded on the stage that are shown during the presentation. The director of photography operates the camera, interfering in the scenes and sharing the stage with the actors throughout the play to show hidden parts of the action (Da Costa, 2017)

A similar procedure reappears in *E se elas fossem para Moscou [And if they went to Moscow]* (2014), loosely inspired by Anton Chekhov's The Three Sisters. Conceived in parallel with a documentary and a video installation, *Utopia.doc*, this work is based on testimonies by exiles, especially migrants who aspire to a

[5] Although the oscillation between the real and the fictional is a constant in Christiane Jatahy's artistic trajectory, it is not the intention of this text to develop the issue. It is possible to observe this oscillation, for example, in the actors' performances, which are close to everyday informality, using autobiographical elements, with an emphasis on authenticity and colloquial speech, in addition to explicitly addressing the audience. José da Costa and Christiane Jatahy, *L'Espace du Commun*. Le Théâtre de Christiane Jatahy (Paris: Hachette, 2017). In this sense, her work approaches the "theatre of the real" defined by Carol Martin, for whom the interaction between theatre and reality and the blurred boundaries between scene and the "real" world are constant in renewed documentary theatre practices. They include a variety of forms and methods whose main objective is to approach the social and political context. For Martin, the theatres of the 21st century share characteristics of the post-dramatic, including the particularization in subjectivity, the rejection of universalism, the contradictions between staging the real in a fictional frame, and the questioning of the relationship between truth and facts. Their strategies are often linked to post-structuralism, in stating that the truth is contextual, multiple and subject to manipulation. Carol Martin, *Theatre of the Real* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

renewed life elsewhere, as with the Chekhovian characters. This proposal remains in *A floresta que anda [The forest that walks*] (2016), an "installation-performance" inspired by Shakespeare's Macbeth, set in a large shed with four suspended screens on which are projected testimonies of repression, violence, racial prejudice, and killings by contingents of an alleged "pacifying police" operating in Brazil's slums.

In a sense, *Nossa Odis*seia project is the radicalization of the previously mentioned elements. *Made up of Ítaca* and *O agora que demora*, the diptych maintains the hybridization procedures between theatre and cinema and the emphasis on performativity. But Jatahy increases the use of testimonies, opting for oral narrative as a means of rescuing collective memory. Here, through testimonies, she recovers the recent history of refugees, which she associates with the search for her own past in an indigenous tribe in the Brazilian Amazon.

The choice of the refugee as the central focus of Nossa Odisseia is the director's political option to rescue a multidirectional memory (Rothberg, 2013). This marginal figure undoubtedly destabilizes the old state-nation-territory triad, as Giorgio Agamben notes when he claims that the refugee calls into question the fundamentals of citizenship linked to birth in a given country. As is known, Agamben underlines the paradoxical status of refugee camps, which considers a stretch of territory to be outside legal norms and, therefore, a space of exception among nations (Agamben, 1998).

In an attempt to find a fictional equivalent to the migratory crisis, Jatahy turns to the *Odyssey*, associating the stateless people's wanderings with Ulysses' long trip to Ithaca and his doubts about the possibility of returning. A mythical journey par excellence, a true paradigm of wandering, Homer's epic is linked to memory in the double sense of narrating memorable acts and being an oral narrative that can be memorized. In the assemblage woven by the Greek rhapsode, the hero's time to return home is defined by the "not yet", a "now that is delayed" able to synthesize the nuclear problem of the *Odyssey*: knowing whether Ulysses manages to return to his territory of origin, his *νόστιμο*. (Cassin, 2011, p.103-106)

Ítaca and *O agora que demora* maintain troubling traces of the Greek narrative, using literal passages from the epic interspersed with testimonies of refugees whom Jatahy interviewed after they crossed the Mediterranean. What oversees the association is the understanding of the continuity and simultaneity of history and the forms of its actualization through performative repetition and transformation. This is the "immaterial labor of *passing*" of the work of art, in which similar questions are brought up to date (von Hantelmann, 2007, 137; Schneider, 2011, p.130-135).

In the first part of *Nossa Odisseia* project, Ítaca, Jatahy turns exile into a scenic subject by designing a device with long curtains that divide the stage in order to create a two-way scene in which three Brazilian actresses and three French-speaking actors perform the couples Penelope/Calypso and Odysseus/suitors. In the speeches in Portuguese and French, the director recreates the language barrier to show the uncomfortable border position of the foreigner. In the coming and going of the text between the two languages, the performers show the mutant states of Ulysses, Penelope, and Calypso.

The performers are not defined by their identity roots or the subjective trajectory of the characters but rather by constant circulation, a migration from one side to the other of the stage that shows their territorial and social disengagement. In the concrete clash between the bodies, in frightening sequences of aggression by men against women, the attention of the spectators is awakened to the body-to-body transmission of affection between the subjects. The atmosphere of the environment literally crosses borders of bodies to allow them to experience the "jump" of affection in a "cross-temporal, cross-spatial, cross-geographic" form (Schneider, 2011, p.36).[6]

[6] The "affective turn" linked to Gilles Deleuze and Brian Massumi resists the body/text binary and prioritizes the atmosphere between the bodies, the shifting and the negotiation between them. Affection crosses borders in transmission that takes place in bodily exchanges, when the atmosphere of the environment literally reaches the viewer. In Schneider's reference to Deleuze and Massumi, she states that it is a "cross-temporal, cross-spatial, cross-geographic, cross-and/or contra-national" jump. Affection can therefore circulate in material remains or gestic/ritual remains transmitted by a song or narrative in the encounter between people. Touch or being touched become monikers of affection that can travel between bodies in time and space and indicate the libidinal level of engagement. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *L'anti-OEdipe: Capitalisme et schizophrénie* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1972); Brian Massumi, *Politics of Affect* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2015); Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment.* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).

The narrative flows made up of passages from the *Odyssey* and testimonies of the refugees circulate performatively and coexist with the actors capturing live images, which are projected on the screen/curtain. The live scenes intercalated with the videos project a cross-temporal route, between liveness and documentation. The recent memory of the refugees is hybridized to the ancient text of Homer, creating a temporal syncopation that is repeated in the in-betweenness created by testimony and performance, orality and multimedia, local and global.

The intricate scenic assemblage is moved by the constant repetition of gestures, speeches, images, movements and reconfigurations.[7] The intensified acts of reworking culminate in the passage in which the audience is invited to migrate to the seats on the other side of the curtain, where the scenes begin again for another audience, in a kind of re-performance of the previous episodes.

The repetitions always reappear reconfigured by shifting between the presence of the actors, the images projected on the screen/curtain, the testimonies of the refugees, and the excerpts of Homer's epic. They change the scenic situation thereby creating a game of metamorphoses that immerse the viewer in a "dizzying specular dimension" that destabilizes their position (Triau, 2017, p.54). In the game of reconfigurations of the hybrid scene, the recorded images collaborate to expand the "liveness-of-the-living" (Schneider 2017, 81). They also define a threshold that Erika-Fischer Lichte calls "a state of in-betweenness", responsible for triggering a perceptual multi-stability (Fischer-Lichte, 2007, p.19).

The production ends with the opening of the curtain that separated the two sides of the stage, followed by a gradual flooding with water that dissolves the borders demarcated by the device, and, little by little, actors submerge in the suggested drowning. This resource refers to the death of the migrants in their

[7] In "Assemblage thinking and actor-networks: Rethinking Socio-material Power, Politics and Space", Martin Müller recovers Gilles Deleuze's notion of assemblage is a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons of different natures. According to Müller, the most immediate spatial implication of adopting an assemblage perspective is the view of folded and crumpled topological space. In other words, what counts is how closely connected entities in a network are. The global, the national, and the local are all effects of connections and associations in a network. Müller insists that assemblage is a more suitable concept to describe social movements, for assemblage allows the component parts to exceed the network. Martin Müller, "Assemblage Thinking and Actor-networks: Rethinking Socio-material Power, Politics and Space" (*Geography Compass*, No.9/1), 27-41.

precarious boats in the Mediterranean, in addition to evoking the in-betweenness zone characteristic of the refugee's. Although partially submerged, the performers are still caught by the cameras, which project deformed images. The distortion of the bodies, the vertiginous dissolution of the device, and the scattering of scenic objects draw a palimpsest of remains. This procedure makes time visible and simultaneously ensures disappearance and preservation. It is a medium for the performance of memory (Rothberg, 2013, p.48).[8]

The testimonies return in *O agora que demora*. The central device of the spectacle is a huge cinema screen installed over the entire length of the stage, with control tables at the side where the director makes the live editing of a documentary with refugees filmed in five countries. She cuts the scenes and changes the dynamics of the sequences in the presence of the audience, transferring the repetition device to the cinema. The film is re-edited at each presentation.

During the four months of filming the documentary, between September and December 2018, Jatahy worked with Freedom Theatre, created by Israeli Juliano Mer Khamis in the Jenin camp, where Palestinians are exiled in their own land. In the Beka Valley, Lebanon, she lived with the Syrians who survive in a terrible situation distributed in small camps. Exiled actors from Syria develop artistic events in these camps and take part in the film and the presentation. It is the case of the playwright filmed in the Beka Plain, who cannot get a visa from Western embassies. In Johannesburg, South Africa, the Hillbrow Theatre opened its doors to make contact with groups coming from Zimbabwe and Malawi. In Greece, Jatahy interviewed exiles coming especially from Iraq and Syria, who had been tortured by the regimes there. She has joined the testimonies of refugees to those of the peoples of the Amazon rainforest ,who, like them, had lost their rights and were forced to leave their own lands destroyed by the deforestation which has

[8] Michael Rothberg refers to Kentridge's work, mentioning the artist's drawing/erasing technique. Through multidirectional visual associations, he juxtaposes stories and landscapes that extend beyond the nation-state to connect different forms of violence in Europe and Africa. He believes the transnational circulation of memory in transcultural contexts and multidirectional terrains is a means of remembering the past that is not ours. Kentridge's multidirectional connections show that "cultural memory regenerates itself at the site of historical loss". Michael Rothberg, "Multidirectional memory and the implicated subject: On Sebald and Kentridge". In *Performing Memory in Art and Popular Culture*, Plate L and Smelik ed. (New York and London: Routledge), 39-58.

been encouraged by the ultra-right-wing government of Jair Bolsonaro. The director believes that the Amazon is "the epicentre of the disaster that we are about to experience worldwide".[9] The Brazilian political situation would be, figuratively, close to the Ithaca of Ulysses, which has been destroyed by the voracity and prey of Penelope's suitors.

In the documentary, refugee actors living in camps in Greece, Lebanon, Palestine, and South Africa, as well as Kayapó indigenous people of Brazil, read passages from Homer's *Odyssey* in their own language, interspersed with their testimonies. The film projects a polyphony of voices that lament the loss of family, country and lands they left behind in a narrative of personal odysseys, which are sometimes banal but always traumatic. The impact comes from the fact that the reports are not linked to official history, and nor do they resort to political, social and contextual analysis. They are oral flows of subjectivity that reflect intimate memories, which are able to engage the spectator through directly addressing them, in addition to referring to the context of refugee camps with a marked degree of authenticity (Forsyth and Megson, 2009, p.12). They are autobiographical reminiscences manifested in acts of "re-gesture, re-affect, re-sensation" (Schneider, 2011, p.6).

The first part of *O agora que demora* begins on the screen, at a banquet table in Lebanon where the Cyclops episode is narrated. In the live editing, the director merges Ulysses' misfortunes with a refugee's narrative about their escape from Syria and an armed struggle in Palestine. Individual testimonies mix with Homer's epic passages and confuse present and past in an apparent multitemporality.

The production oscillates from the filmed parts to the live performance of the refugees placed in the audience who take part in the presentation. At various moments they stand up to take up the narrative started in the documentary. This is the case of the young actress Yara Ktaish. She left Syria to study theatre and returned in 2015 to face a succession of unexplained imprisonments until she was

[9] Christiane Jatahy in Fabienne Darge, "Au Festival d'Avignon, Christiane Jatahy présente son odyssée intérieure", Le Monde, 5 julho 2019, 13. In the article, Darge reproduces Jatahy's comments on the election of Bolsonaro. « *Avec tous les dangers que cette élection fait peser sur le Brésil, nous avons légèrement réorienté le projet. Il est apparu alors très clairement que l'Amazonie était l'épicentre concentrant toutes les folies du nouveau président, et l'épicentre du désastre que nous sommes en train de vivre au niveau mondial.*»

able to get into the refugee camp where she has lived for six years. She is seen in the film then reappears in the audience as if she had broken down the borders that held her back. The witness comes out of the film to question us. Her testimony among the audience continues, with her face in close-up filmed by a cameraman and projected onto the screen on the stage. In the audience and on the screen, the actress and the refugee associate the performative time of the present with the cinematographic time of the past, involving viewers in a complex temporal crosshatch.

His testimony in the audience is replicated by an Iranian actor in the film. Facing the Mediterranean Sea, with supertankers in the background, he reports the tiredness of always repeating the same story and makes a confession: "My mistake was to be born in the Middle East". It is another indication of what happens in the production, in which the migratory crisis is divested of its macroeconomic aspects to take on a subjective element. The particular experience is at the core of the performative montage that challenges the viewer with the embodied knowledge of refugees and performers, aiming at an ethical questioning.[10]

This is the case of the testimony of the performer Fepa Teixeira, who recounts how his grandfather fled the Salazar dictatorship in Portugal to take refuge in São Paulo on March 31, 1964, the date of the coup that established the 21-year Brazilian military dictatorship. This speech is followed by that of a Belgian actor, who reports the flight of his parents from the Second World War in 1940. It resonates in the testimony of the Swedish artist whose multiple identities do not allow for a national definition. Christiane Jatahy herself presents the odyssey of returning to her ancestors. Thus past and present events are examined and reconsidered by performers and spectators in the body-to-body transmission that, through addressing the audience directly, engages it in the negotiation of new versions of

[10] Christiane Jatahy assumes that the construction of the scene has several layers. Although the viewer cannot perceive the many juxtapositions, there are multiple possibilities for meaning, apprehension and connection. This non-hierarchical approach takes place in all aspects of dramaturgical and scenic creation. The multiplicity of details and occurrences keeps the various aspects of the scene on an equal footing in the dispute for the attention of the spectator-editor. She observes that her work may be neither cinema nor theatre, but something that happens in a third territory that intersects them. See Christiane Jatahy's interview published in José Da Costa and Christiane Jatahy, *L'Espace du Commun. Le Théâtre de Christiane Jatahy* (Paris: Hachette, 2017), 51-78.

social memory. The theatre becomes the public forum for discussing the recent past (Wilmer, 2018, p.84).

These singular subjectivities relate and negotiate new versions of reality. In this case, it is intimacy that sets the terms of engagement (Reinelt, 2011, p.21). It is a manifestation of voices of the "little story" lived by men and women with their subjective, hidden, and contradictory truths. (Picon-Vallin, 2019). No doubt the testimonies of O agora que demora express dissenting versions of the official memory (Forsyth and Megson , 2009; Schneider, 2011; Taylor, 2003).

The stereoscopic view of history is made possible by different strata of the scenic assemblage made up of image projection, live performance, recorded testimonies of refugees from three different continents, and fragments of the Odyssey. The multiform and multimedia device enables the crossing of temporalities and spatialities and increases the dialogue between the film and the performance at the present moment of the scene. Thus, a party in Syria is repeated in South Africa, where refugees on the screen act with performers in the theatre audience. Following the same principle, a testimony in Lebanon resonates in the Amazon rainforest.

The transnational circulation of memory in transcultural contexts projects a network of violence in the contemporary world, which connects Europe, Africa and America in different geographical and historical situations. The constellation of stories and bodies in *O agora que demora* allows us to map different ways of involving subjectivity in collective traumas. The juxtaposition of reports of war, colonialism, refugee crises, and the extermination of indigenous peoples projects a multidirectional memory. In the articulation of collective memory, Jatahy builds living, transnational and minority archives (Rothberg, 2013, p.40-41)

It is known that Homer's *Odyssey* does not end in Ithaca. In the epilogue, after returning to the island, the diviner Tiresias advises Ulysses to go in search of his ancestors. In order to replay the end of the narrative Christiane Jatahy decides to recover the past of her ancestors. Linking her personal history to that of Brazil, she returns to a dramatic episode in her family history, when an aeroplane carrying her grandfather crashed in the Amazon and was never found. Jatahy sets out in search

of the remains of her grandfather's presence in the territory where the Kayapós live. "It is in the encounter with men and women who could still have the memory of what happened that I wanted to conclude a spectacle in which the return to the original home is a grail" (Sourd, 2019,19).

In the scene filmed in a location close to the plane crash, in the heart of the forest, the flames of a fire crackle in the Amazonian night, illuminating the wrinkled face of the Kayapó chief. Jatahy says that she came to look for the traces of her grandfather, who disappeared in 1953, in obscure circumstances. As his body was never found, the family wanted to believe that he survived among the indigenous people. The old chief recalls the plane's explosion in the past, which resonates in today's forest, devastated by fires and the plunder of indigenous lands by agribusiness and international mining companies.

O agora que demora ends with the Kayapós' testimony in their own language. Members of the tribe speak of resisting the invasion of their lands. We see on the screen an Indian reading the last episode of the *Odyssey* translated into the Kayapó language, on the banks of an Amazon river. He recognizes in Homer's narrative images of their own mythology. Christiane Jatahy enters the stage to tell the audience that the entire Earth has responsibility for what is happening in the Brazilian forest.

The production crosses a constellation of sites in the transnational circumnavigation of refugees, to end with the native peoples of Brazil, whose genocide continues at an alarming rate. The mapping of multiple forms of violence in refugee camps in Lebanon, Greece, Palestine, South Africa and indigenous villages in Brazil creates a multidirectional territory in which suppressed memories gain space to be shown. Thus, *Nossa Odisseia* constitutes a performance laboratory for the reinvention of memory and provides tools “to explore how past and present are to interrogate and critically affect one another in ways that can refigure artistic creation” (Kuburovic and Heathfield, 2016). On screen, on stage and in the audience indigenous people, refugees, performers and spectators negotiate new versions of the history in the projection of a social counter-memory.

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