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TROUBLING THE STAGE: OPENNESS, IMPURITY AND INTENSITY. THE POLITICALITY OF MARLENE MONTEIRO FREITAS' CHOREOGRAPHIC WORK

Thesis submitted to Universidade Católica Portuguesa to
obtain a PhD Degree in Culture Studies

By

Alexandra Balona Sá Oliveira

Faculty of Human Sciences

November 2021

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Under the supervision of Professor Doctor Isabel Capeloa Gil and Professor Doctor Samuel Weber

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To Júlia

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Samuel Weber for all his care and friendship, and for his ground-breaking and inspiring intellectual contribution.

A profound thanks to Professor Isabel Capeloa Gil for her illuminating and challenging intellectual contribution, for all her support and friendship, and for being an inspiring role model.

A deep thanks to Marlene Monteiro Freitas for her time and availability in sharing her thoughts. I also would like to thank her family warm welcome in Cape Verde, as well as the illuminating conversations with António Tavares, the director of Mindelo Cultural Center, in São Vicente.

An eternal gratitude to my parents, without them this work would not have been possible, and to my dear brother for his unconditional support. A deep thanks to my grandmother Amélia, the timeless figure of care and love.

Thanks to Nuno Merino Rocha for his understanding and support.

A very special thanks to Tiago Delgado for all his love and encouragement.

A final thanks to my daughter Júlia, for challenging me at every moment, and inspire my permanent reinvention.

Abstract

The present study wishes to elaborate on the politicality of Cape Verdean Marlene Monteiro Freitas' choreographic work through the constellations of *Openness*, *Impurity*, and *Intensity*, the three common lines that, according to the choreographer, cross all her work.

For choreographer and dancer Marlene Monteiro Freitas, who was awarded in 2018 the Silver Lion by Venice Biennale and in 2021 the Chanel Next Prize, dance happens in that third space of radical openness in-between the stage and the audience, where forces propelled by the performance encounter those released with and through each singular spectator, opening the sensory to the unforeseen, and having transformational impact on the intensity of co-being.

Summoning overdetermined, hybrid and animistic figures that evoke queer and multispecies entanglements, and through figural transgression, transformation and intensity as choreographic tools, her work concurs to the construction of an imaginary, a radically unbounded fictional world where the unexpected finds a potential ground for existence.

Articulating Openness, Impurity and Intensity as choreographic strategies of displacement and transformation, we propose that Marlene's work displaces some of Western modern Grand Divides (subject-object, human-non-human, modern-primitive animality, among others), proposing a space of negotiation beyond identity politics, and gender and racial binaries. Hers is, therefore, a decolonial and intersectional choreographic practice in the context of contemporary dance in Western Europe.

Keywords: Marlene Monteiro Freitas, choreography, contemporary dance, hybridity, gender, decolonial, intersectionality, Cape Verde, theatricality, political.

Resumo

O presente trabalho tem como foco a politicalidade da obra da coreógrafa cabo-verdiana Marlene Monteiro Freitas, e estrutura-se em torno das constelações Abertura, Impureza e Intensidade que, segundo a coreógrafa, são os três denominadores comuns da sua obra.

Para a coreógrafa e bailarina Marlene Monteiro Freitas, premiada em 2018 com o Leão de Prata da Bienal de Veneza e em 2021 com o Chanel Next Prize, a dança acontece no terceiro espaço entre o palco e o público, onde as forças produzidas pela performance encontram as forças libertadas por cada espetador singular, criando espaço de abertura ao insondável, e tendo um impacto transformador na intensidade do co-existir.

Convocando figuras sobredeterminadas, hibridez e animismo que evocam constelações imaginárias queer e multi-espécie, e tendo a transgressão figurativa, a metamorfose e a intensidade como ferramentas coreográficas, a sua obra concorre para a construção de mundos ficcionais radicalmente ilimitados, onde o inesperado encontra um terreno potencial para a existência.

Articulando Abertura, Impureza e Intensidade como estratégias coreográficas de deslocamento e transformação, propomos que a obra de Marlene desloca algumas das dicotomias da modernidade ocidental (sujeito-objeto, animalidade humano-não-humano, moderno-primitivo, entre outras), propondo um espaço de negociação para além de políticas identitárias, e de binários de género e raciais. Trata-se, assim, de uma prática coreográfica decolonial e interseccional no contexto da dança contemporânea da Europa Ocidental.

Palavras-chave: Marlene Monteiro Freitas, coreografia, dança contemporânea, hibridez, género, decolonial, interseccionalidade, Cabo Verde, teatricalidade, política.

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Introduction

Troubling the Stage: Openness, Impurity, and Intensity.
The Political Potentiality of Marlene Monteiro Freitas' Choreographic Work

Any body on stage is a political gesture. Although its long history as an apparatus of encounter and conviviality, for Plato the theatre was a dangerous mimetic artform that could disrupt the subject's identity, contaminate the political and place the *polis*, or the city, in peril. However, since the turn of the twentieth century, theatrical practices, in which we include contemporary dance, can be seen as spaces for radical openness, allowing for the creation of antagonistic places of the common and for catalysing processes of subjectivation.

For Cape Verdean choreographer and dancer Marlene Monteiro Freitas, who was awarded in 2018 the Silver Lion by Venice Biennale and in 2021 the Chanel Next Prize, dance happens in that third space of radical openness in-between the stage and the audience, where forces propelled by the performance encounter those released with and through each singular spectator, opening the sensory to the unforeseen, and having transformational impact on the intensity of co-being. The present work wishes to elaborate on the politicality[1] of Cape Verdean Marlene Monteiro Freitas' choreographic work under the constellations of *Openness*, *Impurity*, and *Intensity*, which will be clarified further ahead.

[1] The use of the term "politicality" refers to the condition and potentiality of the political. It takes as point of departure that the relation between the political and performance, or performing arts, cannot be taken for granted in the present context of neoliberal capitalism, which has blurred the domains of private and public, praxis and *poiesis*, the political and the economic, as we will analyze further ahead in the chapter "Art and Politics" (pp. 54-56).
Moreover, the concept of "politicality" is also indebted to other theorists, namely, to Samuel Weber's investigation on Walter Benjamin's use of the suffix "-ability", or "-barkeit" in some of Benjamin's relevant concepts, such as, "Kritisierbarkeit" (the ability of criticizing), "Übersetzbarkeit" (the ability to translate in *The Task of the Translator*, 1923), among other Benjaminian crucial concepts (Weber, 2008: 3-10). According to Samuel Weber, forming a concept in terms of its potentiality, or its -ability, virtualizes not only the process of naming, but distances the idea (Benjaminian term for concept) from the event or the phenomena it is naming, through deconstructing and dissemination. This suffix "ability can also be related to the much-celebrated Derridean concept of "iterability" (developed further in pp. 41-43), which refers to the mark's potentiality to repeat and be repeated, but that also questions the identity of the same, demonstrating a repetition that always implies difference. The idea, or concept, hence, has the ability to single out not only the average in the phenomena, but its extreme, its singularities. Questioning the politicality of Freitas' choreographies implies, hence, a critical quest on its political potentiality, a process that tries to unveil its singularization, instead of framing it in a universalizing assumption of the relation between performance and the political. Finally, methodologically, it also evokes Irit Rogoff's concept of "embodied criticality", which is developed further ahead in the pp. 31-33.

Marlene Monteiro Freitas was born in 1979 in Sal, Cape Verde,[2] and later moved to Mindelo, São Vicente Island, where she lived her childhood and youth. Later, through a funding program for academic studies between Cape Verde and Portugal, Marlene received a grant to begin her dance studies in Lisbon, at the *Faculdade de Motricidade Humana* [Faculty of Human Motricity]. On the second year, she decided to continue her studies at *Escola Superior de Dança* [Dance Superior School], in Lisboa, where she graduated. Freitas proceeded her academic education at *Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian* [Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation], and later in the renown European contemporary dance school P.A.R.T.S., in Brussels.

In her choreographies, Marlene places dissonant materials in relation, opening space for the *non-place* of discourse. These choreographic materials propose open and multiple modalities of performance, that articulate overdetermined, hybrid and animistic figures, concurring to the construction of an imaginary, a radically unbounded fictional world where the unexpected finds a potential ground for existence. Hence, choreographic writing constitutes for Marlene a richer, more complex, and more profound language for translating the choreographer's experience of the world. According to Marlene, that is the strength of the theater, a space where we have the potentiality of reinventing our existence, reinvent the human condition, and the relations between bodies, as Freitas clearly states:

> (...) todos elementos trabalham para o mesmo, trabalham para a construção de um imaginário, (...) para a construção daquilo a que eu chamo de ficção que é essa possibilidade de juntar coisas que à priori não estariam ao lado umas das outras. Eu penso que essa é a grande força do teatro, desse espaço onde nós conseguimos reinventar a nossa existência, reinventar a condição humana, reinventar o corpo humano, as relações entre os corpos. Daí que haja uma estante de música que se pode tornar num corpo, que pode ter poderes, que normalmente são concedidos aos vivos (...) (Freitas in Peres, 2021).[3]

[2] Cape Verde was a former Portuguese colony, and it is an independent country since 1975. The country's idiosyncrasies and some of its cultural and performative practices have a relevant impact in Freitas' artistic work, so we will dedicate some attention to Cape Verde historical, social, and cultural singularities in the chapter *Cape Verde: Colonialism, Creolization, Cape-Verdianity*

[3] "(…) all elements work for the same goal, they work for the construction of an imaginary, (…) for the construction of what I call fiction, which is this possibility of gathering things that a priori would not be next to each other. I think this is the great strength of theater, that space where we are able to reinvent our existence, reinvent the human condition, reinvent the human body, the relationships between bodies. Hence there is a music stand that can become a body, that can have powers, which are normally granted to the living (…)" (Freitas in Peres, 2021, my transl., in https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yCN27S_SjtA, accessed June 11, 2021).

Therefore, through such a methodology anchored in fiction, Marlene negotiates the porosity between a wide spectrum of borders, polarities, and fixed binary structures. In her own words, Marlene demonstrates how choreography has the ability to transcend a relation with the world mediated through rational language, allowing to access unconscious and embodied layers of relationality:

> Eu penso que a ficção, pessoalmente, (...) ajuda-me na tradução do mundo, na tradução das coisas. Por isso, para mim a linguagem coreográfica é mais complexa, mais rica, mais completa e mais profunda do que propriamente a palavra que, no meu caso, fica sempre aquém. E eu penso que há esse lado que nos escapa que a coreografia consegue transbordar e transcender (*idem*).[4]

Summoning figures that evoke hybrid, queer, and multi-species entanglements, we propose that her work dislocates some of the Modern European Grand Divides, namely, the subject versus the object, the human versus nonhuman animality, the modern versus the pre-modern, intersecting, and dislocating species, identity, racial and gender determinations. Consequently, grounded on a radical openness of expression, her figural[5] work not only disturbs these onto-epistemological and aesthetic premises of European modernity, as it also destabilizes certain choreographic methodologies of a so-called "conceptual contemporary dance," often encountered in Western European theaters from the nineties until the present.

These proposals of a so-called "conceptual contemporary dance," influenced by the legacy of American post-modern dance of the sixties and the seventies of the past century, were more focused on questioning dance's ontology, through a critique of dance as the bind between the moving body in space following a specific technique and with a harmonious relation with music. Influenced by post-structuralist questioning on the subject's autonomy, self-reflexity and authorship, by social and political upheavals, and by Western European conceptual art, installation, live and performance art, these choreographic works proposed abstract, conceptual, and process based choreographic methodologies, countering the referred dance's ontological premises, often with a minimalist approach of movement, stage

[4] "I think that fiction, personally, (...) helps me translating the world, translating things. Therefore, for me, the choreographic language is more complex, richer, more complete, and more profound than the actual word, which, in my case, always falls short. And I think there is this side that escapes us that choreography manages to overflow and transcend (…)" (Freitas in Peres, 2021, my transl., in https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yCN27S_SjtA, accessed June 11, 2021).

[5] The concept of figure and figural will developed further ahead in the chapter "The Figure and The Figural" (pp. 153-60).

and light design, evidencing its conceptual focus, sometimes even excluding the body presence and movement from the stage.

Contrarily, in Marlene's work, the spectator witnesses, above all, a fictional, overdetermined, and uncanny imaginary realm on stage where the dancing body appears not as a representational theatrical character, but as a discontinuous and indeterminate figure in close articulation with music and with all the choreographic details (from the stage to light design, from the costumes to all objects and props). Although being thought as a theatrical show, her work does not present a sense of wholeness, unity, and linear comprehension, but instead, a disjointed world, an oneiric universe out of time and out of place, where music and movement play a significant role. Music, refers Marlene, allows her and the performers to access specific experiences and intensities that would otherwise be unattainable.

In addition, Marlene names her performers as figures, be them dancers or musicians, since figures allow for a wider array of potentialities beyond the theatrical character constrained to a narrative, and beyond the figurative dancer constrained to mimetic and representational body-images. In Marlene's work, the figure opens the field of choreographic experimentation to transfiguration, dislocation, and instability where all details—from the mouth expression to the eyes, and all body's gestuality—concur to its singularity, always multiple, hybrid, and metamorphic, as Marlene clarifies:

> É uma figura, (...) um rosto que tem um corpo e (...) um corpo que tem um rosto. Assim como trabalho um gesto, o movimento de um braço, inclinações do tronco, também posso trabalhar a inclinação de uma sobrancelha, ou a extensão dos lábios. Fazem parte das figuras, é um todo, um todo que pode ser um todo híbrido. Não está numa ideia de um personagem, é uma figura que é múltipla, pode ser um corpo boneca, (...) um corpo robot, (...) um corpo animal, um corpo máquina, ou pode ser a mistura disto tudo. Pode haver uma intenção clara desse corpo, ou pode ser um corpo que não tem intenções e que é movido por algo exterior a ele. A curiosidade que acontece em relação ao rosto acontece em relação ao corpo todo, aos músculos, à intensidade com que a figura agencia modos, maneiras...[6] (Freitas in Peres, 2021).

[6] "It is a figure, (...) a face that has a body and (...) a body that has a face. Just as I work on a gesture, the movement of an arm, the trunk inclinations, I can also work on the inclination of an eyebrow, or the extension of the lips. They are part of the figures, it is a whole, a whole that can be a hybrid whole. It's not an idea of a character, it's a figure that is multiple, it can be a puppet body, (...) a robot body, (...) an animal body, a machine body, or it can be a mixture of all of this . That body can have a clear intention, or it can be a body that has no intentions and that is moved by something outside of it. The curiosity that happens in relation to the face happens in relation to the whole body, the muscles, the intensity with which the figure is an agent of modes, and manners..." (Freitas in Peres, 2021, in https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yCN27S_SjtA, accessed June 12, 2021).

It is, in fact, the curiosity or restlessness around something that she does not understand that triggers Marlene into a choreographic creation, focusing on all details, from the minor scale of a face muscle to the macro choreographic scale, always drawn towards disparate and transitional materialities. It is this coexistence of dissonant materials that produces forces and tensions and renders the choreographies their uncanny and bewildering quality. Such collisions escape representational subjectivities and result, instead, from simultaneous contradictions or polarities placed in circularity, becoming productive conflicts towards the emergence of other polyphonies and choreographic multiplicities.

This idea of the multiple is evident is all her work: in its figures—be them human or nonhuman materials that the choreographer animates endowing them with movement and subjectivity—whose dissonance occurs through their unstable and ungraspable body-images; in the musical selection that usually combines disparate genres, such as classical music articulated with pop, popular or street-dance music; in the eclectic mosaic of choreographic movements that evoke a diversity of dancing genres, from everyday gestures, to reminiscences of Cape Verdean, Brazilian and other dance forms, to a montage of disparate and unrecognizable figural movements evoking animals, puppets, robots, statues, fauns, among many others non-crystallizable figures; finally, in the dramaturgy that also contains interruptions, cuts and abrupt changes that dislocate any possible linear and rational understanding of the whole.

To this contributes Marlene's methodology that is grounded, firstly, on a very concrete idea, upon which the choreographer starts an extensive theoretical and imagery investigation. Influenced by strategies of montage, namely, by Aby Warburg's project *Bilder Atlas Mnemosyne* [Mnemosyne Atlas of Images],[7] Marlene engages in a recollection and assemblage of materials, such as photographs, artistic images, photo-journalistic images (in particular, in her last work *Le Mal – Embriaguez divina*, 2020), films, musical references from the wide spectrum of classical to pop music, theoretical readings (from the fields of critical theory, image anthropology, visual studies, psychoanalytical readings, among others) and a diversity of other elements. These materials evoke both a Western European epistemological, cultural, and artistic legacy, from erudite to popular culture references, as well as summoning other temporalities and geographies, with special regard to Freitas' personal archive

[7] We will elaborate on Aby Warburg's research project further ahead in the introduction.

of everyday life: from Cape Verde, her home country, to other transnational relationalities resulting from her international path.

Secondly, the choreographic process begins solo in the studio, where Marlene rehearses gestures, movements, and figures that she films and visualizes, structuring the choreographic writing that guides the project. Departing from that defined structure, the creative process proceeds with a relational negotiation with all the performers through observation, sensing and in Marlene's own words, "smelling the other" (Freitas in Peres, 2021), until the performers and the choreographer cross their paths and follow a converging direction. The choreographic process follows in the studio through the articulation of these materials using fiction, unbounded imagination, and processes influenced by what Sigmund Freud names the dream-work operations: overdetermination, dislocation, condensation, conditions of figurability, and secondary elaboration, that we will unravel further ahead.

Therefore, although departing from a very clear choreographed structure, which Freitas allegorically compares to the tight skin of a “chorizo,” the dance work continues to be filled with elements, multiplying and demultiplying them in order to achieve the highest degree of tension. Hence, disparate fragments collide and are combined like a living montage, undergoing transformations throughout the creative process. The dance piece itself is the result of the digestive process of all those elements, in Freitas’ words, “the feces” (*idem*), from where the spectator is not able to clearly recognize the initial references and materials that were combined and transformed along the choreographic process. In fact, operating through excess, saturation and simultaneous contradictions, her works aim not at the transmission of a conceptual, univocal, and rational message, but at the production of forces, emotions, and intensities. For that matter, they can exist only through the theatrical physical encounter between the performance and the spectators, body to body, in-between energetic fields, hence, unmediated by a screen.

Furthermore, with a figural work that rests on hybridity and instability, Marlene’s dance work dislocates the autonomous and self-reflexive modern subject, opening space of negotiation beyond identity politics, countering gender and racial Western modern hegemonic discourses, as well as assumptions on European dance ontology. Through this poetics of dissonant collisions, we are better able to understand the three key denominators that, Marlene refers, cross all her works: *Openness*, *Impurity,* and *Intensity*. It is the choreographies’ radical *Openness* through unbounded fiction and imagination that allows for *Impurity*

to take place, intersecting several dislocations of gender, race, and species, of vernacular and high culture, and other ways of binaries' unsettling. Hence, *Impurity* appears through strategies of hybridity, animism, as well as through other processes kin to the referred Freudian dream-work operations. Finally, as mentioned, the tension resulting from this poetics of saturation, excess and simultaneous contradictions produces forces, emotions, and *Intensities*—the third key term—that ground her dance work, and from where a "trembling thought" (Glissant, 1997) may find open alleys to appear.

This dissertation proposes to reflect not only about what her work presents, but also the kind of gaze the spectators (mostly white middle-class Western European subjects) project with and through it, and what kind of gaze the work retroactively sends back, frequently with a provocative decolonial positioning. In what ways does Marlene Monteiro Freitas' dance works disturb Western European theatres with both bewilderment and astonishment? Where resides its political potentiality that produces such disparate reactions in the public, from intoxicating fascination to disturbing restlessness?

Her works are, thus, performative intertextualities that produce a series of effects through their iterabilities, refusing ontologies and treating them as open surfaces where all gestures and figures have the potentiality for deconstruction and resignification. In a disobedient, ironic and humorous way, Marlene proposes singularities that embody modernity's vexed thresholds at the frontier where the binaries clash and cancel each other, in between worlds and dichotomies such as Europe and Cape Verde, coloniser and colonised, male and female, modern and premodern, white and non-white, subject and object, animate and inanimate, human and nonhuman, beauty and ugliness, clean and dirty, sacred and profane, among others, unveiling the ruins of such binaries and the hierarchical power structures that still govern our global order, proposing the folds, the cracks and the hybrids as new tools for rethinking the political and the contemporary.

As Judith Butler refers, "we can ask what is the use of 'opening possibilities' after all, but it is unlikely that anyone who has understood what it is to live in the social world as the 'impossible,' illegible, unrealizable and illegitimate will ask this question" (Butler, 2017 [1990]: 18).

Objectives and Structure

From a personal and situated perspective that is our own, a white European Portuguese woman, this dissertation proposes to unravel Marlene Monteiro Freitas' three key denominators—*Openness, Impurity and Intensity*—as three practical and theoretical constellations, how they resonate in and through her choreographies, disclosing their politicality.

Each constellation, as a virtual and vital entity, evokes Walter Benjamin's idea of constellation as a conceptual and methodological tool in relation to his other formulation of "dialectical images." For Benjamin, "image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation," or in other words, "image is dialectics at a standstill" (Benjamin, 1999: 462-463). In this sense, the author adds, "[e]very present day is determined by the images that are synchronic with it: each now is the now of a particular recognisability" (*idem*). In his perspective, constellations have a mediating potentiality between the material facts or events of a determinate moment (phenomena), as singularities, and the mode of conceptualizing. For Benjamin, the ideas belong to different realm from those of phenomena, and phenomena are not incorporated in ideas. Thus, the role of conceptualization is then to approach the material realm of phenomena, to decompose it, and to "virtual" reorganize it in their "thing-like elements," but "departing from its traditional role of establishing sameness" (Weber, 2008: 7). Instead, the potentiality of conceptualization, as Benjamin proposes it, is one of "singularization," not of finding the average and the generality in phenomena, "but rather to reveal their distinctive, incommensurable spatial-temporal singularity as a measure of change and alteration" (Weber, 2008: 9). Therefore, we also organized the constellations *Openness*, *Impurity* and *Intensity* as assemblages of complex and virtual singularities that in their entanglement are never stable once and for all.

Before approaching these constellations, to reflect on the politicality of Marlene's choreographic work, Part I begins by questioning the conditions of spectatorship and of performing art works in the present context of global neoliberal capitalism, which not only capitalizes all forms of life and performative creativity, but also, thrives through what sociologist Gerhard Schulze has called "the experience society" (Schulze, 2008). In this context, the spectator becomes the "participant-consumer of experiences," which are then tracked and monetized through online data evaluation and dissemination. In his book *Singularities. Dance in the Age of Performance* (2017), the performance studies scholar André Lepecki calls it the neoliberal condition of "*dis-experience*," (Lepecki, 2017: 170) which he also connects to what Eyal Weyzman proposes as a forensic turn in aesthetics since the end of the

twentieth century. This increasing "forensic sensibility" (*idem*) is related to a certain dismissal of the witness, where the affective impact of the event seems to be progressively bypassed by neutral markers and vectorial data that classify, evaluate, or even validate the event. The context of the present pandemic, conditioning the possibilities for presential encounters, has increasingly disengaged the spectator-consumer from the dynamics of a theatrical performance as an affective-political experience.

Therefore, in today's information era, or in what James Bridle has called the *new dark age* (Bridle, 2018), an age designed by *radical technologies* (Greenfield, 2017) that produce and reproduce (our) subjectivities, although having been unable to prevent our life from becoming increasingly *precarious* (Butler, 2004), with our bodies placed on the *pharmaco-biopolitical line* (Preciado, 2013), while *a global idea of race* (Ferreira da Silva, 2007) persists in prevailing ways through a settler colonialism and modern knowledge apparatuses, it is urgent to rescue, as refers Lepecki, the role of the witness unmediated by a screen, as well as the experience of storytelling. In his essay "The Storyteller," Walter Benjamin remarks how in the context of post-World War I and industrial capitalism there was a demise of storytelling, the incapacity of sharing and transmitting affective communicable experiences (Benjamin, 1968: 84).

Therefore, Part I focuses, firstly, on these conditions of possibility for storytelling and for translating a work of art through a language that, refers Giorgio Agamben, is always *presupposed*, and to produce thought and written knowledge upon an experience that is not only culturally and historically situated but also, according to Derrida, always a *hetero-affection*. Secondly, to evoke the politicality of an artistic work implies that it acts in and through a certain contemporary, where its political potentiality is able to affect and be apprehended. For this matter, we draw some lines of a possible (situated) contemporary towards which Marlene's work engages politically. Thirdly, we briefly outline the framework of recent theoretical developments in the Western context on the relation between art and politics, as an introduction for the more specific relation between theatricality, dance, and politics.

In addition, considering the entanglement between art and politics with the field of aesthetics, we propose a reflection on some of the traits of the aesthetic experience in the field of dance. For that, we begin by contextualizing the emergence of aesthetics in the context of modern thought with its ideological underpinnings, to focus on the notion of aesthetics not as a transcendental concept but as an aesthetic experience grounded in the relation

between the event and a situated *becoming* subject. Moreover, at the end of Part I, we address the notion of "force as an aesthetic intervention,"[8] a relevant issue considering that Marlene insistingly refers that her dance works happen as the encounter of forces in the third space between the stage and the public.

Part II is dedicated to unravelling Marlene's three main choreographic lines: *Openness*, *Impurity* and *Intensity*. Although considering these key terms as entangled constellations that contaminate each other, for organizational purposes we structured the second part in three main chapters entitled, respectively, *Openness, Impurity* and *Intensity*, each with their respective sub-chapters. Thus, we propose that Marlene's work *opens* rifts and interstices both in the onto-epistemological field and in the context of artistic creation, and this *Openness* creates multiple territory of possibilities that welcomes the heterogeneous, the hybrid, and the figural, concepts which we will unravel under the constellation of *Impurity*. Together, an *Openness* that allows for a politics of *Impurity* to exist, engenders the potentiality that produces energetic clashes and forces, enhancing Freitas' dance works as emotional and vertiginous events of *Intensity*. The three keywords interconnect not only in her methodology but also in the events itself, as we will demonstrate along the dissertation.

The chapter *Openness* divides into three lines of inquiry. The first chapter *Openings that counter Western modern/colonial onto-epistemologies* focuses on openings in the onto-epistemological field, analyzing some counter critical discourses of Western modern/colonial onto-epistemologies, namely, Foucault's post-structuralist and anti-humanist critique, and further through postcolonial, decolonial and intersectional thinking, negotiating Freitas' work within these critical theoretical frameworks.

As Foucault demonstrates in *The Order of Things* (2002 [1970]), to place opposites or extremes in collision, one of Marlene's main choreographic strategies, not only causes odd and uncanny realms on stage, as it reveals the impossibility of a common locus where these imponderables may coexist, proposing universes that become accessible only through the "non-place of language" (Foucault, 2002 [1970]: xviii). Hence, we could call Marlene's figural choreographies "heterotopias," in the sense of Foucault's definition, as disturbing theatrical realms that not only undermine language, as they shatter the possibility for univocal and linear dramaturgical lines. Therefore, collapsing the operative plan of discourse,

[8] For a detailed reflection on force and energy as aesthetic interventions in performing arts, please see Huschka, Sabine; Gronau, Barbara (Eds.) (2019), *Energy and Forces as Aesthetic Interventions. Politics of Bodily Scenarios.* Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.

recurring to overdetermined figures detached from representation, and making use of strategies of dislocation, indeterminacy and transfigurability, not only a rational understanding becomes scattered, as the figures themselves fragment the assumption of a stable and univocal modern subject, both on stage and in the audience, since it also contaminates each spectator's singular politics of self-reflexivity and recognition.

Opening thought to the *unthought*, we argue that Marlene also conveys an unthought of Western European culture, to which Marlene relates in this condition of embodying a transnational simultaneous contradiction, being both Portuguese and Cape Verdean, sharing the ambiguity and ambivalence of inhabiting border and diasporic zones, evoked in her work so clearly through one of her main choreographic strategies: hybridity. Therefore, beyond Foucault's anti-humanism critique, we convey Bruno Latour's investigation on the anthropology of science developed in his seminal book *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993 [1991]), unravelling modernity's purifying practice of separating nature from society, subjects from objects, humans from nonhumans, modern from premodern through scientific reasoning, increasing the proliferation of that which it intended to negate: the hybrids, that so profoundly ground the construction of Marlene's composite figures and choreographic realms. Moreover, we evoke other authors such as Donna Haraway (1989, 1991), Rosi Braidotti (2006, 2013), Cary Wolfe (2009), Bill Brown (2004), among others, who respectively propose a feminist, queer, materialist, and multi-species criticality of Western modern anthropocentric and hegemonic onto-epistemologies assumptions.

Beyond the referred post-structuralist and posthuman criticalities, we consider that Marlene's choreographies have a decolonial potentiality, conveying figures and realms that critically disrupt some of Western modern/colonial onto-epistemologies, proposing through choreography polyphonic rewritings of otherness. Therefore, to contextualize that potentiality we convey a decolonial theoretical framework for its premise of unveiling the logic of coloniality, and for its openness to epistemic and artistic rewritings. In addition, we will also evoke intersectional theory, for its articulation of a matrix of race, gender, class, and local cultural singularities as interlocked multiplicities to unveil and deconstruct Western modern, white, heteronormative, capitalist, and (neo)colonial powers and discursive formations. In this sense, we will briefly address Anibal Quijano (1999) and Walter Mignolo decolonial critique (1995, 1999, 2011), Sylvia Wynter's (1979, 1992, 1995a, 1995b, 2000, 2003, 2006,

2015) intersectional critique of Western onto-epistemologies, as well as Denise Ferreira da Silva (2007)'s reflections on Western post-Enlightenment's construction of race.

Still under the constellation of *Openness*, the second line of inquiry *Openings through image, montage and formulas of pathos* reflects on openings in the field of artistic production and art history through overdetermined images, montage, and emotion. We will unravel the Freudian concept of overdetermined images and their potential *mise-en-abîme* and reflect how the legacy of Aby Warburg (1866-1929)'s work shows traces in Marlene's own methodology, since Freitas anchors each new dance piece in the assemblage of an imagery atlas. In fact, through his project *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* [Mnemosyne Atlas of Images], Warburg developed a process of knowledge production through image montage, considering images fluid, heterogeneous and heterochronic vehicles of other images, of reminiscences, symptoms, and emotions, polarized by artists in their own time. Similarly, Marlene's artistic practice embraces the heterogeneous, fertile, and migratory character of images and symbols as places of in-betweenness, where polarities and formulas of *pathos* are played out and await to be transformed by the artist as a seismograph, in each historical moment. Marlene's choreographies, hence, trouble the stage by opening it to a *Zwischenraum*, an interval space, a rift that allows the performers and the spectators to temporarily exit modernity's ethno- and eurocentrism, or as Warburg would say, to exit modernity's schizophrenia.

Finally, the last sub-chapter of Part I, *Openings across relational geontologies: on Cape Verde, creolization, and the archipelagic* evokes the geo-ontopoetic relationalities between Marlene and Cape Verde, reflecting on the historical processes of creolization resulting from Cape Verde's colonization by the Portuguese colonial imperialism. We will try to unravel the intricate identity politics surrounding issues of creolization and creoleness[9] and reflect how the archipelagic, the diasporic, and creoleness can play a role in Marlene's poetics, namely, in her interest on hybridity and on transitional figurability.

The second constellation, *Impurity*, also unfolds in several lines of thought. Bearing in mind the relevance that the figure and figural work have in Marlene's work, the first subchapter *The figure and the figural* develops a brief genealogy of the term "*figura*" departing from Erich Auerbach's theoretical investigation, elaborating how the term's ambivalence

[9] The concepts of creolization and creoleness will be developed further ahead in the subchapter "Creole, Creolization and Creoleness" (pp. 134 - 139).

and ambiguity played a major role in questions of rhetoric, representation, and artistic creation, from ancient Greece until the present.

The second sub-chapter *Hybridity and composite beings* addresses a pivotal choreographic instrument in Marlene's choreographic work: the hybrid. Thus, we elaborate a brief archaeological survey of the term "hybrid," passing on to the influence the concept of hybridity played in the post-ninety's multiculturalism global context and postcolonial thinking, then returning to Bruno Latour's critique of modernity with a focus on the hybrid, and finally, to recent reflections on interweaving performance cultures in the scope of theater and dance.

Still under the umbrella of *Impurity*, the third sub-chapter *Animism: across the subject-object divide* addresses the concept of animism as a choreographic device to inquire on modernity's subject-object and culture-nature Grand Divides, also evoked in Marlene's work. Frequently in her choreographies, all the materials on stage, be them human or nonhuman, embody the threshold between animation and de-animation, life and death, objectivity and subjectivity, dislocating those pre-established modern assumptions.

Furthermore, dancing the hybrid animal to open the human, Marlene's figures critically negotiate the frontier between human and nonhuman animality. Thus, in the sub-chapter *Animality: dislocating human-animal boundaries* we elaborate on how the concept of animality in Western modernity onto-epistemological thought was elaborated as a frontier, together with language and rationality, for conceptualizing the human, and how this human was constituted upon a caesura within itself, and the disavowal of its animality.

Finally, the sub-chapter *Queer fabulations*[10] addresses the relevance of queerness as an operative tool in Marlene's work for deconstructing normalized gender formations in her composite figures, confronting heteronormative and hegemonic assumptions on gender.

In the third constellation entitled *Intensity*, we begin by analyzing *Sensation, intensity, and affect* in Deleuze thinking, and how it resonates in Marlene's work, namely, through the influential reflection on Francis Bacon paintings, a strong reference not only for Marlene's solo *Guintche* (2010), but also for her choreographic work of transfiguring the face.

[10] We adapted the scholarly term of "critical fabulation" coined by the American scholar Saidiya Hartman in her essay "Venus in Two Acts" (Hartman, 2008) which refers to the creative strategy of elaborating semi-nonfictions that attempt to bring suppressed and subaltern voices of the past to the surface, by means of deep archival research and the montage of scattered facts. In our approach, "Queer fabulations" brings queerness—as counter-normative and counter-hegemonic, hence, often suppressed, political modalities of existence beyond identity and representation—in relation to fabulation, which evokes strategies of fiction and imagination, as openings for unbounded singularities and relationalities to find their place in the politics of the common and the sensible.

Secondly, in the sub-chapter *Freudian dream-work operations as choreographic tools* we demonstrate how Freud's dream work operations such as overdetermination, condensation, dislocation, conditions of figurability, and second elaboration are articulated as choreographic tools in Marlene's work.

Moreover, still under the constellation *Intensity*, in the sub-chapter *Music, Dance, Carnival: some Cape Verdean cultural traces* we survey some of the most relevant performative practices of Cape Verdean dance and music that Marlene evokes in her choreographic work, such as *morna*, *coladera*, *funaná*, *batuque*, *colá San Jon*, and the *tabanca*. Furthermore, we demonstrate how Mindelo's Carnival, in São Vicente, as the moment of radical openness and licentiousness that allows for one to be another while simultaneous remaining oneself (one of Marlene's main choreographic goals) is for Marlene a significant artistic inspiration.

Finally, in the third part we focus on some of Marlene's dance works: firstly, her first solo work *Guintche* (2010), then, her group piece *Paraíso – coleção privada [Paradise – private collection]* (2012) and, lastly, her group piece *Bacantes – prelúdio para uma purga [Bacchae – Prelude to a purge]* (2017).

We will demonstrate how Marlene's choreographic lines of *Openness*, *Impurity*, and *Intensity* traverse each of these works in their own singularity. Therefore, each dance work departs from a curiosity or something disquieting towards a choreography grounded on figural work that escapes the sequential linearity of a narrative, escaping univocal hermeneutics. Freitas operates through choreographic tools heir to the legacy of the Freudian dream-work operations, proposing choreographic fictions that result from overdetermination and unconscious montages. Articulating simultaneous contradictions, dissolving the logic of cause-effect, and organizing dissonant elements through strategies of hybridity and animism, Marlene's work functions through forces, energies and tensions released on stage. Through these transfiguring strategies, her choreographies have the power to dislocate some of the Western modern onto-epistemologies, namely, racial and gender binaries, the dichotomies between the human and the nonhuman, nature and culture, but also Eurocentric hegemonic aesthetic discourses on contemporary dance, complicating through the play of emotions the expectations of the Western theatrical spectator.

State of the art

Besides press reviews, short theatre information sheets, and some interviews, there exists no extensive critical reflection on Marlene Monteiro Freitas' choreographic work until the present day, and none that specifically tries to unravel how *Openness*, *Impurity*, and *Intensity*, the three key denominators that cross her work, resonate practically and theoretically in her choreographies. We consider that this justifies the pertinence of the present dissertation.

However, since we propose that Freitas' choreographies have been troubling Western European theatres, we consider relevant, firstly, to review some of the traits of a so-called "Western European contemporary dance," from the late nineties until the first decade of the twenty-first century, to have a framework in relation to which Freitas' work may be positioned. Secondly, we will convey other lines of choreographic work that have become visible since the second decade of this century, and that we consider closer to Freitas' work. These works seem less focused on dance as a conceptual tool, and recover choreography grounded on dance and theatricality, while at the same time evoking issues of gender, queerness, sexuality, race, fusing high and low culture, reimagining parallel historical or contemporary narratives. Refusing new categories, we nevertheless consider that these choreographic proposals, each in their own singularity, show differences from the previous conceptual strand of contemporary dance, translating a global world also on the move, with pressing issues such as global inequality, ecological crisis, racial and gender discrimination, and often with a decolonial and counter-hegemonic perspective, contributing for opening the political to other bodies and figures on stage.

Therefore, we will begin with a brief survey of the theoretical production in the field of dance studies and choreography, since the beginning of the 21st century, that has been analysing how Western European choreographers, since the nineties, have been questioning dance's ontology and have been expanding the scope of the choreographic to other genres. Several critics and theoreticians (Ploebst, 2001; Lepecki, 2006, 2017; Siegmund, 2006; Sabisch, 2011; Brandstetter and Klein, 2013; Cvejic, 2015; Laermans, 2015, Franko, 2019) have been tracing in Western American and European choreography a progressive turning away, since the late nineties, from the modern conception of theatrical dance that implied the body in movement, frequently associated with music, within the predictable theatrical apparatus and conventions. Choreographers such as Boris Charmatz, Xavier Le Roy, Jonathan Burrows, Vera Mantero, Mathilde Monnier, João Fiadeiro, Jerôme Bel, Mette

Ingvartsen, just to name a few, have been engaging in processes of destabilizing the conventional theatrical protocols of production, presentation, and spectatorship, as well as subverting the assumptions not only of the moving body, but also of the body as the author's expressiveness, or as the locus of representation, narration, and textuality.

Helmut Ploebst's book *no wind no* word. *New Choreography on the Society of Spectacle* (2001) addresses the work of some young choreographers at that time, such as Jérôme Bel, Meg Stuart, Vera Mantero, Xavier Le Roy, João Fiadeiro, among others, who were sharing an attitude of reflexivity and research towards dance.[11] The generation that followed also proceeded on the path of deconstructing and exploring the boundaries of dance and non-dance, such as Mette Ingvartsen, Thomas Lehmen, Philip Gehmacher, deufert&plischke or the Superamas collective.

Later, in his relevant work *Exhausting Dance – Performance and the politics of movement* (2006) André Lepecki refers how dance's relation to movement, in current critical practices in the field, seems to be exhausted. Thus, the author reinforces stillness as a critical gesture of contemporary "reflexive" dance, especially in Europe, but also a wider oppositional move towards, not only the awareness of modernity as mobility, but also towards the contemporary condition of spectacle, speed and global circulation of subjects, images, and commodities. Lepecki proposes a critique of what he considered some of the constitutive elements of Western European contemporary theatrical dance, which he has listed as follows:

> (…) solipsism, stillness, the linguistic materiality of the body, the toppling of the vertical plane of representation, the stumble on the racist terrain, the proposition of a politics of the ground, and the critique of the melancholic drive at the heart of choreography (Lepecki, 2006: 4).

Moreover, his study proposes a critique of modernity's ontology as a kinetic project, which has contaminated all spheres and apparatus of bio-producing the modern subject, namely, choreography itself as an "apparatus of capture," subjecting dance to a politics of controlled and pre-ordered movement. In this sense, in the scope of postmodern criticism and Derridean deconstructivism, Lepecki analyses the work of several choreographers, whose work has proposed counter-discourses to this modern narrative of the choreographic.

[11] Also, Ploebst argues that these choreographers do not take the traditional parameters of dance or choreography for granted but critically question, and redefine performing and choreographic tools (Laermans, 2015: 49).

Thus, since the beginning of the 21st century, but influenced by the sixties' counter-discourses, dance has been expanding into other artistic and critical fields, creating "new possibilities for thinking relationships between bodies, subjectivities, politics, and movement" (Lepecki, 2006: 5), recovering its task of rethinking "the subject in terms of the body" (*idem*).

Petra Sabisch (2011) and Bojana Cvedjic (2015) have been analysing Western European contemporary choreography in its close relation to continental and practical philosophy. In *Choreographing relations. Practical Philosophy and Contemporary Choreography* (2011), Sabisch focuses on the singular relations produced in-between some choreographic works and its audience. A singularity that results from an "assemblage of specific relations: relations to objects, to music, to bodies, relations between bodies, relations of visibility, relations between forces, relations of movement and rest" (Sabisch, 2011: 7). This relationality bears the marks of transience; thus, it is neither fixed nor stable. In this sense, upon the work of choreographers such as Xavier le Roy, Eszter Salamon, Antonia Baehr and Juan Dominguez, Sabisch proposes the relations of "contamination," "articulation," and "contamination and articulation" as some traits in a renewed discursivity and practice in Western European contemporary choreography.

Furthermore, in *Choreographing Problems. Expressive Concepts in European Contemporary Dance and Performance* (2015), Bojana Cvejic investigates practices from seven European contemporary choreographers between 1998 and 2007, tracing their "thought-problems" in the "making, performing and attending" of those singular works (Cvejic, 2015: 1). Focusing on works by Xavier le Roy, Eszter Salamon, Jonathan Burrows and Jan Ritsema, Boris Charmatz, Mette Ingvartsen, and Jefta van Dinther, Cvejic refers that these authors give voice (and body) to a process of a "renewal of European contemporary dance," enrolling in practices and discourses "characterized by experiment and by the conceptualization of working methods and of the medium of the dancing body, as well as by a proximity to performance art" (*idem*), introducing "a method of creation by way of problem-posing" (2).

In the publication *Moving Together. Theorizing and Making Contemporary dance* (2015), Rudy Laermans traces a genealogical investigation of the deconstruction of modern dance, since the late sixties by the *Judson Dance Movement* relevant for the so-called American postmodern dance; the author proceeds through the eighties with a reflection on Anne

Teresa de Keersmaeker's[12] minimalist dance structured around repetition and difference, and Meg Stuart's deconstructed dance that begins a process of destabilizing the subject's autonomy, stability and integrity. Further ahead, Laermans' analysis turns towards the nineties, particularly to the work of choreographers that were catalysers of the inquire on dance's ontological premises, namely, the critique of representation, of the author, of the subject's identity and autonomy, of dance's bind to movement, of choreography's relation to conceptual art, of the reduction of choreography to a concept, of the search for a zero degree in the field, of the permeability of the boundaries between dance and other artistic practices. We are referring, namely, to the French choreographers Jérôme Bel, Xavier Le Roy or later Boris Charmatz, but also several others, such as the Portuguese Vera Mantero, Francisco Camacho, João Fiadeiro, among others (part of the so-called "Nova Dança Portuguesa" [New Portuguese Dance]).

Laermans argues how other authors have been demonstrating these aesthetic qualities in Western European contemporary dance. In his reading of Gerald Siegmund's *Abwesenheit. Eine Performative Ästhetik des Tanzes. William Forsythe, Jérome Bel, Xavier Le Roy, Meg Stuart* (2006), Laermans underlies how in each one of these choreographer's work one or more parameters of dance were absent — dance itself, the dancers' bodies, dramaturgical or structural choreography — and how, according to Siegmund, it was that fundamental absence which allowed dance to appear (Laermans, 2015: 50). In this so-called "conceptual" or "reflexive dance," the absence of dance parameters was recurrently experienced by the public as a "lack, even as a threatening loss of identity." However, recalls Laermans, this is a recurrent trait of "reflexive dance works: they overtly question the still prevalent idea as dance-as-bodily-movement or as the art of 'a measured pace'" (Laermans, 2015: 50).

In André Lepecki's recent publication entitled *Singularities. Dance in the Age of Performance* (2016), Lepecki confirms dance and choreography pertinence in the world as embodied criticality, even in the context of global neoliberalism, that profits from the capitalization of everything, from affects, to subjectivities, from the performance of the individual to that of experience. Moreover, Lepecki signals some choreographic and performance works as singularities that he gathers around five topics: "Moving as some *thing* (or some

[12] Let us recall that Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker, beyond an iconic dancer and choreographer, is the founder of P.A.R.T.S., the renowned School for Contemporary Dance in Brussels where Marlene proceeded her academic training after graduating in Escola Superior de Dança, in Lisbon. For more information on P.A.R.T.S. please consult the website: https://www.parts.be/school (accessed July 15, 2021).

things want to run)" (26-54), "in the dark" (55-84), "Limitrophes of the human: monstrous nature, thingly life and the wild animal" (85-114); "The body as archive: will to re-enact and the afterlife of dances" (115-142); Choreographic angelology: the dancer as worker of history (or remembering is a hard thing)" (143-169).

Some of his reflections, namely, in the second chapter "Limitrophes of the human: monstrous nature, thingly life and the wild animal" touch upon some of the points we wish to analyse here, particularly around the themes of hybridity, animality and animism. However, Lepecki does not analyse Marlene Monteiro Freitas' choreographies but, instead, casts light on the collaborative work of Eiko & Koma, on *Monstrous Nature* (2011) by Marcela Levi and Lucía Russo, on *Low Pieces* (2009-2011) by Xavier Le Roy, and Antonia Baehr's collaborative work My *Dog is My Piano* (2011). In this sense, our investigation is complementary to some of Lepecki's conceptualization, to which we add Marlene Monteiro Freitas' work, analysed through the framework of decolonial and intersectional theories of hybridity, but also, theoretical discourses on animal studies, on the anthropology of image, and Freudian psychoanalytical theories, among others.

Secondly, as frequently happens to grand master narratives other parallel movements and bodies that have been existing for long take some time to find their presence on a wider politics of the sensible, in particular, in institutional Western American and European stages. As an example, in the sixties and seventies, in New York, while the so-called American postmodern dance was flourishing at the Judson Church, in Greenwich Village, a movement that was extremely influential to all Western European contemporary dance, other movements such as voguing,[13] were being performed in Harlem by a gay, transvestite and transsexual African American and Latino underground community.

These crossing narratives have come to the fore, namely, through Jenny Livingstone's film documentary *Paris is Burning* (1990), which inspired the dancer and choreographer Trajal Harrel to develop the series *Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning at the Judson Church* (2009-2012), with high visibility in the American and Western European dance scene since the second decade of this century. This series tries to answer the question: "[w]hat would have happened in 1963 if someone from the voguing scene in Harlem had come downtown

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[13] The voguing dance tradition refers to a series of ball dance competitions that took place in Harlem from the 1960's. It was a form of social practice influenced by the early fashion and media industry and was initially developed by an African American and Latino community of gay, transvestites, and transsexuals, performing images of archetypal social and gender identities through movement and behavior.

to perform alongside the early postmoderns at Judson Church?"[14] A series that comes in seven sizes, each one corresponding to a different performance, that tries to re-imagine events that were historical impossibilities in order to trigger audiences to disentangle these questions together, and to formulate unforeseen possibilities in the contemporary. As Harrel refers, he is looking after a "togetherness" in the theatre, a liveliness that commits performers and public to live the theatrical force in a sense that relates to what Martha Graham referred: "theater was a verb before it was a noun" (Harrel in *Artist Statement*, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, 2014),[15] therefore, to live the theatrical performance as an event that impacts the experience of subjectivation and co-being.

The medium-size episode of the series, (*M)imosa/Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning at the Judson Church (M)* (2011), was co-created by Harrel, Cecilia Bengolea, François Chaignaud and Marlene Monteiro Freitas, and it was this dance piece that gave Freitas' work international visibility. A work that results from the encounter of these four different choreographers, and departs from the desire of being someone else, and its impossibility. Through a succession of *personas*—in which Marlene embodies one of her icons, the musician Prince (1958-2016)—this work combines contemporary dance, transvestism, glamour, and humour with a high sense of theatricality, evoking themes of gender, sexuality, and race in an unpretentious, and non-intellectualized way.

We can trace some choreographers that follow a similar artistic and choreographic line of contemporary dance that is highly theatrical, that recovers the virtuosic dancing body on stage, but a body that can be transformist, metamorphic, beyond the canon of the Western European white normative social body and the abstract or everyday life body-images of "conceptual" contemporary dance. These works, on the other hand, evoke queerness, hybridity, inter-species, decolonializing practices and narratives, hence, deconstructing hegemonic and Eurocentric geo-historical narratives not only of dance's ontology, but also, of Western modern onto-epistemologies. Beyond Marlene Monteiro Freitas and Trajal Harrell, and although considering each artist in its singularity, we could include in the above referred line of choreographic research François Chaignaud, Cecilia Bengolea, Ana Pi, Jonas &

[14] In https://betatrajal.org/artwork/2284457-Twenty-Looks-or-Paris-is-Burning-at-The-Judson-Church-XS.html, accessed July 15, 2021. For detailed information on the seven episodes, please consult Trajal Harrel's website: https://betatrajal.org/home.html.

[15] In https://www.foundationforcontemporaryarts.org/recipients/trajal-harrell/ (accessed July 15, 2021).

Lander, Miguel Bonneville, Dinis Machado, João dos Santos Martins, Rita Natálio & Joana Levi, Joana Castro, Volmir Cordeiro, Fabián Barba, among others.

Research methodology

In the present dissertation, structure, research methods and the theoretical framework are inter-dependent and inter-related. Thus, while structuring dissertation into three main parts as constellations, these have not only laid the background for the theoretical framework, as they will also influence the research methods.

Regarding the translatability from the observation of an event to conceptualization, we will consider a methodology that departs from the assumption, already developed by some authors, that the spectators' relation with a dance piece is, primarily, a visual one. Not only is the spectator a viewer, but also, in the wake of Barthes' *death of the author* (Barthes, 1967) or Rancière's *emancipated spectator* (Rancière, 2009a), amongst other authors,[16] the spectator is a producer of meaning through his/her hetero-affection, informed by his/her own situated cultural and historical context.

Moreover, the referred relation of visuality between the viewer and the performance, and the performance's documentation (photography, video, textual review, amongst others) informs the process of theory production, i.e., the hermeneutic mediation between the viewer as spectator/producer and the viewed moving (images of the) bodies. Thus, *looking* starts at the event but goes beyond the relationality of *being-present* at the event, and raises relevant issues regarding the methodological approach at stake that allows the *(paradox of) translation*[17] between viewing, thinking, and writing.

Furthermore, we adopt what Irit Rogoff (2003) calls an embodied criticality in these visual and performative encounters, both as a theoretical framework and a methodological strategy of "reading dance," also heir to what German dance studies scholar Gabrielle Brandstetter proposes in her groundbreaking work *Tanz-Lektüren* [dance readings] (Brandstetter, 2015).

[16] See in this respect Peters, 2014; Bleeker, 2011; Gil, 2011.
[17] This point refers to Derrida's paradox of translation, which the author has developed, namely, in his talk "What is a 'Relevant' Translation? (2001). In this study, the complexity of translation is expanded in-between different media: the event to perception and to language.

In her seminal study *Poetics of Dance. Body, Image and Space in the Historical Avant-gardes* (2015),[18] Brandstetter signals that the concept of dance readings implies "that dance in its cultural and performative form can be understood as a discursive formation" (Brandstetter, 2015: xvi). In the same token, in *Reading Dance* (1986), Susan Leigh Foster has already previously shown how historical theories and post-structuralism could be applied to critical dance studies (*idem*). According to Brandstetter, the *Tanz-Lektüren* (reading, interpretation, hermeneutics) are a combination of reading and writing, in an intertwined process:

> This reading has a dual meaning: it describes the various ways in which authors, artists, philosophers, and academics read dance as part of a discourse on modernity. But it also describes reading as a physical process, in which dance and dancer become intertwined in their conscious and unconscious readings and rereadings of body and movement models, which pre-exist in and can be retrieved from visual memory that is, the historical and imaginary storehouse of history (*idem*).

The present dissertation is largely indebted to Brandstetter's *Tank-Lektüren* proposition since it proposes the dual movement of "reading" dance work, as well as the analysis of how the performers' bodies show traces of *incorporated readings* through dance: of memory images, of migratory visual material and bodily patterns belonging to an historical personal visual and incorporated archive, conscious and unconscious. This reading, however, is not to be understood in terms of a text, but instead "as a form of experiencing the body in motion through dance, hence as the independent act of reading a non-discursive medium, on equal footing with the reading of a text" (9). As the author highlights, this methodology of reading cultural signs besides the textual ones, "offers the advantage of capturing (…) the dialogue of non-verbal and unwritten codes—for instance, the kinetic signification processes of (dance/theatre) performance and the iconographic structures of pictorial traditions" (*idem*).

The readings of body images in a theatrical dance performance—that Brandstetter calls the "body-image" concept, or "body imagery" (13)—are implicitly conditioned by the historical, social, and cultural context of its reception. Thus, the "body-images" in this research are defined as a non-verbal symbolic construct that migrates between the stage and this dissertation textual production, hence without the presumption of establishing a translation from two different systems of signs, but with the goal of capturing its embodied discursiveness and political potentiality.

[18] Published with the original title of *Tanz-Lectüren: Körperbilder und Raumfiguren der Avantgarde*, in 1995.

As the Belgian thinker and performer Jeroen Peeters states, contrary to the modern fiction of autonomy, transparency, and immediacy of a neutral observer, the "paradigm of visual studies now analyses vision as a complex relationality between the person who sees and that which is seen" (Peeters: 2014, 6). Furthermore, in relation to dance in the theatrical apparatus, he adds:

> [b]oth performers and spectators project and perceive body images in each other's presence and experience ways of being different. Each time an emergent, singular event, a performance situation thus repeats and challenges conventional patterns of perception, creating new subjects of sense perception beyond recognition. The theatre's medial apparatus with its proscenium arch also separates performers and spectators in their co-presence, allowing for a reflexive attitude towards this intricate process of producing attention, imagination and meaning (7).

If contemporary dance proposes alternative representations of the body, different and unconventional *body-images* expose and challenge our social and cultural awareness of the visible body. As Brandstetter notes, the flexible methodological concept of reading dance through bodily images has also another purpose: the relevance of the body self-awareness, conscious and unconscious, and the body social and cultural figurations for the *construction and deconstruction of the concept of the subject* (Brandstetter: 2015, 14). This topic was central for Brandstetter's investigation framed temporarily between the turn of the century and 1930. For the present dissertation, within our contemporary visual regime, the body and its images occupy a particular relevance in the political. "We need the gaze of others to come to terms with our own invisibility to ourselves," recalls Peeters, and therefore, the "theatre promises to be a public space that may relieve the subject of its blind spots and open up a horizon and space of possibility in which singularity and difference have a place" (Peeters: 2014, 17).

Therefore, theoretical frameworks from image anthropology, art history and iconology also inform this dissertation. I am referring particularly to the anthropological and psycho-historical Aby Warburg's *Kulturwissenchaft* [Science of Culture], but also to the recent studies on the same fields, namely, by Georges Didi-Huberman, Hans Belting, Victor Stoichita, among others. As Agamben refers in his reading Warburg's project, each time an artist makes choices that are not only formal neither stylistic, s/he proposes an ethical positioning towards both a particular contemporary time and a relation to the legacy of the past. This process that the Agamben calls "the interpretation of the historic problem" becomes, for this

reason, “a diagnostic of the Western subject, fighting to solve its own contradictions and to find, in-between the ancient and the new, its one vital dwelling” (Agamben, 2004: 17, my transl.). According to this perspective, which considers “culture always as a process of *Nachleben* [*survival*, my transl.], transmission, reception, and polarization,” we understand why the study of “symbols and their life in the social memory” played such a relevant role in Warburg’s *Kulturwissenschaft* (18, my transl.). According to Agamben, the symbol and the image for Warburg “resemble an engram of human’s nervous system.” The symbols, according to Warburg, “belong to an intermediary sphere between the consciousness and the primitive reaction,” (Agamben, 2004a: 20), and are engrained in social memory as an intermediary space, a *Zwischenraum*, between image and sign. And the artists, following Warburg, could be considered as “hyper sensible seismographs” that respond to symbols, by polarizing them. Therefore, we could consider that the symbols and images that Marlene collects in her own private atlas, while beginning each dance piece, also hold in them a crystallized energetic charge and emotional expression that survives along the time and is transmitted to the audience polarized by the artist, as a seismograph of her own time.

Regarding the research methods, this dissertation adopts direct observation, analysis of the choreographers’ works, and direct interviews to the choreographer, so a first approach is anchored in an embodied criticality (Rogoff, 2003) based on a close and lived experience with each singular choreography. Moreover, the methodology is indebted to the disciplinary field of Culture Studies, which recognizes all culture as a process of hybridization between the global and the local, grounding its processes of approaching the object of study through a strategy “oriented toward themes and problems, with the help from various disciplinary perspectives” (Gil, 2008: 145). For the present investigation, the most influential disciplinary fields are, then, culture studies, performance studies, dance studies, Freudian psychoanalytical theory, animal studies, continental philosophy, image anthropology, Western art history, postcolonial, decolonial theory, intersectional, feminist, and queer theory. Moreover, culture studies have inherited from the Anglo-Saxon tradition the “interest in popular and material cultural manifestations, as well as in the mediation and representation forms, and still in the interaction between the power structures and cultural manifestations” (146).

In addition, culture studies embrace a strong heritage of the German *Kulturwissenschaft*, which results in its hermeneutical and semiotic inquiring, with an awareness of “culture as a sign macro-system” (*idem*). Therefore, we intend to address not only the embodied

and visual materiality of the choreographic works, but also to produce a theoretical hermeneutical and semiotic approach to the complexity of signs the work proposes.

Therefore, referring that Marlene's work troubles the Western theatrical stages can be related to Fred Moten's reflection on Black Studies in his recent book *Stolen life* (2018), the second volume in his land mark trilogy *consent not to be a single being* (2017-2018), since her work, elliptically also crosses paths with Moten's thinking on Blackness as performative figures of fugitivity, as an impetus that radically connects aesthetics and politics, since her dance works, as living entities and living forces, also dissolve some of the grounds on which we are used to stand. Hence, within such lines thought, we propose that Marlene's dance pieces also cause a rift "at the heart of the institution" of Western European contemporary dance, proposing a "walking through other worlds while passing through this one," choreographically "disordering" the established presuppositions from where her work "flows as wealth" (Moten, 2018: 51). For Moten, in his inaugural book *In the Break: The Aesthetics of Black Radical Tradition*, black performance as a critical and disruptive performance of the human as something "fugitive" (Moten, 2003), related to improvisation and to an ongoing refusal of standards imposed from elsewhere. Although Marlene is Cape Verdean creole, we propose nevertheless to relate her work to this notion of fugitivity, since her work also disrupts Western European theatrical dance standards and normative frameworks, where identities and essentialisms give room, instead, to hybrid and political figural fictions.

Part I

On Politics and Aesthetics of Western European Contemporary Dance

In the Dionysian state . . . the whole system of the emotions is aroused and intensified so that it discharges its every means of expression at one stroke, at the same time forcing out the power to represent, reproduce, transfigure, transform, every kind of mime and play-acting.

– Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*

Reflections on the Contemporary

We wonder if language is still able to do its work in order to understand contemporary global entanglements. It is symptomatic to our blockage in thinking current times when we need to add neologisms or modifiers to words to adapt their content to contemporary intricate forms of manifestation. We are referring, namely, to terms such as the *information era* or the *post-truth era*, or to what James Bridle has called the *new dark age* (Bridle, 2018), an age designed by *radical technologies* (Greenfield, 2017) that produce and reproduce (our) subjectivities, although having been unable, regardless promises otherwise, to prevent our life from becoming increasingly *precarious* (Butler, 2004). An age that places our bodies on the *pharmaco-biopolitical line* (Preciado, 2013), while *a global idea of race* (Ferreira da Silva, 2007) persists in prevailing ways through a settler colonialism and modern knowledge apparatuses. These have not only produced the racialized subject but have been perpetuating its subjection through old and new tools of racial knowledge and power structures.

In the art field, we have been trying to grasp how artistic practice finds its space and time in this planetary conundrum, through reflexions such as the *Postconceptual Condition* (Osborne, 2017), or *Duty free art in the Age of Planetary Civil War* (Steyerl, 2017); or how in the dance and choreographic field, choreographers and dancers are working on experimental and emancipatory collaborative modes of production, in an effort to counter what Bojan Manchev has called a "performing and pervasive capitalism" that "prostitutes life" (Manchev, 2013: 175). However, since capitalism has transformability as one of its contemporary traits, it seems to be able to appropriate all those experimental and artistic forms of labour and insert them into the production circuit (not only of commodities production, but mostly, of information and subjectivities production).

For the Cape Verdean dancer and choreographer Marlene Monteiro Freitas, dance, rather than language, is a deeper way to translate her relation with the world. By creating choreographic realms anchored in fiction and its unconscious, in impurity and intensity, her work opens rifts both in the stage and in the subject itself. With and through her dance work, Freitas does not wish to convey any rational messages, but forces and emotions that connect with each singular spectator through empathy[19] and incorporation. Hence, how to formulate

[19] There is an etymological relation between empathy and *pathos*. Empathy is the English translation of the Greek e*mpatheia* "passion, state of emotion," formed through the assimilation of en "in" with the Greek word *pathos* "suffering, feeling, emotion" (which has its Proto-Indian-European root in *kwent(h)* – "to suffer").

a thinking upon an artwork that wishes to escape rationality, logic and theatrical narrative and proposes, instead, dance as emotional intoxication, as a vertigo of unbounded imagination that at the end, still operates as a poignant mean for criticality?

In this dissertation we propose to unravel the politicality of Freitas' choreographic work by dissecting and critically expanding the artistic lines that cross all her work: openness, intensity and impurity. Hence, to argue that her work is political raises several questions: towards *what* is it political? And *how* does it perform its politicality? The "what" refers to the choreographer's historically and culturally situated contemporary. Although impossible to disentangle for its unique singularity, we will try, nevertheless, to approach from our perspective what could be the geo- and ontopolitics of contemporary times. In addition, the "how" refers to the choreographic work' singularities, its politics of gesture and of figures, and the forces and gazes that produced with and through the spectators, trouble the theatrical stage.

To this end, in Part I, we propose to elaborate on what can be some of the traits of our situated contemporary to reflect on how artistic practice may operate as a critical tool. Furthermore, we wish to focus on dance and theatre genealogical relation with politics in the so-called Western thought, to further extend our criticality with and through a decolonial, intersectional, performing arts and cultural studies approach to Marlene's work, while dissecting in the second part of this dissertation the key concepts of openness, impurity, and intensity. In addition, we wish to analyse some of the relevant developments of aesthetics, from its modern foundation, to some of its recent elaborations on the concept of force and energy as aesthetic experience (Menke, 2013; Huschka, Gronau, Eds., 2019), particularly, to approach Marlene's definition of her dance work as an event that results from the encounter of forces in a third space between the stage and the audience, where the choreographic forces clash and encounter those released by the public. How are these forces propelled with and through Marlene's dance work? How can we grasp or experience them, and where lies their politicality?

Before the above referred elaborations, and because approaching Freitas' choreographic worlds is to relate to theatrical scenes that are always open and never self-enclosed, that (dis)organize themselves through uncanny and contradictory dynamics, where the

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This term echoes the viewer aesthetic relation with an artwork is indissociable from their ability to relate emotionally with it. Hence, instead of rational comprehension or theatrical narratives, *empathy* and *pathos* play a decisive role in how Freitas' choreographies relate with the spectator.

relations between the visible and the invisible, cause and effect, perceiving and thinking — and from there, writing — can no longer be taken for granted as a unified discourse, we wish, firstly, to touch upon the *thing in itself* of language, of thinking, and of writing.

From Openness in Language to Hetero-Affection

In an entrenched reflection on language, the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben elaborates an illuminating exegesis on Plato's inquire into "the thing in itself of thinking?" (Agamben: 1999a, 27-9)—departing from the philosophic digression of Plato's *Seventh Letter*— to unveil the openness and incompleteness at the core of language, and the need for poetic (and artistic tasks). It recounts a dialogue between the seventy-five-year-old Plato and his friend Dion and refers to Plato's encounter with Dionysius, and how the philosopher wished to test Dionysius' knowledge of "the thing itself" and his "professed desire to become a philosopher" (28). Plato then begins by explaining how a thought can grasp its "thing", starting by elaborating on the five necessary steps by which one can acquired knowledge of a thing:

> Each being has three things which are necessary means by which knowledge of that being is acquired; the knowledge itself is a fourth thing; and as a fifth one must posit the thing in itself, [by] which is knowable and truly is. First of these comes the name [*onoma*]; second, the definition [*logos*]; third, the image [*eidōlon*]; fourth, the knowledge. (…) For if someone does not grasp the first four of each thing, he will never be able to participate perfectly in knowledge of the fifth. Moreover, the first four things express the quality [*ti poion ti*] of each being no less than its real essence, on account of the weakness of language [*dia to tōn logōn asthenes*]. This is why no man of intelligence will ever venture to entrust his thoughts to language, especially if the language is unalterable, like language written with letters (29-30).

Hence, the "thing itself" seems to have an essential place in language, as notes Agamben, but it is also seemingly paradoxical. The thing itself, "while in some way transcending language, is nevertheless possible only in language and by virtue of language: precisely the thing of language" (31). However, what is pertinent to highlight is Plato's reminder that this thing itself "is not sayable like other *mathēmata*," which means, like other disciplines, but it is not only unspeakable for that reason, but above all for ethical reasons, not logical ones. And here lies the heart of the matter that leads us to make this *détournement* of thought. Beyond the four terms upon which one can acquire knowledge of a thing—the name, a defining discourse, the image, and knowledge—related to modern linguistic theory of

signification, respectively, the name as the "signifier", the definition as the "signified" and the image being the "actual reference" (*idem*), it is the fifth element—the thing itself—that introduces some changes into the above referred theory of signification. Essentially, refers Agamben, "the thing itself is not simply the being in its obscurity, as an object presupposed by language and the epistemological process; rather, it is (…) that *by which* the object is known, *its own knowability and truth*" (32). It is not something presupposed by the logos and language, but rather "the very medium of its knowability, in the pure light of its self-manifestation and announcement to consciousness" (33). This rather messianic tone by Plato seems aporetic to all Western metaphysical discourse based on the traditional conception of Plato's ideas as the locus of truth and certainty. If there is a fragility in language, it is because language needs to be *pre-supposed* in advance on the face of the thing it wishes to signify (*idem*). Hence, this process of *pre-supposition* also objectifies, implying a decomposition of the thing itself into something one speaks about, with certain qualities that one determines. Hence, language process of objectifying signals a construction of a subject upon an object that only gets validated in the context, or tradition, that entails the possibility of this *pre-supposition*.

The weakness of language or logos, continues Agamben, consists therefore in the fact that it is unable of express this very knowability and sameness: "it must transform the knowability of beings that is at issue in it into a presupposition (as a hypo-thesis in the etymological sense of the word, as *that which is placed beneath*)" (*idem*). However, the thing itself is not something unsayable that should remain in the domain of the ineffable. It belongs to language, because such a non-linguistic thing can only be conceived in language, and through language. "The thing itself," Agamben argues, is not an object, a thing; "it is the very sayability, the very *openness* at issue in language, which in language we always presuppose and forget, because it is at the bottom its own oblivion and abandonment" (35, my emphasis).[20] Thus, this thing itself that is the *openness* at issue in language, is the locus of a potentiality that never gets fully constituted, but remains constituent as a radical *openness*, expressed also in the possibility of writing.

[20] This very act of pre-supposing that structures language, Agamben clarifies, is the very condition of tradition. We presuppose because these pre-suppositions were already passed on to us, and we continue to pass them on. Taking the double connotation of the term *tradition*, Agamben continues, it is poignant how it is "through language" that "we betray the thing itself", i.e., being the process by which "language can speak about something." And it is by this erasure of the "thing itself" that something as a tradition is possible (Agamben, 1999a: 35).

In a messianic tone, Agamben concludes that "the task of the coming philosophy" would then be "[t]o restore the thing itself to its place in language and, at the same time, to restore the difficulty of writing, the place of writing in the poetic task of composition" (38). Hence, there is a radical *openness*, first in language and, therefore, in knowledge itself, but above all in all poetical and artistic task. What we presuppose in Agamben's reading is that this *openness*, this *thing itself* language is uncapable of consigning, finds a more fertile terrain in the poetic and artistic task.

We could argue that a similar radical *openness* is present Marlene's choreographic work, which makes her work rationally ungraspable through language (even if, again, it is solely through language that we are able to process it). By deconstructing and complicating the presuppositions through which rationality and language operate, her work defies the structures of tradition that ground those same pre-suppositions. And the dissolution and deconstruction of these structures contributes to the politicality of her work, demanding an effort of rewriting and rethinking our own positionings to think and write on the *thing in itself* of her choreographic work.

Therefore, embracing the *openness* at issue both in language and in art, we wish to consider both writing and artistic praxis, in the path of Jacques Derrida (1930-2004)'s philosophical work, as an *ethos*, a form of relation to the singularity of the event, be it the event of *being* or the event as *happening*, in its radical iterability and readability. Language, in the Derridean sense, it is a place of a plurality of senses where there is no room for just one proper sense, but for impurity and undecidability. Moreover, if language is something we possess, it also possesses us. Language is organized by signs—which are composed by the relation of the signifier (the word itself) to the signified (the reference to which the signifier alludes)—whose signification depends not in the relation between reality and signs, but in the structure of difference that organizes the signs with each other.

Contrary to the Heideggerian quest for Being as one of the original words [*Ürworte*], as the signified of all signifiers, Derrida has no nostalgia for this lost presence or for *Ürworte* capable of restoring language's limiting logic of signification. Derrida sees in the traditional concept of the sign a heterogeneity, as Gayatri Spivak clarifies in her preface to Derrida's *Of Grammatology* (1997 [1967]): "the other of the signified is never contemporary, is at best a subtly discrepant inverse or parallel discrepant by the time of a breath—of the order of the

signifier" (Spivak, 1997: xvi). With Derrida's work we are reminded that there is no identity between the so-called components of sign, and that the structure of reference works because of their relationship of difference. Thus, "the sign marks the place of difference" (*idem*), recalls Spivak, and word, thing and thought never become one once and for all.

Writing has the ability of extending the field of locutory and gestural communication in space and time. In Derrida's essay *Signature Event Context*, published in *Limited Inc* (1988), an essay that focus on Husserl's phenomenology and Austin's speech act theory, the French thinker elaborates on the impossibility of defining a certain and saturated context, and its double implications: the "theoretical inadequacy of the current concept of context (linguistic or nonlinguistic), and "a displacement in the concept of writing" (Derrida, 1988: 3). Such are the nuclear traits of writing:

> A written sign is proffered in the absence of the receiver. How to style this absence? (…) [T]his distance, divergence, delay, this deferral [*différance*] must be capable of being carried to a certain absoluteness of absence if the structure of writing, assuming that writing exists, is to continue itself. It is that point that *différance* [difference and deferral] as writing could no longer (be) an (ontological) modification of presence. In order for my written communication to retain its function as writing, i.e., its readability, it must remain readable despite the absolute disappearance of any receiver, determined in general. (…) Such iterability (*iter*, again, probably becomes from *itara*, *other* in Sanskrit, and everything that follows can be read as the working out of the logic that ties repetition to alterity) structures the mark of writing itself, no matter what particular kind of writing is involved (whether pictographical, hieroglyphic, ideographic, phonetic, alphabetic, to cite the old categories) (Derrida, 1988: 7).

And Derrida adds that a writing that is not structurally readable, or iterable, beyond the presence of the receiver cannot be considered writing. A mark, or a code, to be iterable cannot be secret. Writing should then function in the radical absence of every receiver, but also of any sender or any producer. Writing can still be readable, or iterable, even if its author no longer answers for what s/he wrote. Furthermore, Derrida elaborates on the essential predicates in a minimal determination of the concept of writing,[21] and extends them beyond

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[21] These three predicates of the minimal determination of writing, according to Derrida, are the following: (1) a written sign is a mark that subsists and does not exhaust itself neither in the moment of writing nor in the moment of reading. It is marked by its iterability and readability independently of the subject who produced it; (2) this written sign carries with it a "breaking force [*force de rupture*]" (Derrida, 1988: 9) of its context, or "the collectivity of presences organizing the moment of its inscription" (*idem*). This force of rupture is also relevant semiotically, because of its capacity for iterability, "the written syntagma can always be detached from the chain in which it is inserted or given without causing it to lose (...) all possibility of 'communicating'" (*idem*). Finally, this force of rupture is also connected to "spacing [*espacement*]", the spacing to other elements in the chain of its context, but also a space, an espacement, in relation to "all forms of present reference, (...)

writing, not only to the spoken word, but also to what in the field of philosophy can be called experience. The structural possibility of the written mark of being disengaged or separated from communication and from its context makes the written as well or the oral mark "cut off from its putative 'production' or origin" (10). And Derrida, as referred, extends this to "all 'experience' in general", conceding "that there is no experience consisting of *pure* presence but only chains of differential marks" (*idem*).

Hence, following a tradition of critique since Nietzsche, and in some sense also through Heidegger's oeuvre, Derrida is one of these thinkers who developed, in his fruitful work, a long critique of Western metaphysics, considering it a monolithic and homogeneous philosophical tradition. In this sense, his *deconstructive* criticism ("deconstruction" is one of the most influential Derridean concepts) aimed, among other aspects, Platonism, a philosophical belief that existence is structured and hierarchically organized by oppositions (separate substances or forms). Deconstruction operates by a theoretical process of rereading and reversal of those Platonist dichotomies, such as, the "hierarchies between the invisible or the intelligible and the visible or the sensible;" between "essence and appearance," between "the soul and the body," "living memory and rote memory," between "good and evil," and "voice and writing" (Lawlor, 2019).

Returning to Derrida, no idea or reality is ever pure as in the Platonist way, one concept always contaminates and infects the other, and even the experience of the event—the event of living—also spans between singularity and repeatability, since it is for us impossible to trace the present in this minimal temporal-spatial gap where it is located, between the past and the future. The "I" or the subject is also an impure and contaminated term, in line with its condition of being her/himself at the same time as being other.

Some of these dichotomies and hierarchies are also unravelled and disorganized in Marlene Monteiro Freitas' choreographic work, as well as a radical deconstruction of the subject, as we will develop further ahead in the second part of this dissertation. Hence, to this line of thought belongs the paradox of conceiving that both language and the event have an internal relation between repeatability—or "iterability" as Derrida would name it—and an irreplaceable singularity. A radical heterogeneity—or as Freitas could say: a radical openness and impurity—characterizes both language and the event.

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objective or subjective" (9-10). "This spacing", according to Derrida, is not a negative or a lack, but "is the emergence of the mark" (10).

In addition, this theoretical perspective also has implications in thinking the temporality and spatiality of the event. This experience of the now, of the living event, is at the same time present in this now that is, simultaneously, passing away, or no longer present, and, on the other hand, coming to be, or not yet present. Therefore, "the present is always complicated by non-presence," in-between the rememorating past and the future of anticipation. Derrida calls this minimal repeatability in every experience "the trace," a kind of "proto-linguisticality," or "*arche*-writing," if one considers that "language in its most minimal determination consists in repeatable forms" (Lawlor, 2019) or signs.

"Trace," according to Gayatri Spivak, is one of the Derrida's master words, from the French containing the meanings of "track, footprint, imprint" (Spivak: 1997, xv). Beyond "arche-writing (*archi-écriture*)," trace can be substituted for "*différance*" (*idem*), among other Derridean terms. This relates, on the one hand, to the condition of undecidability of the present, but also to the fallacy of a fixed universal origin, and consequently, of a fixed end. With a strict sense for paradox and aporia, this argument has disturbed the traditional structure of transcendental philosophy that consists of a linear relation between foundational conditions, or an origin, and the empirical event as a derivative from these. Interested in the necessary and foundational conditions of experience, Derrida argues that the conditions of possibility of the event or, in other words, a so-called origin is never homogeneous and universal. This origin is an "origin-heterogeneous," thus, "nothing is ever given as such in certainty," and no knowledge, no truth, no perception, and no intuition can be given as such.

Moreover, for Derrida, every experience is always not on time, i.e., the time of the event is "*out of joint*." Furthermore, the space in relation to that event is not stable, it is a "spacing" (*espacement*), a space *out of place*. This radical critical gesture in the analysis of experience has wide-ranging implications, since it is also based on the experience of what Derrida calls "auto-affection," and here we can return to Novalis's reference of language as a monologue with oneself referred previously in order to understand Derrida's critique of it. The Derridean move was to show how "auto-affection" is, in fact, an "hetero-affection" (Lawlor, 2019). This critical point is of an extreme relevance to understand further ahead in this dissertation the radical otherness of Freitas' work in and as itself, manifested, namely, the dissolution of the boundaries between the human and the other, be it human and nonhuman otherness (animal or inanimate thingness), along with the profusion of hybrids that her choreographic work critically proposes.

In his later book *The Animal that Therefore I am* (2008 [2002]), Derrida elaborates further on auto-affection opening a radical relation to otherness as animality:

> (…) if the auto-position, the *automonstrative autotely* of the 'I,' even in the human, implies the 'I' to be an other that must welcome within itself some irreducible hetero-affection (…), then this autonomy of the 'I' can be neither pure nor rigorous; it would not be able to form the basis for a simple and linear differentiation of the human from the animal (Derrida, 2008: 95).

If auto-affection is, then, hetero-affection, because there is no autonomous "I" but a heterogeneous subject, then language cannot be a monologue, a thinking with oneself, as Novalis proposed. When the subject is thinking about her/himself, s/he is thinking of someone or something else at the same time. Therefore, the experience of the subject is the experience of (an)other, which shows, therefore, that an irreducible hetero-affection infects and contaminates auto-affection, contaminating further thinking, writing and all artistic practice.

In addition, for Derrida, there is a "spacing" in every auto-affection, be it auditory or visual auto-affection, respectively, when one hears-oneself-speaking, or when one looks oneself at the mirror. One cannot at the same time be a speaker and a hearer of oneself, so there must be "a hiatus that differentiates me from myself," a hiatus that can also be considered a "trace," "a minimal repeatability," and then this "fold of repetition is found in the very moment of hearing-myself-speak." Regarding to visual auto-affection, to look at oneself at the mirror also demands a spacing from it. One must be distanced from oneself in order "to be *both* seer *and* seen." Here again the "I" is doubled in heterogeneity in its experience with her/himself, and Derrida adds that all auto-affection, even the tactile one that seems more immediate, has this minimal and invisible spacing (Lawlor, 2019).

After this excursus on Agamben's reflexion on the *thing itself* of language — the *openness* in language as well as in artistic or poetic praxis—and on some of the Derridean deconstructive critiques of the Western metaphysical tradition—namely, an auto-affection that is always an hetero-affection that conditions the gesture of thought and writing of the event—the questions that follow are multiple: how to articulate through thinking and writing our hetero-affection with and through Marlene's choreographies? Considering that in Marlene's work the choreographer also tries to come to term (politically) with her own time, of which events and of whom are we—the choreographer, the performers and the spectators—contemporary? We propose that her choreographic work, being a conscious and unconscious response to her hetero-affection, responds through the production of forces, emotions, and

intensities in dance, that encounter and unleash indeterminate hetero-affections in each singular spectator. It is in this radical openness and heterogeneity of the event that her dance work takes place.

On a Possible Situated Contemporary

To inquire on the "contemporary", in his well-known essay "What is the Contemporary?" (Agamben, 2011: 10-19), Agamben brings into discussion Nietzsche's *Untimely Meditations* (2012b [1873]), in which the young philologist seeks to understand its epoch and criticizes its time by diagnosing in it "an illness, a disability," an epoch that is "proud of its historical culture," but where all were "consumed by the fever of history" (11). For Nietzsche, then, to relate to the contemporary means an *out-of-joint* positioning, a disconnection with regard to the present. In relation to this idea, Agamben gives his first definition of the contemporary:

> Those who are truly contemporary, who truly belong to their time, are those who neither perfectly coincide with it nor adjust themselves to its demands. They are thus in this sense irrelevant [*innatuale*]. But precisely through this disconnection and this anachronism, they are more capable than others of perceiving and grasping their own time (11).

In a concept not distanced from the spacing in time and space referred previously in relation to Derrida's concept of *différance*, Agamben resumes contemporariness as that singular relation to one's own time that "*adheres to it through a disjunction and an anachronism*" (11). On the contrary, those who are perfectly in synchronicity with their own time, they do not have the distance to grasp it. Further ahead, the philosopher unravels the relation between the poet and its own time, as the one who "must firmly lock his gaze onto the eyes of his century," the poet as the fracture that at the same time "impedes time from composing itself and the blood that must suture this break or wound" (12). He then proposes a second definition of the contemporary: "[t]he contemporary is he who firmly holds his gaze on his own time so as to perceive not its light but rather its darkness" (13), since all contemporary eras are obscure.[22]

[22] Being able to see the obscurity is not a form of inertial or a passive condition. On the other hand, using neurophysiologists explanations for our retina's functioning, Agamben clarifies how it is the functioning of the so-called *off-cells* that produce the experience of darkness. Thus, to see the darkness of one's contemporary implies an activity or the special ability to see beyond the lights of one's epoch, and to have a glimpse of its shadows and obscurity.

Moreover, to be contemporary is to stand on an irreducible fracture that does not take place only in chronological time. It demands an anachronic move to grasp that any action in the present has to be in relation to other times, be them past or future times. We may here draw a connection to Walter Benjamin's theory of the dialectical images, which acquire legibility only in a particular moment in history. To be contemporary demands, then, an effort to respond to the shadows of the now, but also to navigate with and through the images and texts of the past, features that we recognize in Marlene's work.

Furthermore, the contemporary is not only fractured, but it is also culturally, temporally, and bodily situated. Our speaking and writing will always be different from that of another; thus, any awareness of the global conditions tends to a fallacy. Certainly, Marlene Monteiro Freitas' "contemporary" will be her situated and singular one, however, we will dedicate some attention to a provisional view of the now, from our own singular situatedness.

Departing from the contemporary as a fracture in time and space, diverse thought-images come into mind. In the third volume of the *Capital* (1863-83), Karl Marx diagnosed several ruptures in the natural processes of renewal of the Earth's ecosystems—what he then called rifts on the planet's metabolism, or metabolic rifts[23]—caused by early industrial agriculture, the fossil fuel extractive capitalism, and the logic of accumulation that underlies the referred systems. These rifts, or fractures, were the anticipation of the increasing complex relation between capital and ecology, [24] which is at the backdrop of today's climate and planetary crisis.

Another metaphor is brought into consideration, "the thick darkness" we observe when we stare at the sky at night. According to astrophysics, this darkness results from the fact that the most remote galaxies move away from us (…) at a velocity greater than the speed of light" (14). Therefore, according to Agamben, to be a contemporary requires realizing that in the darkness of each epoch there exist a light that although directed toward us, infinitely moves away from us (15).

[23] The multi-platform *Prospections for Art, Education and Knowledge Production*, co-founded by Alexandra Balona and Sofia Lemos, borough from Karl Marx the expression "Metabolic Rifts" to name the homonymous assembly series that took place in Porto, from 2017-18. For more information, please consult http://www.prospectionsforaekp.org/assemblies/.

[24] Ecology is a rather recent term, coined in 1866 by the German zoologist Ernst Haeckel, who applied the term *oekologie* (from the Greek word *oikos*, meaning "household", "home" or "place to live") to the relation of the animal both to its organic as well as its inorganic environment. Ecology, also called bioecology, bionomics, or environmental biology, studies the relationships between organisms and their environment, thus, some of the most pressing contemporary human affairs—expanding populations, food scarcity, environmental pollution and global warming to plant and animal species extinction—all these are to a certain degree contemporary ecological problems, since the interrelationships of organisms with their environments and among each other are not only biological, but also sociological, economic and political relationalities. Ecology can also be considered a scientific discipline structured by the same way as early cybernetics, mapping multispecies beings and their environment, with algorithms composed by scales of components in relation to other components, a kind of governing organic machine.

The general theory of "the balance of nature," a dominant idea in Western philosophy dating from before Aristotle, states that *nature* (whatever this term may signify) has the power to correct itself in order to reach a desired balance. This myth, having been engrained in popular culture for millennia, impacts everything, from conservation management to climate change policy, and several scientists would like to see it unravelled and questioned by the general public.[25] Moreover, this idea of a self-regulatory nature has also been serving the interests of a corporative capitalism built on global industries that profit from products they know are toxic, while at the same time sustaining the market dependency on this toxicity through an insatiable consumption and, for its own functioning, global dependence on fossil fuel.

In order to counter nature's unbalance, evident in the current climate crisis, in the global warming, and what is already considered the sixth mass extinction of species in the planet, we witness the financialization of the environment through processes such as geoengineering,[26] carbon offsetting, climate forecasting and disaster control, aggravated by corporate and environmental deregulation in postcolonial territories showing how the rifts in the metabolism of the Earth are not disfranchised from historical matters of neo-colonialism, dispossess, and inequality.

Implicit in these strategies, as well as in the (anthropocentric) theory of the Anthropocene, are the convictions on a (Western, white, heteronormative, legal rights owner) human exceptionalism. Thus, most of these proposals come from the countries with the ability to implement them—countries that Paul Gilroy calls in his seminal book *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993) the "overdeveloped countries"—proposals that pressure the less developed countries with solutions to problems that were mostly caused by the most polluters countries.

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[25] In his book *The Balance of Nature: Ecology's Enduring Myth* (2009), John Kricher traces the history of the science of ecology and evolutionary biology, since the Greeks until contemporary thinkers in the age of Big Data, revealing how ecology's processes are always dynamic, within a permanent flux of change, defending an idea opposite to the myth of the balance of nature, and relying on empirical data to show how natural processes are not only ungraspable in its entirety, as well as they are naturally out-of-balance. Not only thinkers of science, but also journalists, political, economic and environment theorists have been dedicating some interest to this, namely, Elizabeth Kolbert's winner of the Pulitzer Prize book *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* (2014), and in the same year, the award-winning journalist Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate* (2014), among others. Thus, we can no longer rely on disastrous teleologic assumption that nature, or Earth, will re-balance itself independently of our agency.

[26] Most of these geoengineering proposals refer to direct interventions in the global ecosystems without a wider awareness of the long-term impact and side effects these options may cause in a more-than-human planet.

In the face of this escalated climate crisis, some collaborative collectives urge to stop reproducing the narrative of human exceptionalism to counter proposals dependent on extractive capitalism, as well as strategies of geo-engineering, or the so-called "clean" natural gas. Some of them, such as the *Institute of Queer Ecology*[27] try to reimagine queer and decolonial alliances and kinships in-between epistemologies, species, and worlds.

Additionally, a more literal reading of this first metaphor for the contemporary, the fracture in time and space, recalls the scientific analyses of the air trapped in polar ice, which, by showing the concentrations of carbon dioxide and methane, establish a liability between human actions and its historical time frame. In fact, two decades have passed since the publication atmospheric chemist and Nobel Prize-winner Paul Crutzen's and Eugene Stoermer's influential article,[28] announcing man has entered a different geological age called the Anthropocene, and that the past centuries of human action have been the major transformational force of the planet. If Crutzen and Stoermer localized the beginning of the Anthropocene in the eighteenth century due to the industrial revolution (although there is still no official scientific consensus), recent analyses from the polar ice indicate other historical junctures as significant markers of human action on the Earth's metabolism, such as the year of 1610 — coinciding with the clash between the "Old World" and the "New World", the effects felt by the modern European imperialist and colonial projects—, and 1945 — encompassing the first detonation of a nuclear weapon. This collision of the two worlds, what Kathryn Yusoff calls the "non event" (Yusoff, 2019: 1) undercovers a drastic geological fracture of corporeal and racialized violence. This "non event" situates a contact and time zone of geo-ontological relations that the Anthropocene does not verbalizes, although naturally presupposes, because modernity's technological, capitalist, and industrial bedrocks were driven by coloniality, the colonial matrix of power that Walter Mignolo called "the darker side of Western modernity" (Mignolo, 2011).

[27] In the mini-manifest series "Metamorphosis", by the Institute of Queer Ecology, a collaborative and decentralized group of artists, scientists and activists propose art pieces and exhibitions (in this case, the series "Metamorphosis" is available in https://dis.art/series/metamorphosis, accessed on August 17, 2020) where they explore queered and decolonized tools of ecology, and expose the fractures of our current fossil fuel capitalist world order. Through their works, they intend to reimagine queer and decolonial new connections between epistemologies, species, and worlds.

[28] Crutzen, Paul J., Stoermer, Eugene F. (2000), "The Anthropocene", in *Global Change Newsletter. The International Geosphere–Biosphere Programme (IGBP): A Study of Global Change of the International Council for Science* (ICSU). No. 41, p. 17-18.

If the Anthropocene attempts to refer to a geologic corporeality as a result of human agency on the planet, it continues to perpetuate a white Western linear narrative that fails to acknowledge the asymmetries of colonial possession of lands, subjects and resources, opposed and dependent on an indigenous and black dispossession. Kathryn Yusoff argues that this clash between the Old World framed by the European imperialism and the New World of coloniality reflects not an encounter but a violent exchange, caused by the forced eviction from land towards the Atlantic slave route from Africa to the plantations and mines of the "New World," together with the invasions, the killing, and the indirect violence of pathogens that decimated entire indigenous populations through rape and forced contact.

In addition, Boaventura Sousa Santos argues that the hegemonic power grounded on the European Imperialism and its current neo-colonial strategies can only be countered by the epistemological and social struggles of those groups who have been dispossessed and deprived of representing their own cosmologies and ontologies. Their knowledges resulting from anti-capitalist, anti-colonial and anti-patriarchal struggles constitute what Santos calls "Epistemologies of the South"[29] (Santos, 2019 [2014]: 57). Therefore, the necessary process of disentangling modern cognitive empire can only be engaged through "epistemic reconstitution", a term coined by Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano, known also for the development of the concept "coloniality of power" in the 1990s (Quijano, 2005). Unfortunately, we are all still in the realm of the matrix of coloniality, a matrix defined by the conjunction that connects modernity, coloniality and decoloniality. Therefore, a deep elaboration on this "darker side of Western modernity," according to Walter Mignolo (2011), will be developed in the second part of this dissertation, in the chapter *Openings that counter Western modern/colonial onto-epistemologies*.

This also relates to Agamben's second metaphor for contemporaneity - the shadows beyond the visible lights – since modernity has its hidden side in the power matrix of modernity/coloniality. Similarly, capitalism, the economic system that underlies this matrix also has its dark forms of indiscernibility. It is system that cannot be described once and for all because of it is permanent adaptability, with the mounting financialization of subjectivity,

[29] For detailed information on Santos' "Epistemologies of the South", please see De Sousa Santos, Boaventura (2014), *Epistemologies of the South. Justice Against Epistemicide*. London and NY: Routledge and De Sousa Santos, Boaventura (2018). *The End of the Cognitive Empire: The Coming of the Age of Epistemologies of the South*. Durham: Duke University Press.

commodification of human life in diverse forms of unfree or immaterial labour, towards an increased inequality and general precariousness of social life.

Thus, in the current fractured present of financial governance, climatic disarray, and under the effects of the juncture of modernity-coloniality, we wonder, in line with Mckenzie Wark's *Capitalism is Dead. Is this Something Worse?* (2019), if we still have propositions to add to the word "capital" in order to create neologisms—such as post-fordist, neoliberal, cognitive, immaterial, neocolonial, among others—to describe the current global complexity.

Going back to the long path of investigation on capitalism to clarify some of the referred designations, one of the Italian operaists, namely, Paolo Virno, proposes the concept of *post-fordist* capitalism[30] (Virno, 2004) referring to a system that mechanizes, reifies, and commodifies the spiritual, intellectual, and creative production. On a similar thread, the Italian philosopher Maurizio Lazzarato signals the paradoxes resulting from today's "ubiquity of entrepreneurial subjectivation, manifest in the drive to transform every individual into a business" (Lazzarato, 2014: 9). Hence, "for the majority of the population, to become an economic subject ('human capital,' 'entrepreneur of the self')" means no more than being compelled to manage life as precarity (*idem*). In addition, Yann Moulier Boutang's concept of *Cognitive Capitalism* (2012) was not limited to the technological labour sector but extended to a certain kind of knowledge-work, "where information systems shape living knowledge production to their form, and for the purpose of extracting more information" (Wark, 2017: 69). "In cognitive capitalism", refers Boutang, "we witness the emergence of the systematic exploitation of a third passion—or desire—as a factor of efficiency in human activity," the passion for learning and the challenge of knowledge, what he calls "the libido *sciendi*" (72).

For Mckenzie Wark, in today's society of information, if one is getting something for free, namely media content googling at the Internet, it is one's digital footprint, choices,

[30] Already back in the nineties, in Arjun Appadurai's article *Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy* (1990), in the context of the emerging global cultural economy, post-fordist capitalism was considered "disorganized", a complex situation that departs from "disjunctures between economy, culture and politics" (Appadurai, 1990: 296). In this sense, Appadurai proposed to shed light into these disjunctures by analysing the complex relations between "five dimensions of global cultural flow: (a) etnoscapes, (b) mediascapes, (c) technoscapes, (d) finanscapes and (e) ideoscapes" (*idem*). These diverse *scapes* are not objective, but deeply constructed and interdependent on numerous factors and agents, such as the political, social, linguistic, institutional. These *scapes* are irregular, not fixed nor stable, and they comprise the landscape of persons, of fluid technology, the virtual landscape of capital and finance, but also of all sort of media and mediators, as well as inherited master-narratives, conventions and ideological discourses.

wishes, and desires that are being sold to an invisible corporative buyer. Worse than that, there seems to be a whole new political economy based on asymmetric tools of surveillance and information at the service of technologies for power and control (Wark, 2019: 3), contributing to algorithms created and own by unknown corporations that storage information in order to predict future moves, most of these algorithms grounded on biased assumptions that perpetuate gender and racial inequalities.[31] We acknowledge, then, a pervasive permeation of technology and mediation in all spheres of life, making private and public spheres indistinct, contributing to a flow of images, people, commodities, information, and capital that contribute to an overall process of mobility and deterritorialization.

At the same time, settler colonial economic strategies guarantee the increasing outcomes of corporative capitalism. Legal instruments of representation are created, on the human level, to conceal violence premised on the subordination and exploitation of racial and gendered subjects, and on the material level, to maintain a politics of extraction of the planet natural resources guarantying the on goings of the engine of a systemic capitalism. In addition, neo-colonial and neoliberal processes outsource their resulting toxicity associated to industrial and consumer waste and their by-products to economically dispossessed communities, increasing the disruption of the ecosystems in the so-called Global South.

Since international cosmopolitanism, as Nikita Dhawan demonstrates, fails to address the processes behind local and global asymmetries, perpetuating the power relations between international actors as ethical "givers" and dispossessed communities as vulnerable and subjects in underdeveloped contexts, the current moment requires a global redistribution of intellectual labour, undoing the discontinuities that perpetuate neo-colonialism and its consequent subalternity.[32]

Furthermore, Boaventura de Sousa Santos signals how the universalizing project of the European Enlightenment was predicated on a single conception of knowledge and rationality, ruled not by the transmission of ideas, but by the urge of power sustained by the

[31] These technologies have made information increasingly affordable and available, and the present dominant ruling class, as Mackenzy Wark refers, no longer owns the means of production as in a normal capitalism system but owns and controls information (Wark, 2019: 5). Commodity nowadays does not appear as "world of things, but as a world of information on things", including information that is used to create algorithmic models enabling analyses of change patterns, futurability of those things and manipulation of future outcomes for the profit and benefit of those owning these "world of things" (15). In fact, Wark names the commodity of our times as a "vector, a potential fulfilled through the interface of our phone or tablet or computer" (*idem*).

[32] For a comprehensive analysis on the theme by Nikita Dhawan please see "Global Ethics and Neocolonialism" in Balona, Alexandra and Lemos, Sofia, eds. (2019), *Metabolic Rifts*, p. 23-33.

three interconnected power relations of colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy. To reverse the effects and the perpetuation of such forces, Santos proposes processes of "decolonizing knowledge as means to global cognitive justice."[33]

In addition, addressing now the shadowy world of the technosphere with its abstract language of binary code, we realize how technological acceleration and neoliberal models of abstraction introduce unprecedented forms of interaction between human and information, fragmenting the subject by catalysing coercive patterns of repetition and alienation in the service of economic growth. We witness the increasing autonomy of these digital information technologies and corporative infrastructures exerting governance power over state control, shaping one's perceptions, conditioning one's available choices, and redesigning one's experience of space and time.[34] Any hope of coping with the speed velocity of these bodies of knowledge, induce us into a cycle of obsolescence and upgrade, inhibiting our ability to meaningfully reframe and think about the future. In order to guarantee any hope of keeping our agency and exerting some capacity of control on the circumstances that surround us, we are urged by the effort of diving into this field of knowledge that was deliberately designed and programmed to be obscure and incomprehensible, what James Bridle as called *The New Dark Age* (Bridle, 2018).

Thus, referring to global neoliberal capitalism also means the pernicious capitalization of everything that lives, from seeds, to water, to affects and social relations, to individual performances, creativity, subjectivity, experiences, where one includes, artistic production, and within it, performance art, dance, theatre or performing arts in general.

Thus, these dark shadows of our contemporary era remind us, as Agamben observes, not only the light of the galaxies that travelling away from us never reach us, but also several other shadows that not only overshadow our understanding of the now, as they fragment our conditions of possibilities.

[33] For extended information on Sousa Santos's proposal of cognitive justice and epistemic disobedience, please see de Sousa Santos, Boaventura, "Stay Baroque" in Balona, Alexandra and Lemos, Sofia, eds. (2019), *Metabolic Rifts*, p. 49-58.

[34] In more-than-human global ecologies, all rhythms, flows and processes are captured and registered by the Big data, Adam Greenfield notes, through radical technologies — "the smart phone and the internet of things"; "augmented and virtual reality"; "3D printing and other technologies of digital fabrication;" "cryptocurrency and the blockchain;" and the "algorithms, machine learning, automation and artificial intelligence" (Greenfield, 2017:8)— implicated in shaping our everyday life.

The Politicality of Contemporary Dance

To address the politicality of Marlene Monteiro Freitas' dance work, firstly, we wish to briefly outline the framework of recent theoretical developments in the Western context on the relation between art and politics, as an introduction for the more specific relation between performing arts and politics. Secondly, considering the entanglement between art, politics, and the field of the aesthetics, we will further ahead reflect on some of the traits of the aesthetic experience in the field of dance. For that, we will start by contextualizing the emergence of aesthetics in the context of modern thought with its ideological underpinnings, to focus on the notion of aesthetics not as a transcendental concept but as an aesthetic experience grounded in the relation between the event and a situated "becoming" subject. Finally, we will address the notion of "force as an aesthetic intervention,"[35] a relevant pratical and theoretical framework if we consider that Marlene recurrently refers that her dance work happens as the encounter of forces.

Art and Politics

The attempts at defining the fields of art and politics, and the relations that can be put in place among them, have a long and vexed path. One may consider each field separately: politics related, for example, to the exercise of power and its legitimation, and art, when defined in modernist or postmodernist terms, related to an aesthetic experience that has gradually surpassed the imperatives of mimetic artistic representation. However, we propose to address both art and politics as human activities with the capacity of suspending the rules that govern individual and collective normal experiences; activities that open space and time for other political and aesthetic configurations, proposing disrupting rifts in the metabolism that governs ordinarily human situations. e

Jacques Rancière's general thesis of art and politics as forms of *dissensus* proposes that each one of these activities, in its singularity, effects a redistribution of the sensible, involving innovation leaps that dislocate bodies from their "normal" political and social assigned places, and that open spatio-temporal conditions for free speech and expression

[35] For a detailed reflection on force and energy as aesthetic interventions in performing arts, please see Huschka, Sabine; Gronau, Barbara, eds. (2019), *Energy and Forces as Aesthetic Interventions. Politics of Bodily Scenarios.* Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.

beyond all reduction to functionality and representation. This disruption, according to Rancière, is not simply a reordering of the social and the political positions in the power relation's infrastructure, nor an institutional destitution and reconstitution. To think of art and politics as *dissensus*, refers Rancière, means to consider each one as an "activity that cuts across forms of cultural and identity belonging and hierarchies between discourses and genres, working to introduce new subjects and heterogeneous objects in the field of perception" (Rancière, 2010: 2). The relation between these activities is not questionable, according to Rancière, as they both imply "reorienting general perceptual space and disrupting forms of belonging", thus, according to the French philosopher, it can be said that politics is inherently aesthetical, and aesthetics is intrinsically political (*idem*).

Moreover, to understand Rancière's elaboration of *dissensus*, one should account first for his concept of consensus that, according to the philosopher, is defined by "the idea of the proper" (5).[36] Underlying every hierarchy is the distribution of the proper and the improper, as Rancière refers: "it is the very idea of difference between the proper and the improper that serves to separate out the political from the social, art from culture, culture from commerce" (*idem*), conditioning the distribution of one's proper place, one's right of speech and function in any collective sphere. It conditions, the author notes, ways of doing, what the Greek called *poiesis*, and its own consequent horizon of affects, or *aisthesis*. On the opposite, *dissensus* implies the possibility of a certain "*impropriety*" that disrupts identity categories and "reveals the gap between *poiesis* and *aesthesis*" in practices that are both "materialist and anti-essentialist" (*idem*). This aspect is crucial in relation to Marlene's choreographies, namely, to her figural work which stages figures that disrupt the subject's autonomy and notions of identity and belonging, exploring its radical heterogeneity.

Refusing both ideas that everything can be political, or of art becoming life, Rancière reiterates that politics and art only result in the effects of equality that they stage, when these activities are able to blur the boundaries between what is considered the sphere of the political and the proper of the social (in case of politics); and of blurring the frontiers between

[36] Consensus, then, presupposes a relational "identity between sense and sense, between a fact and its interpretation, between speech and its account, (…) etc.". On the political level, the logic of consensus can be effected in the contemporary managerial state, which is translated, on the one hand, in "reducing the people as political subject to the notion of population, a sociological category decomposable in its constituent empirical categories", and on the other hand, in the "transformation of politics as an affair of professional politicians and their experts in government" (Rancière, 2010b: 5).

the prevailing categories governing perception and the distribution of the sensible (in the case of artistic practices). What can also be highlighted in Rancière's theoretical enterprise is how these egalitarian effects of the political and of art can infiltrate his philosophical corpus, and contingently, "level out discursive hierarchies by effecting an *egalitarian* disruption of the prevailing categories governing perception and action" (4).

Politics and art as *dissensus* appear, thus, as activities that based on a logic of equality reveal the arbitrariness of the distribution of social, political, and aesthetic categories, *opening* new alleys for political participation and artistic practice.

Marlene Monteiro Freitas' dance worlds also work on to disrupt political, ontological, and epistemic predefined categories and consolidated hierarchies. Dissensus, in her work, becomes visible in the blurring of boundaries her figures perform on stage, revealing an invisible equality subtending not only human social distinction, but also, and through a disruptive work of figural instability, the invisible equality among racialized, gendered subjects and multi-species beings. The invisibility of those who were before unimaginable come to the fore as staged figures of potentiality, thus enacting a different *sharing* of the sensible, as we will reflect in the second and third part of this dissertation.

According to Agamben, art is not a human activity in the realm of aesthetics, but it is inherently political because "it is an operation which contemplates and renders non-operational man's senses and usual actions, thus opening them to possible uses" (Agamben: 2008, 136-137). This renders art closer to politics and to philosophy, since it can be seen as an action without an end, a means without end, particularly evident in dance that uses the performing body as its materiality. Following Agamben, art as well as politics and philosophy, by "rendering biological and economic operations inactive, (…) show of what the human body is capable", thus "they open the body to new possible uses" (137).

Thus, Rancière's thesis of the new aesthetic regime of the arts—as that which promotes different partitions of the sensible (the visible, the invisible, the audible and the sayable), and in that sense, renders possible new modes of enunciation—has some touching points with Agamben's thought of art as a mean without end that opens new possible uses of the medium itself. This new aesthetic regime of the arts proposed by Rancière highlights the aesthetic as experience, in detriment of the mere aesthetic judgment as elaborated in the foundational grounds of modern aesthetics.

Dance and Politics

Both Rancière's and Agamben's propositions seem to follow a similar line of thought we encounter in Hannah Arendt's seminal book *The Human Condition* (1998 [1958]), where the German philosopher proposes to deconstruct the concept of politics inherent in the history of Western thought since Plato. Arendt defends that politics should be seen as action, but developed by a plurality of human beings, thus, subjected to each one singular and different potentiality to act. Moreover, Arendt has distinguished action as politics from the other human activities, such as labour and work (Arendt, 1998 [1958]: 17).[37]

In addition, this singular potentiality for politics, according to Arendt, inherent in the plurality of every human being, finds its expression in human action that exhausts its full meaning in the performance itself. What assumes relevance, claims Arendt, "are the living deeds and the spoken words", the performance itself, and "neither its motivation nor its achievement" (395). Relevant for Arendt, is this notion of politics as a human action that exhausts its potential in its performance, as a means without end, since the end, or *telos*, exhausts itself in the performance/action full actuality.[38] Arendt conception of politics seems, then, closer to those of the ephemeral and performing arts, in the sense that the "performance" (be it of dance, theatre, or of the political) is the work itself.

Arendt, thus, singled out this relation between politics and the performing arts in the following passage:

> It is like a feeble echo of the prephilosophical Greek experience of action and speech as sheer actuality to read time and again in political philosophy since Democritus and Plato that politics is a *technē*, belongs among the arts, and can be likened to such activities as healing or navigation, where, as in the performance of the dancer or play-actor, the "product" is identical with the performing act itself (397).

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[37] For Arendt, to conceive politics as making or produce something, in the sense of what Marx called craftmanship, was a misconception of politics inherited since Plato. Arendt claims that Marx envisioned man as a species being, part of a collective, and history in terms of production and consumption, that according to her, it was placing the concept closer to the logic of labour as animal life (Arendt, 1998 [1958]: 17).

[38] Her reflection also brings to light Aristotle's concept of *energeia*, the Greek word for "actuality", with which, claims Arendt, "he designated all activities that do not pursue an end, that leave no work behind, but exhaust their full meaning", as referred above, "in the performance itself" (Arendt, 1998 [1958]: 396). In his political philosophy, Arendt observes, Aristotle conceptualizes politics as "the work of man qua man", defining this work "as to live well" (*idem*), meaning that from this work there is no end product, but exists in its singular actuality.

Curiously, refers Arendt, we realize how action and speech, considered before the highest activities in the political realm, seem to have lost some relevance in the context of modern society. Activities such as healing, flute playing, play-acting were considered of a higher status in ancient Greece. According to Arendt, after Adam Smith classification of such activities that depend solely on their performance as "the lowest and most unproductive labour," there was a progressive degradation of action and speech in modern era (397-8).

What positions performing arts, namely dance, in a privileged relation with politics is not only the fact that the full meaning of dance exhausts itself in its performance, but also that both politics and dance have the body and its relation within space and time as the locus of their materiality. Several dance scholars have elaborated on this relation between dance and politics, namely, Mark Franko, Randy Martin, Susan Leigh Foster, Gabriele Brandstetter, Gabriele Klein, Gerald Siegmund, André Lepecki, among others. Dance, then, shares some traits with political in the sense that it can reflect not only upon the social and political context of its emergence, it can embody it in the ephemerality of its gestures, and its means of production have not only been reflected upon, but acted as the performance itself.[39] In fact, according to Randy Martin, the relation between dance and political theory could be considered more than metaphorical, since when dance is performed, it "makes available, reflexively, the means through which mobilization is accomplished" (Martin, 1998: 6).

Moreover, other authors, such as Andrew Hewitt redefined the concept of choreography (instead of dance in general) as a mean of reflecting and theorizing the social order, and thus, establishing a relation between the dance piece and the political. For Hewitt, choreography is a discursive realm *par excellence* not only to reflect upon social order, but also for "articulating and working out the shifting, moving relation of aesthetics to politics" (Hewitt, 2005: 11). Thus, the relation between dance and politics, according to Hewitt, should not be seen metaphorically, as an image or allegory upon which the spectator can derive political reflections. Rather, choreography is the privileged realm where bodies placed in relation to each other can be disposed and mobilized, interweaving a constellation of social, racial, gender, bodily, somatic, aesthetic, and economic issues where "choreography is the very matter (…) of politics" (Lepecki, 2013: 155).

[39] We are referring to recent tendencies for collaborative and processual choreographies that expose the working process and its experimentation, not being completely immune to the neoliberal context that explores and capitalizes upon the artists' strategies of reinvention and experimentation.

In fact, we have witnessed that the choreographic has been expanding beyond the realm of the aesthetic towards other concerns, related to the social, the political, and the economic, focusing also on the artist's labour conditions.

How can dance and choreography propose, then, new configurations of the political? If the political, taking Rancière's notion of the new aesthetic regime, happens to reconfigure the sensible through arenas of dissensus, how can dance and choreography propose these dissensual spaces that open time and place for other potentialities to be tested, to be rendered actual in the on-goings of performativity?

There exists no pure politics, refers the performing arts scholar Bojana Kunst, but politics revolving in a relationality of the possibilities of space and time, a permanent sensual distribution of the sayable, the audible, the perceptual, in a continuous negotiation and articulation between and through singular subjects, which are never stable once and for all.
Thus, politics allows for no homogeneous and universal concept, but for an antagonistic place of the common and for catalysing processes of subjectivation. Art and dance, as processes that open the sensory and the aesthetic to "ways yet to come," refers Kunst, can have a transformational impact on the "intensity of co-being, and the existing paths of subjectivation" (Kunst, 2013: 169). Thus, "the political subjectivation that can take place in a performance," or in choreography, "gives rise to a certain new multitude that calls for a different kind of enumeration" (*idem*). It is neither a homogeneous multitude, but a subjectivation that is also a "dis-identification, a painful and paradoxical process of being torn out of the place of usual political order" (*idem*).

Moreover, we cannot think of the relation between dance and politics without bringing into discussion its contemporary modes and conditions of production, so kin to contemporary capitalism. As we have already discussed, creative, cognitive, and immaterial labour constitute a privileged arena for capitalist perverse exploitation and blurring of the boundaries between the private and the public, work, and life. The relation between dance and politics as dissensus, refers Kunst, becomes more evident in the different and inventive modes of working, be they collaborative or experimental, even if we realize that these alternative modes of production are quickly absorbed into the vortex of capitalist commodification of all that is experimental. Even though, according to Kunst, "the relation between dance and politics is the result of the continuous care for enabling different ways of working and living around the possibilities of space and time" (170).

Philosopher and dance scholar Bojan Manchev expresses similar concerns. According to him, dance can be seen, on the one hand, as a field of experimentation where unforeseen possibilities can be continuously tested, namely, new modes of life, processes of subjectivation, new ways of doing that contradict normative modes of mobilization of bodies in space and time. However, on the other hand, it can also be one of those privileged fields that can fall into the trap of becoming what Manchev calls "performance capitalism" (Manchev, 2013: 173), dealing with the challenges of a "new biocapitalism" that progressively commodifies forms of life, normalizes processes of subjectivation, and creative modes of experimentation (174), thus, a "perverse capitalism" that reifies life (175).

To unravel this dialectic, Manchev positions "contemporary dance as a field of exemplary aesthetic struggle," that is also a "struggle for the possibility of the event of freedom" (173). To develop a critical thought on this matter, Manchev recurs to Foucault's late writings, when he proposes instead of an analytical philosophy, a critical thinking that would take the form of an ontology of ourselves, an ontology of actuality. This ontology of actuality, according to Manchev, does not intend to be another metaphysical category, but a set of critical tools and critical practices in order to face and operate within the complex political tissue of the real, and to answer the demands of what he calls today's "crisis of aesthesis," "the sensitive becoming-world of the world" (*idem*).[40]

In fact, for some decades already, the social, economic, and political spheres and conditions of action within have become more and more blurred. Flexible and cognitive modes of production blur the boundaries between the private and the public, labour and leisure; a creative and cognitive capitalism quickly appropriates the ability for inventiveness and transformation and inscribes it into the circuit of production (not only of products but especially

[40] In the 60s and 70s of past century, the emergence of performance art and post-modern dance engaged in a critical practice of countering rigid social and political models of representing bodies and subjects, through technologies influenced also by post-fordist modes of production, strategies of collaboration and improvisation, looking for experiences of freedom of movement, of the body, of subjectivities, beyond the constrains of the commodification of art and culture.
After the collapse of the Soviet bloc, an emerging global capitalism becomes the dominant political economy, guided by a rapid and permanent transformation of modes of production, dominated by technologies of representation, technologies of production of subjectivities, appropriating the potential for transformation of human beings, a potential that makes the multiplicity of modes of life possible.
In the 1990s, some conceptual tendencies in contemporary Western European dance tried to respond to the emerging conditions, with tools and strategies that could bring to the fore and unsettle the prevailing techniques of representation and of the production of subjectivities. "Thus, contemporary dance", refers Manchev, "was trying to make again possible the experimentation with the (technical) modes of life, and in that way to re-appropriate its driving force" (Manchev, 2013: 174).

of subjectivities); information is the new commodity, as we referred, while impermanence, virtuality, and the inability to fully cope with the radical technologies that design our lives contribute to the opacity of our era.

Following this line, in his book *Relational Aesthetics* (1998), Nicholas Bourriaud proposed artistic practices that promoted flexibility and fluidity of boundaries between art and life, experimentation with relationality among artists and viewers-becoming-participants. Hence, he was acknowledging art practices that responded to the drives of a creative capitalism. Similarly, performance art and contemporary dance may encounter the same danger of seeing their critical potential weakened in that context Manchev called "performing capitalism" (175), a biocapitalism that commodifies all forms and modes of life, even the most pioneer and experimental (artistic) ones.

Besides aesthetics as a transcendental principle, there is also an "emerging an-aesthetics," proposes Manchev, an "*aisthesis* (…) of matter" (*idem*). This "*aisthesis* of matter" has singular contemporary modes, observes Manchev, that operate by "reopening and re-mobilizing the transformative power of the artistic and conceptual praxis," not in order to transform the world, but recognizing today capitalist's hegemonic instruments of submitting all transformability into economy growth and subvert them by "transforming its transformation," or by "transforming the conditions in which the [critical] question is formulated." This would certainly be a challenge, because a pessimist response to this proposition would be that all transformation is, inherently, assimilated and commodified by capitalism. Bojan Manchev concluding proposal is the following:

> (…) in the era of neoliberal cult of performance, which reduces sensible matter to exploitable resource or to a matter of production — production of forms of life as commodity — performance and dance could only matter as an affirmative counter-act, *reopening* the potential of sensible matter, disorganising commodified bodies, transforming the standardises modes of production of subjectivity, inventing new emancipatory tools, new techniques and forms of life, giving new flesh of emotions — rage, true pleasure or irreducible joy. Their only sovereign should be the irreducible drive for freedom (*idem*, my emphasis).

Similarly, we also propose that Marlene Monteiro Freitas' dance work operates a radical *reopening*, by subverting not particularly capitalism hegemonic tools of commodification and appropriation, but through forces and intensities grounded in fiction, unbounded imagination excess and freedom, that subvert some of Western modern hegemonic

postulates.[41] In the second part of this dissertation, we will contextualize the critiques of these modern onto-epistemological discourses, and in the third part, how these *openings* as criticality come to the fore in Marlene's choreographic work.

Theatricality and Politics

Besides performance art and contemporary dance, theatre is another privileged arena to debate the relation between performing arts and the political. Since Marlene's dance work happens in the context of theatrical apparatus, we will briefly elaborate on some the relation between some theatrical traits and politics, along its conceptual and historical path in the so-called Western thought.

According to Antonin Artaud, in the preface of *The Theater and Culture* (Artaud, 1958: 9), theatre was created as a place to outburst our repressions. To an aesthetic disinterested idea of art, according to Artaud, other cultures, "oppose a violently egoistic and magical, i.e., *interested* idea" (11). Thus, while "true culture operates by exaltation and force," our European ideal of art attempts to place the mind in an attitude not of force, but of laziness, addicted to the exaltation of the spectator's aesthetic judgment (12). Some natural elements, such as the *Quetzalcoatl* Serpent's harmonious movements, or even statues of gods lying silently in museums, refers Artaud, seem to have an underlying force. In the case of the serpent, its movements take on magical connotations, and the statues, when carved properly, acquire forces that seem to endow them with life. Thus, this energy or force beyond the work of art, or the work of nature, may be related to what Artaud calls the shadow cast by any effigy, and which is nothing more than its double. Moreover, art fails from the moment "the sculptor believes he has liberated the kind of shadow whose very existence will destroy his repose" (*idem*). What seems very poignant in this sentence, we believe, is the fact that it is this double, or art's shadow, that modern aesthetics wished to neutralize through a rationalized and disinterested idea of art, in order to control its dangers.

"True theater," according to Artaud, also "has its own shadows," of all the arts it is the only one left whose shadows not only have never tolerated limitations, as they "have

[41] Marlene's work has been widely recognized, especially since she was awarded the Silver Lion by Venice Biennale, in 2018. Thus, this award has confirmed the relevance of her work internationally and she was invited by two Dance Companies to choreograph for them (Batcheva Dance Company in 2018, and Münchner Kammerspiele in 2019).

shattered their own limitations" (*idem*). These shadows, Artaud refers, can also be equated with the fractures that destabilize, on the one hand, the principles of autonomy and identity, be them of the subject or of the relation between words and things. On the other hand, these shadows can also be understood as the other side of rationality, of certainty, of the theory's abstractionism imposed onto reality on the path of the Cartesian modern subject.

However, since theater deals with living beings and things that move, it cannot prevent to control and get rid of all its shadows. The actor does not say the same word equally and does not make the same gesture twice. The actor moves and surpasses the fixed form, representation, hence, Artaud highlights, the actor "rejoins that which outlives forms and produces their continuation" (*idem*). Besides directing its own shadows, both for theater as for culture, it is a question of redirecting naming and not fixating itself in one language. Thus, the theater being "not confined to a fixed language and form," not only "destroys false shadows but prepares the way for a new generation of shadows, around which assembles the true spectacle of life" (*idem*).

We cannot fail to relate this Artaudian reflection with another type of shadows also associated with a certain type of theatrical staging, a foundational setting for the so-called Western thought, as Samuel Weber has unveiled in his thought-provoking *Theatricality as Medium* (2004).[42] According to Weber's investigation on theatricality in Western history of thought, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, as a response to the exhaustion of a theoretical tradition based on a "certain notion of identity, reflexivity and subjectivity," *theatre* and *theatricality* were being articulated in the thoughts of thinkers such as Kierkegaard, or Nietzsche, followed in the twentieth century by, namely, Artaud, Brecht, Freud, Barthes, Bataille, Deleuze or Derrida. These authors were reacting to the meaning of theatre and theatricality, concepts that have a long history dating back to Plato and Aristotle, when considering Western history of theatre (2).

Following Weber's reading of Plato's parable of the cave, the Platonic condemnation of all forms of mimetic representation, namely, theater and poetry, were conditioning factors for Western historical genealogy of the concept of theater and its relationship with politics.[43]

[42] For an illuminating reflection on the relations between theater, philosophy, and ethics, please see Weber, Samuel (2004), *Theatricality as Medium*. New York: Fordham University Press.

[43] According to Weber, the famous scene of the cave in Plato's *Republic* is a theatrical scene in its own way: a place or a setting as a parable to illustrate the limited existence of those who are not illuminated by a philosophical perspective. The scene pictures men dwelling in a subterranean cavern, mainly as spectators of a very specific kind since they are fixed in a place and do not move. They are in a way prisoner, Weber notes,

We have always associated theater with the immediacy and ephemerality of the event, and the real presence of performers and spectators. In addition, the word *theater* has the same etymology of the word *theory*, "the Greek work *thea*, signifying a place from which to observe and to see" (Weber, 2004: 3). The privilege granted to this place from which one can see contains a certain ambivalence: between the fascination before other staged realities, and the terror and anxiety this fascination can provoke. Some of the disquiet theatre was blamed to cause was, namely, the loss of the notion of real, of a sense and place of presence, and the doubt about the subject's integrity and self-referentiality, be it the performer or the spectator. In fact, among all mimetic practices, theater and theatrocracy were signaled by Plato as dangerous, because they could cause not only the disruption of the polis but also of the political, through the expansion of theatrical practices beyond its entitled places of action, and through the spell they could release on the individual and the collective.

In fact, in Western tradition, a strong desire for self-identity has, since Plato's parable of the cavern and its interpreters, been rendering theatre and theatricality suspicious, as condemnable practices where the autonomous subject can no longer guarantee a place from where to see, hear and take control of his/her experience of truth and reality.

For Plato, the alternative to theatre "is the ascent into the open and natural light of the sun" (8), the world not of mere appearances but of the ideas illuminated by a light that requires neither a defined place nor a theatrical frame, "leaving behind the cavernous nightmare of theatre in which enslavement appears as freedom" (*idem*). Strangely, Weber observes, it is this desire to know more that seems to be contradictory to the maintenance of communities, of the polis, for which its members should "remain the *same*, to survive in the *same place* (…) to *see* the same, even while seeing others" (*idem*). Hence, this desire to remain the same may have the tendentious consequence of confounding the theatrical staging with reality, and this supposed "reality" with self-identity.[44]

"although unaware of their imprisonment" and it is this fact that makes this such a modern, or contemporary scene, prisoners of a medium without being conscious of it, their point of view is absolutely conditioned by their (forced) immobility (Weber, 2004: 5).

[44] According to Weber, if Plato defends exchanging the cave, with its fake appearances and shadows, for the dazzling direct sunlight, which would correspond to the realm of ideas and true reality, Socrates condemnation, being someone who defied habits and traditions, could be a reminder that the challenge for change also has its own consequences. Hence, the desire to see shadows as though they were real things and to see the scenario as though it would be a world, may be related to what these cave spectators seem to embody: the desire to remain the same and to survive in the same place. Socrates seems to suggest, notes Weber, that the formation and maintenance of communities and polities may depend on this desire, with the consequence of confounding "reality with self-identity and thereby to misconstrue the relationality of one's own place and position in a world" that cannot simply be apprehended by those who inhabit it (Weber, 2004: 8).

In the so-called Western thought, observes Weber, theatre is not only a place of "dissimulation and delusion but, worse, self-dissimulation and self-delusion", an ambivalent place of "fixity and unfreedom, but also of fascination and desire" (8). Hence, theatre is that "which challenges the 'self' of self-presence and self-identity, by reduplicating it in a seductive movement that never comes full circle" (*idem*).

In this challenge, if one considers theatre a departure from a secure self-enclosure of the subject, namely, the spectator, in the perspective of his/her self-identity and self-presence, Weber refers, theatre "marks the spot where the spot reveals itself to be an ineradicable macula, a stigma or stain that cannot be cleansed or otherwise rendered transparent, diaphanous. (…) This irreducible opacity defines the quality of theatre as *medium*" (6-7). Hence, the condemnation of the theatre, as referred, is indissociable from Plato's condemnation of all mimetic practices. These theatrical events that "never take place once and for all, but are ongoing," Weber notes, they also "pass away", never being the repetition of the same, but attesting to their theatrical singularity, the singularity that "haunts and taunts Western dream of self-identity" (7). Thus, this power of theatricality that, according to Weber, can be called theatrocracy is twofold. It happens within the theatrical apparatus, influencing the spectators' perception and behaviour but also outside it, as Weber refers: the "*theatron* exits its spatial limits disturbing the boundaries of propriety and restraint (…) remaining difficult to control or even to identity" (37). In a theatrical happening, the place's stability as well as the subject's identity are disturbed, confirming Plato's fears regarding the mimetic practices. Imitation, or mimesis, places the possibility of being more than one while remaining oneself. Annihilating the self-identity of the same and the stability of values, Weber refers, it implements "'in each individual soul' a propensity that leads to confuse phantoms with reality and to 'call the same thing now one, now the other'" (38).

According to Nietzsche, the theatre is no longer a stable place where bodies move around, observes Weber, but "the theatrical site itself splits and stretches, twists and turns into a space of alteration and oscillation, of *Verwandlung*," i.e., of "metamorphosis and trial at once, involving both change of place and change of identity" (40-41). Two of the principles of self-identity and self-presence—constancy and containment—are out of place, or displaced, thus, not only the "site does not contain the body," as the body is not any longer framed or "*informed*" by the soul (41). Similarly, in her artistic practice, Marlene refers,

what most interests her is the ability to be *another* while at the same time remaining the same, recognizing and embodying this split subject within and as itself.

If the subject, according to Nietzsche, "gives itself up to this movement of *Verwandlung* both by entering into alien bodies and souls and at the same time by seeing itself splitting apart in the process"—a movement so kin to Marlene's choreographic methodology—this recurrent movement that is never the repetition of the same opens a gap where the oppositions (of life and death, but also of other kinds) are altered. What results from this instability of place where the individual stands, and from its *Verwandlung* capacity, is not the plurality of beings, Weber concludes, but the "fracturing of the individual as such" (41). Organized in parts, the theatrical collective, where we include both performers and spectators, is marked by certain disunity, not only of the performers but also of spectators and of the site itself. A splitting site lacks a proper place and a proper body, and performers and spectators are not individual, but cast in this game of "dividuality" that renders them both between real and unreal, life and death, spectator, and performer, at the same time seeing themselves taking part and entering other bodies and souls, even if temporarily, but witnessing this spectral split within themselves (42). In the spectral split theatrical place, neither real nor entirely fake, the "self-abandonment of the individual" does not result in another individual, as describes Nietzsche, but a "spectacle that offers itself to sight while at the same time eluding any purely perceptual grasp" (*idem*). That is why, recalls Weber, Nietzsche does not refer to the emergence of a new figure from this splitting, but the crossing of barriers of an individual that sees itself as though it has entered into a foreign body and character" (*idem*).

This will be a recurrent topic of this dissertation, not the emergence of a new figure from a separation between the individual and the Other, but the notion of a subject, both the performer and the spectator, that is inherently split within itself. This implies a notion of subjectivity, on the tracks of Foucault's "technologies of the self" (Foucault, 1988) as a process of subjectivation of an always *becoming-subject*. Furthermore, it can also relate to Esposito notion of personhood developed in his book *Third Person: Politics of Life and Philosophy of the Impersonal* (2012), as an ongoing processual construction never stable and enclosed once and for all, but a transindividual and processual interrelatedness in the human itself and with its non-human context. Related to this notion of a plural and unstable subject lies Marlene's figural work, a political gesture of a radical opening of the subject.

Aesthetics of Contemporary Dance

From Aesthetics Autonomy to Aesthetics Experience

According to Terry Eagleton in his study *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (1990), with the birth of aesthetics (as science), coined by Alexander Baumgarten,[45] the sphere of art enters the abstractionist filter of modern European theory (Eagleton, 1990: 2). So, aesthetics as episteme was a kind of self-undoing project that by focusing on the theoretical judgment of the artistic object was risking emptying it of the experience of "ineffability" which was considered one of art's main traits. Moreover, Eagleton elaborates on the construction of the modern notion of aesthetics and of the aesthetic object closely related to political ideology, namely, how the emergence of early bourgeoisie in the mid eighteen-century began to play a significant role in the construction of modern notion of the aesthetic artefact. Hence, this new form of human subjectivity also provided a powerful challenge to the dominant ideological forms and political class structure.

Such aesthetic debates, or such interest in art, did not imploded a-new in the eighteenth century, since it already had intellectual antecedents dating back to classical antiquity or to the Renaissance. Although not being an absolute break, a brief analysis of the history of European philosophy since the Enlightenment cannot but realise the relevance attached to aesthetic questions. For Kant, Eagleton argues, "the aesthetic holds a promise of reconciliation between Nature and humanity"; Hegel, on the other hand, diagnosed art's detachment from a spiritual vocation; for Nietzsche, aesthetic experience was a higher value, and Heidegger's meditations produced an ontology for which the definition of the artwork assumed an impressive relevance, among many other thinkers dedicated to the aesthetic sphere (1). The fact that the emergence of aesthetics was not dissociated from the ideological construction of the modern class structure, makes this theme so influential to think its intellectual

[45] The word aesthetics comes from the Greek word *aisthesis*, that means "sensible experience", and was introduced by Alexander Baumgarten in 1735 in his master's dissertation to mean "*epistêmê aisthetikê*, or the science of what is sensed and imagined." However, the term was not completely new then, since it was used by Plato in the *Republic* (c. 375 BC), when the Greek philosopher condemned the educational value of poetry, devaluing its cognitive potential, in the sense that poetry dealt with images of particulars, and not with universal truths of the realm of ideas, also questioning its relevance to morality. In his work *Poetics* (c. 335 BC), Aristotle opposes Plato stating that poetry presents universal truths but in a graspable and not as historical facts, and that it has moral value. *In* https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aesthetics-18th-german/ (consulted 18/09/20 at 12:26).

heritage in the present. In fact, the status of art in modern era and the birth of modern aesthetics results from a series of fractures, or schisms, as Giorgio Agamben refers in his book *The Man Without Content* (1999b), namely, between the artist and spectator, between the artist as genius and the emerging power of the seventeen-century bourgeois "man of taste", between form and matter, among others (13).[46]

In classical antiquity, even before Plato, art was suspected of being "the most uncanny thing," as can be read in Sophocles tragedy *Antigone*, when the poet refers that man has the ability of *tēchne*—what in Greek could mean the ability to "pro-duce, to bring a thing from nonbeing into being" (Agamben, 1999b: 4)— and this ability could result in an "uncanny thing" with a "power that could lead to happiness as easily as to ruin" (*idem*). Following Sophocles, Plato was one of the foundational Greek figures famous for his condemnation of poetry, and with it the condemnation of art and theatre, whose disruptive potentiality could ultimately lead to the expansion of these dangers to other spheres of society, disturbing the order of the *polis*. For Plato, then, poetry could not be admitted into the city since its danger could place the city in peril. This fact leads us to imagine that in classical antiquity, or particularly for Plato, the power of art over the subject or the spectator was not of a disinterested aesthetic enjoyment, but ultimately, it could be an experience of "divine terror" with severe destabilizing consequences (5), not only individual but also collective.

Nowadays, in the presence of an artwork, we often find ourselves in the process of question its status: if it is art or not, and how to evaluate it. We take this reaction for granted without even questioning the immediacy of this reflexive aesthetic judgment and how it conditions our relation to art. At his time, Hegel observes in his *Lectures on Aesthetics* (1835), art seemed to have lost its spiritual relevance, and the tendency to relate to it through reflection and towards a critical positioning had gained prominence. Instead of relating to the vitality of a work of art, as Agamben refers in his reading of Hegel, the most current reaction would be to "represent it to ourselves according to the critical framework furnished by the aesthetic judgment" (40). Thus, for the modern subject, art was not any longer the sublime appearance of the divine, felt as a moment of ecstasy or of terror, but a privileged occasion to exercise the subject's critical taste, in a context where the judgment of art seemed to have gained as much relevance as the work of art itself. Thus, the figure of the bourgeois "man of

[46] For Giorgio Agamben's detailed analysis of this emerging seventeenth century figure of the "man of taste" see "The Man of Taste and the Dialectic of the Split" in Agamben (1999b): p. 13-27.

taste" of the seventeenth century, like the modern spectator, found it incorrect to interfere into the artists' work, created out of "whim and genius" (16), but this noninterference has placed the artist beyond the normal living structure of society and into, Agamben refers, "the hyperborean no-man's-land of aesthetics, in whose desert he will vainly seek nourishment" (*idem*). The artist in the seventeenth century becomes, then, a figure of "imbalance and eccentricity" and "the more that taste attempts to free art from all contamination and interference," Agamben adds, the more "nocturnal and impure becomes the face that it shows those who have to produce it" (*idem*). In the seventeenth century, "with the appearance of the type of the false genius," continues Agamben, "the artist starts to cast a shadow from which it will be impossible to separate in the following centuries" (*idem*).

At the end of the eighteenth century, the aesthetic taste gains prominence as an antidote to the relevance of knowledge and morality. Thus, the experience of art becomes closer to the opposition of virtue. Strangely, then, "the idea that there is a secret kinship between evil and the experience of art gains currency," as well as the idea that "to understand a work of art, open-mindedness and *Witz* are much more useful instruments than a good conscience" (22). However, this rising figure of the "man of taste," as well as the relevance attributed to the aesthetic judgment belongs to a debate on the interpretation of the enlightenment. Therefore, aesthetics can be considered a specific move by which to question the rationalist dualism of body and mind, beginning to accept both sensibility and reason as actions of the subject.

Going back to one of the foundational reflections on the aesthetic judgment from Western thought, Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, Kant defines beauty as the object of aesthetic judgment in four traits, all of them pointing to a disinterested and universal satisfaction apart from concepts, and to the purposiveness of an object without purpose.[47]

Nietzsche's reflections on the aesthetic experience — a clear influence for Marlene's work, namely, through Georges Didi-Huberman's reading of Nietzsche — offers a contradictory notion of what should be the aesthetic experience, of art and the artists. According

[47] In the first one, "*taste* is the faculty of judging of an object or a method of representing it by an *entirely disinterested* satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The object of such satisfaction is called beautiful (Kant, 1951: 45). Secondly, "the beautiful is that which apart from concepts is represented as the object of a universal satisfaction" (*idem*). Thirdly, "*beauty* is the form of the *purposiveness* of an object, so far as this is perceived in it *without any representation of a purpose*" (73); and, finally, in the fourth trait "the *beautiful* is that which without any concept is cognized as the object of a universal satisfaction" (77).

to Nietzsche's Third Treatise of *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Kant intended to honor art by giving preference to its traits that would also honor knowledge, such as, "impersonality and universality" (Nietzsche, 2014: 292). And, Nietzsche adds,

> Kant, like all philosophers, instead of envisioning the aesthetic problem from the experiences of the artist (of the creator) only reflected on art and the beautiful from the standpoint of the 'spectator' and thereby without noticing managed to get the 'spectator' himself into the concept of 'beautiful'. Now if only this 'spectator' had been sufficiently familiar to the philosophers of the beautiful! - namely as a great *personal* fact and experience, as a bounty of the most authentic, strongest experiences, desires, surprises, delights in the realm of the beautiful! But I fear the opposite was always the case: and so, from the start what we get from them are definitions in which, as in that famous definition of the beautiful already given by Kant, the lack for more refined personal experience ends up taking the shape of a think worm of basic error. 'The beautiful', Kant said, 'is what pleases *without interest*.' Without interest! Compare this definition with another made by a real 'spectator' and artist—Stendhal, who once called the beautiful *une promesse de bonheur*. Here in any case what is rejected and crossed out is precisely the one thing Kant emphasizes in the aesthetic condition: *le désintéressement*. Who is right, Kant or Stendhal? - Of course, if our aestheticians never tire of throwing into the balance in Kant's favour that under the charm of beauty even undressed female statues can be viewed 'without interest', surely, we can laugh a bit at their expense: - the experiences of the artists concerning this tricky point 'are more interesting', and in any case Pygmalion was not necessarily an 'unesthetic human being' (292-293).

For Nietzsche, the experience of art implied a purification of the concept of beauty in order to filter out the spectator sensorial involvement and to consider art from the perspective of its creator, so that the aesthetic neutral apprehension should be replaced in prominence by the will to power of the artist, refers Agamben, as a promise of happiness (Agamben, 1999b: 2). Pygmalion, the Nietzschean example of the sculptor who so in love with his sculpture dreams of it leaving the realm of art and becoming alive, can symbolize, Agamben illustrates, the turn from an idea of disinterested beauty to art as an idea of vitality and unlimited growth, moving art's focus from the experience of the spectator to the artist's creative energy (*idem*). Anticipating a rupture movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Nietzsche's words are reflected in the writings of other authors, such as Antonin Artaud's *Theater and His Double* (1958 [1938]), as we referred above, where Artaud insists that art is not and cannot be a disinterested experience (2).[48]

[48] This idea was already familiar in earlier times, namely, in the autonomous examinations of the aesthetic phenomena, such as "the fury with which Saint Augustine attacks the 'scenic games' responsible for the death of the soul" (Agamben, 1999b:3) or the bishops' aversion of the musical innovations in the late fourteenth century called "*ars nova*," whose musical and voice modulations distracted the faithful with their polyphony during the religious services (*idem*).

If aesthetic abstractionism of modern times allows the spectator to enter the realm of art, for the one who creates it, Agamben concludes, “art becomes an increasingly uncanny experience,” because what becomes at stake “seems to be not in any way the production of a beautiful work but instead the life and death of the author, or at least his [or her] spiritual health” (Agamben, 1999b: 5).

Furthermore, in the preface of “The Theater and Culture”, Artaud establishes a parallel between what he calls “the generalized collapse of life at the root of our present demoralization” and the “so much talk about civilization and culture” (Artaud, 1958: 3). This interest in culture, refers Artaud, that has never been coincident with life will not be so far from the long process of entry of the “man of taste” of the late seventeenth century, premonitory of the abstract theorizing of art foreseen in aesthetic science and that intended, in a way, to rationally frame artistic practice and reception. “What is most important,” continues Artaud, “is not so much to defend a culture whose existence has never kept man from going hungry, as to extract, from what is called culture, ideas whose compelling force is identical with that of hunger” (*idem*).

Interested in a compositional process that privileges the unconscious and the visceral over the rational structuring, Marlene Monteiro Freitas collects several references (in a more or less conscious atlas), making use of strategies of saturation, overdetermined images, and using tools of simultaneous contradiction, her dance pieces are the result of this saturating process, as if the each dance piece were, in her own words, “a sausage filled until the skin is on the verge of bursting” (Freitas, 2017, n.p., my transl). Her dance pieces are the result of this process of saturation and digestion. They are, as she calls it, “the feces,” where the original references are no longer discernible, and the aim is not the transmission of a structured, rational, or narrative message (*idem*).

Artaud also places these two spheres of art and life together in an equally visceral and vital way. In his pioneering writings of a certain vitalism, heir to Nietzsche, influenced by Freud and the Surrealist movement to which he was temporarily connected, Artaud reiterates that before any creative or artistic principle, we need to live and believe that something gives us this strength of life. "To believe," he adds, "that whatever is produced from the mysterious depths of ourselves need not forever haunt us as an exclusively digestive concern" (Artaud, 1958: 7). This means that we should not waste our power of being hungry in the satisfaction

of eating, but in life itself, in a certain "idea of culture-in-action, of culture growing within us like a new organ, a sort of second breath" (8).

Placing the aesthetic experience of her dance works in the transmission of forces and tensions, and not in rational messages or narratives to be conveyed, Marlene comes close to Artaud's ideas once more when he condemns the trend of observing "our acts and lose ourselves in considerations of their imagined form instead of being impelled by their force" (*idem*). Contaminated by the choreography's force, Freitas' work also impels the spectators to respond with their own forces. Her dance work releases a set of vital and catalyzing forces coming from both sides of the theater proscenium, forces that clash in the third in-between space which is where, according to the choreographer, the dance event really happens.

Before analysing this notion of force as aesthetic experience, it is worth going back to the dichotomy between the modernist notion of aesthetic autonomy and another strand that seems to rest on a notion of participation. In the beginning of this century, several theories unravelled notions of participation in art as aesthetic experience, namely, Nicholas Bourriaud's theory of the relational aesthetics, the emancipatory regime of the arts, as elaborated by Rancière, or participatory art as analysed, namely, by Claire Bishop.[49]

According to philosophy and performing arts scholar Juliane Rabentisch, this dichotomy between the modernist notion of aesthetic autonomy and current perceptions of a more engaged aesthetic experience has a fragile ground since what is at stake in both poles is a process of participation, which is not that opposite as it may seem. In the perspective of modern aesthetics, "participation in art means transcending one's subjectivity and partaking in something that possesses universal validity" (Rabentisch, 2013: 89). This universality is connected to the notion of art's autonomy and has an ethical dimension in the sense that this autonomy would be a strategy of art's emancipation from the subject expression and from the sphere of consumption. This would also emancipate the autonomous work of art into the status of a *quasi-subject*. Consequently, Rabentisch refers that for Adorno the ideal artist would be the one who could bring an aspect of the artwork independent from the artist's individuality and would defy the power relation of the subject over materiality (*idem*).

[49] For detailed analysis, please consult Bourriaud, Nicholas (1998), *Relational Aesthetics*, Paris: Les Presses du Reél; Rancière, Jacques (2009a), *The Emancipated Spectator*. London and New York: Verso; Bishop, Claire (2012), *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, Verso Books.

Although ethically relevant this idea might be, we recognize with Rabentisch that it was also seems based on the problematic assumption of universality. Participation in art according to the modern aesthetic paradigm, Rabentisch explains, "must be conceptualized as partaking in this universality," which is utopian, thus, problematic (*idem*).

Many developments during the sixties of past century tried to overcome this utopian determination. In the late nineties, Nicholas Bourriaud, as referred above, presents as an alternative to the autonomy of the art disengaged from any concrete politics: artistic practices that operate as micro-political experiments in the social and aesthetic sphere through his thesis of "relational aesthetics" (1998). However, Rabetisch notes, this artistic installation or performances for social integration would still be confined to the institutional space of the museum or the gallery, thus, inalienably conditioned by its privileged institutional condition. Hence, this was nonetheless a proposal of art critical potential but through a process of fictitious sublation of art into life.

According to Rabentisch, a recent turn to a notion of *aesthetic experience* seems to be a reaction to both modernist aesthetics and the relational aesthetics (Rabentisch, 2013: 91). Thus, whereas modernist aesthetics is anchored on the assumption of the autonomous work of art, aesthetic experience conversely proposes the work of art as a product emerging from the process of the experience itself. Art would not be just an objective given, but "would come into existence by the experiences it releases" (*idem*). Thus, the subject of contemporary art no longer transcends its own situatedness and empirical conditions. "If art can indeed effect a change of consciousness that may spill over into political attitudes," Rabentisch concludes, "it does so not because it breaks with our finite worlds, but because in the semblance of art we encounter these same worlds in a different way" (*idem*).

Furthermore, this concurs to Rancière's theorization of the emancipated spectactor (Rancière, 2009a), that positions art's emancipatory potentiality as something inherent, in the sense that all spectators have the capacity to deconstruct the forces that limit and channel their own thinking. In addition, the same is evoked in Erika Fisher Lichte's *The Transformative Power of Performance* (2008), where the dance and theatre studies scholar reiterates that the aesthetic subject is not passive but responsible for the constitution of any art piece, and in the case of theatrical practices, dependent from the community of performers and spectators. These subjects of the *aesthetic experience* are not engaged in perception and interpretation in the traditional sense of art as an autonomous system of representation, but as

refers dance philosopher Gerald Siegmund by "means of their cognitive, affective and bodily participation spectators are inextricably entwined in the emergent event" (Siegmund, 2013: 82). Hence, when referring to the *aesthetic experience*, we are distancing it from the semiotic and linguistic hermeneutical approaches to art, because experience takes into account the bodily and affective of the reception process, thus, being never a passive process, and always a situated and singular one.

In the specific field of modern aesthetics of dance, as refers Gerald Siegmund, John Martins' texts in the 1930s were pivotal in their exposition of the communication between dancers and spectators through the "kinaesthetic transferal of muscular tensions and rhythms" (Siegmund, 2013: 84). Although the spectators remain sited in the theatre, the kin-aesthetic transferal endows the spectators with a sensation of movement, as though they were dancing along with the performers. Not only physical, but this relationality also triggers the transferal or contamination of emotional states from the stage towards the audience. Every artwork or dance piece, thus, is dependent of each singular spectator's relationality and co-creation of the event. Hence, aesthetic experience of any artwork, or of any dance piece, expands the event towards the singularity of each encounter performer-spectator. To that contributes, not only the diversity of the spectator's context and historical position, but also to the plurality of readings of this *reader-author*. In this line, some poststructuralist thinkers such as Barthes or Foucault[50] had already diagnosed the death of the author. And, in fact, not only the author loses its strength, but the reader/spectator becomes an author, but one as a "fissured subject in the psychoanalytic sense of the word, decentred by his/her desiring enjoyment, which is set off by the chain of signifiers" (85), and reveals the intrinsically condition of subjectivation, a process of permanent openness toward transformation and be-ing other.

Aesthetic experience has, then, a performative and processual quality. The event is not only conditioned by the spectator's situatedness, following Rabentisch, but also by its mate-riality and intermediality, by the relation between art and reality, and its temporal dimension. Hence, aesthetic experience is not independent from its materiality because meaning concurs with it and is not separated from matter. The same is valid for the performer's body that is

[50] For further information consult Barthes, Roland (1967), "The Death of the Author," *Aspen Magazine*, nº 5/6. New York: Phyllis Johnson; and Foucault, Michel (1969), "What is an author?" in Faubion, James, Ed. (1998), *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology. Essential Works of Foucault. 1954-1984*. Volume Two, p. 205-222. New York: The New York Press.

no longer subjected to the task of representing a role, and although retaining a reference to meaning, it is a "meaning that can no longer be fixed unambiguously" (Rabentisch, 2013: 92). We can speak of a certain "spectrality" (Derrida, 1994: 18), as Derrida would call it, that rests on these figures on stage, since they are always something other and something more of what they are (*idem*). Marlene's figures of dance also embody this mutant spectrality, the disquieting impermanence that allows her figures to be, simultaneously, several and others in a single figure, and to maintain its transformative and metamorphic potential open along the entire dance piece.

The dimension of intermediality is also relevant for performing arts aesthetic experience since all elements on stage and their materiality concur to the overall event. Free from narrative requirements, all layers contribute to an intermediary experience that is nonetheless characterized by a certain hybridity.

Choreographies, even within the theatrical apparatus, can sometimes create situations that blur the boundaries between the stage and the audience, or that disturb the ontological separation between fiction and reality. This disruption of the proper places assigned to spectators and performers also increases tension in the event, to the extent that it can disintegrate the spheres between art and non-art, the aesthetic, and the non-aesthetic. As Rabentisch remarks, these forms, or moments of contemporary performance "dramatize a paradox that permeates the contemplation of all art: that it demands both an element of immediate belief in the world it opens up and an attention to its being art" (93).

Whereas modernist aesthetics highlights the artwork autonomy and the relevance of its closure and self-referentiality, theories of aesthetic experience point towards its open potentiality. "The work attains a quasi-subjective character" not by having a specific quality, but "by forever extending the determinations the work may obtain in relation to any beholder, listener, spectator, or reader" (95).

In almost all of Marlene's works we find momentary disruptions of the boundary between stage and audience, not with the purpose of disrupting the ontological separation between fiction and reality, but by affirmatively extending choreography's conditions of possibility. Hence, it is fiction as radical openness that expands the choreographic and contaminates the audience. This potential opening is so limitless that the dance piece, the event itself, acquires the status of a *quasi-subject*, a work that has a life of its own, extending its determinations through and with each singular spectator's experience.

May we talk about forces or energies, when we refer that the dance work has a will of its own? A will beyond subjectivity, impelled by strange and obscure energies? As we referred, Marlene dance events happen as aesthetic experiences with and through forces. We propose to relate these forces catalysed by the event to emotions, tensions, and energies, in a non-transcendental understanding. We will then generally elaborate on forces as aesthetic experience, and then more specifically, in the field of contemporary dance.

Forces as Aesthetic Experience

According to German philosopher Christoph Menke in his book *Force. A Fundamental Concept of Aesthetic Anthropology* (2013), the debate over the interpretation of aesthetics was a relevant process of inquiry on the subjectivation of the sensible, thus having a great impact in constituting what has been called the modern subject, as an agent who was defined, according to Baumgarten's aesthetics, by the totality of its faculties of rational and sensible cognition (Menke, 2013: x). The interpretation of aesthetics is, then, an interpretation of the enlightenment by which the aesthetics starts to consider the subject's activities not only confined to its rational faculties, but also considering the sensible as an active faculty, hence, dealing with the sensibilization of the subjective.

Already before the Baumgarten's move of establishing the aesthetics as a science of the sensible, Descartes' doubt about the determinacy or a positive knowledge of the beautiful (which he considered indeterminable) was relevant for catalysing the reflection on the modern subject and to establish his program of the Cogito (Menke, 2013: 1).[51] According to Menke, sensible ideas for Descartes are not representations of real qualities of the objects apprehended, but they always transcend the objective reality. In this sense, Descartes distinguishes the genesis of ideas in twofold: on the one hand, a passively received impression is a product of the faculty of imagination or fantasy and, on the other hand, the rational ideas operate through a scrutiny, clarifying what is clear from what is confused, transforming

[51] Christoph Menke demonstrates that while analysing the conditions for the perception of the beautiful, Descartes performs two moves that are significant for philosophical aesthetics. The first consists in relating the aesthetic to the field of the sensible. The second move consists in considering the sensible as being without rational solid foundations and, hence, indeterminable. Within the domain of the sensible, imagination operates freely and ungoverned, and we can either enjoy the fantasy that imagination's freedom provides, or we can control it through "the self-guided intellect" and make use of it as a parallel cognitive resource (Menke, 2013: 8-9).

through a mental process an idea into a representation, a cognition, or a perception (4). Hence, Descartes demonstrates in his Cartesian program that only the domain of the intellect is capable of action, and that only through it is the subject able to be the agent of its own thoughts and performances. On the other hand, in the domain of the sensible there is no possibility of following a "method," there cannot be a "self-guided progression" which only the subject can control, "hence, no cognition is possible" (4). Descartes, then, links the sensible to a notion of passivity, while the intellect is related to that of activity (5). Moreover, for Descartes, the imagination has no self-governance, it is unpredictable, anarchic, and undisciplined, so it should be guided by the intellect (6).

Descartes' move, as Menke emphasizes, lies not only in doubting the cognitive competence of the senses, but in considering that the intellect is the only faculty with cognitive competence of representing reality and with capacity for action. Hence, it is through this primacy of intellectual action as self-governance, and not in the primacy of self-consciousness, that Descartes grounds the concept of the modern subject (*idem*). Moreover, since for Descartes the indeterminacy of the beautiful, or arts in general, cannot be defined objectively and rationally, his theory leaves the following question unanswered: "how to conceive of the indeterminacy of the beautiful as an effect of the imagination in view of its overwhelming power", when the imagination is conceived as ungovernable and random? (9).

According to Menke, Leibniz will contribute to this inquiry by proposing that not only the "self-conscious and self-guided 'actions of the intellect' have an 'internal principle', so do the sensible ideas" (*idem*). Thus, Leibniz advances that the perceptions of the sensible, which are mostly unconscious "constitute the 'natural changes' of the monads, which proceed from an *internal principle*." Moreover, he extends Descartes' concept of internal principle as not something limited to the intellectual capacity of the "I," but that also including "unconscious 'impulses' and 'forces'" (10). With Leibniz, Menke argues, aesthetics starts conceiving the sensible in a different manner. Although remaining indeterminate, Leibniz proposes the sensible beyond the Cartesian formulas of self-conscious acts, causal mechanisms, or arbitrary perceptions, conceiving the imagination of sensible ideas also an activity propelled by an internal, though unconscious, principle. This new aesthetic program proposes to encompass all these alternatives to reformulate knowledge and action, play and imagination (11).

After Leibniz, the sensible ideas seem not only to grasp adequately the world that surrounds us, even if not consciously and methodologically, as they reveal a capacity that exceeds the judgments of the intellect since they allow for a relationality of images that open the spectrum of perception and disconcert the intellect (12). Hence, Leibniz lays the foundations for Baumgarten's science of aesthetics by showing that the domain of the senses can be open to epistemological inquiry, similarly to any idea deriving from the intellect. In this line, Baumgarten defined "sensible cognition and representation" as faculties and capacities of the modern subject that are acquired through practice, and in so doing, Baumgarten "framed the modern conceptions of human practices," constituting "philosophy as the inquiry into the conditions that enable the success of these practices" (Menke, 2013: x), hence, constituting the subject as practical.

This Baumgartian theory of aesthetics encounters a different theory, the aesthetics of force developed by the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803). If Baumgarten refers that the internal principle of the sensible is a faculty, Herder goes a step further by referring to it as a force of unconscious expression. Aesthetics, in this case, instead of being a philosophical reflection on the subject's sensible cognition and representational practices, would be a play of expression "propelled by a force that, instead of being exercised like a faculty in practices, realizes *itself*" (Menke, 2013: x). This dispute will accompany the theory of aesthetics since its grounding, as well as it roots the debate around the modern subject.

Writings of Herder, Sulzer and Mendelssohn address the basic ideas of an aesthetic of force that counters the Baumgartian position, encompassing the aesthetic as an operation of an obscure force, as a performance without generality, thus a singular event independent from norms, law, and purpose or, in a certain sense, a play. Thus, in this conception, the aesthetic would go hands in hands with a process of the subject's aestheticization, since the aesthetics is seen as the pleasure of self-reflection, and through it, a process of transformation of the subject along with its faculties and practices (*idem*). On the other hand, the aesthetics of force proposes an anthropology of difference between force and faculty, or between a not yet subject in the sense of the autonomous subject. This aesthetics of force, Menke argues, sets the scene for an unresolvable contention between philosophy and aesthetic experience seen as a play of force (*idem*).

Furthermore, if we recall Foucault's theory of the episteme as a technology of power and subjectivation, Baumgarten's move of considering the "sensible cognition" a faculty and activity of the subject also participates in the enlightenment tendency to totalize — submitting the sensible to processes of subjectivation that the rationalist thinking was applying to the domain of the mind — thus, developing a subjectivation theoretical frame that perpetuates enlightenment normalizing and disciplining program.[52] Thus, according to Foucault, one could consider that the subject of aesthetics continues to be a "disciplined participant," whose subjective faculties are initially produced in processes of discipline, that the subject reproduces in the exercise of practicing its forces (Menke, 2018: 29). Therefore, Menke argues that beyond the challenge of individualization or discipline, the development of aesthetics discloses another concept more profound: the concept of the modern subject.[53] This means that Baumgarten's aesthetics has as its foundation the activity of a subject that is previously constituted by modernity's technologies of subjectivation that Foucault so poignantly elucidated. Its starting point is something that already is and not something that by its activity *becomes a subject* or is a *becoming.*

According to Herder, Baumgarten's theories were aprioristic and systematic, since they treated the sensible as cognition, as an activity of a previously constituted subject, and not as a feeling, or a force. Calling for a bottom-up, empirical, reconception of aesthetics, in his essay *On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul: Observations and Dreams* (1778), Herder refers that aesthetics should be "the thinking of an 'internal principle' of sensible activity that is — not yet — a subjective faculty; a reconception of aesthetics as a thinking of force" (Menke, 2013: 32). For the philosopher, the concept of force — also considered a power — should not be understood as a causal explanation or an object of perception, but "it designates a form of apperception." Hence, Herder's concept of force "designates not an event or an object but a relation" (36). Force then presupposes an operation

[52] For the development of Foucault's concept of episteme as a technology of subjectivation and biopolitical governmentality, please consult Foucault, Michel (1995 [1975]), *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Random House USA.

[53] Baumgarten noticed this challenge when discussing the obscure and confuse nature of the subject's sensible perceptions. Thus, Baumgarten refers that "something 'obscure' operates in *all* sensibility", i.e., both the subject's sensible perceptions and representations remain obscure; hence, there must be a field of obscurity in the soul, and he concludes that the totality of the obscure perceptions in the soul constitute the ground of the soul (Menke, 2013: 29). Then, we wonder what the consequences are, considering that the ground of the soul is obscure when the subject is also formed by its soul.

where the one and the other are inter-related and exist only in that operation and transition from one to the other (*idem*).

Herder consideration of the obscure mechanism of the soul as force avoids the modern dualism of nature and spirit by considering the human as being not entirely subject but has having this obscure force as its aesthetic nature, that is neither subjective nor practical. Herder, thus, elaborates on the difference between the human and the subject, between the obscure force and practical faculty, which may also be, in a sense, a difference *within* the human, the human *as difference*, or a reflection on the hybrid nature of the human (47).[54] At his time, Nietzsche also asked what could be the ethical-political relevance of aesthetics, or how can we find a culture that is appropriate to our art forms, thinking aesthetics not only related to art praxis but also to the way both the subject individually and the community conduct their life and affairs in an ethical and political way (81).

Giving primacy to aesthetic over moral criteria, Nietzsche justified existence as an aesthetic phenomenon. The example of music as a non-representational art free from the constrains of the harmonic and the beautiful serves as an example to artists working in other media towards an artistic practice of dissonance, an example for art free from traditional notions and premised on contrasts in content and style.[55] In addition, according to Nietzsche, the duality between the two principles structuring art — the Apollonian and the Dionysian — echoe other distinctions debated in the eighteenth century, namely, between the beautiful and the sublime, and later, between the conscious and the unconscious. The beautiful could be mirrored in the finite and symmetrical, while the sublime could cause fear and anguish before formlessness and the irrepresentable. The Dionysian, following Nietzsche, could be seen as a radicalized notion of the sublime. Associating the decadence of modern life with a prevailing excessive rationalism, Nietzsche condemns the historiography of his time for its factual and scientific objectivity towards a linear conception of progress and historical evolution. That scholarship not only failed to recognize the significance of the past and other cultural influences, as it obliterated it from its linear narratives.

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[54] In Part II, in the chapter *Hybridity and composite figures*, we will unravel how hybridity is a key choreographic tool for Marlene's work, further analyzed in detail in Part III in relation to each dance work.
[55] In fact, for Nietzsche, as for the composer Richard Wagner, and later for Schopenhauer, music possessed ontological significance in the sense that being a non-representational art it could offer a singular access to the will of the artist.

In his first writings on aesthetics developed in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche elaborates on the aesthetics of the obscure between Baumgarten and Kant. Hence, countering the programs of German idealism rationalization and self-assurance of the modern subject, he underlines that the aesthetics of the obscure is not only a theory of art and the beautiful, but it can be a theory on the human being. Separating the domain of the aesthetics from the cognitive and moral practices, Nietzsche proposes in the *Gay Science* that art has the power not only to change those practices, as to change life itself. But this art that Nietzsche advocates in *The Birth of Tragedy* is an "art for the artists," and not a "rhetorical" art that, following the Romanticists canon, was thought to seduce the spectator. This Nietzschean proposal of an art for artists is not simply a return to an aesthetically autonomous art, but an art of ethical and political relevance (Menke, 2013: 82).

In the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche shows how the artists are good in keeping a relation with the world that remains in semblance, that does not tend to rationalize all perceptions. Hence, according to Nietzsche, artists are good in not knowing, to be able to have, as he refers in *The Birth of Tragedy*, a vision of themselves as an aesthetic phenomenon, to be able to see themselves differently, as mere semblances, and from that seeking to gain the distance that enables the play of forces, freedom, and self-creation (84). In the *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche argues that for art to exist the artist must have a physiological precondition: *intoxication*, and only in this state can the artist transform things into perfection, and this "*need* to transform things into perfection is — art" (Nietzsche, 1998: 47).

If the notion of action was considered a causal relation conducted by the cogito, on the other hand, Nietzsche distinguishes the artistic praxis as an intoxicated doing without purpose. Through aesthetic doing and seeing, according to Nietzsche, the artist realizes itself. Thus, as in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche calls this state of intoxication "Dionysian," one of the two drives of the duality that grounds the continual development of art, the other being the Apollonian:

> In the Dionysian state . . . the whole system of the emotions is aroused and intensified so that it discharges its every means of expression at one stroke, at the same time forcing out the power to represent, reproduce, transfigure, transform, every kind of mime and play-acting (48).

Hence, Nietzsche distinguishes the purposeful actions of the subject founded in its rational and conscious faculties from the intoxicating forces, which, on the other hand, are

unconscious and escape rational control. In addition, Nietzsche goes further in establishing another difference between the practical and causal actions of a conscious subject and the intoxicated artist. The artist has the ability *not to act*,[56] and the force of the aesthetic intoxication has the inability not to react, in order to express itself.

Thus, according to Menke, the Dionysian artist is divided: the artist is, at the same time, "self-conscious faculty and force unchained in intoxication (…) and the transition from one to another and back again. The artist has the peculiar ability (…) of inability" (Menke, 2013: 86). This ability to be unable refers to the artist's ability to unlearn a praxis and a life limited to self-consciousness and to purposeful actions. Moreover, this unlearning means the ability to transform the world of praxis, i.e., life, through the aesthetic doing and seeing. This mode of aestheticization of praxis proposes another way of doing that goes beyond action— the referred action governed by practical faculties— a way of doing that Nietzsche calls *Leben*, or a *life* defined by continuous movement, that exceeds action grounded by rational and moral principles. Hence, we can say that Nietzsche proposes an "extra-moral consideration of the world" that is an aesthetic one, with the awareness that most of the actions are actually *doings*, i.e., "movements in which a force is discharged" (89). A life designated by the "purposeless overflowing of force" (*idem*), and where one can learn from the artists their ability to detach from their faculties to make something out of the intoxicated unchaining of their force. Hence, to learn that the rift within the self, between conscious faculties and unconscious forces is irreparable, and that the unchaining of the artist's forces can benefit the practical exercise of its faculties (97). Thus, the ethical-political relevance of aesthetics, according to Nietzsche, resides in the ability of distinguishing practical faculties from the expression of forces, and be able to unable the practical in order to allow the symbolization of forces, without allowing to be overwhelmed by an external power. Nietzsche argues that the artist — contrary to what would be a Dionysian barbarian, whose intoxicating forces supplant the rational faculties—, is able to transform its faculties into the most highly developed 'symbolic forces', unchained in intoxication. Thus, the ethico-political relevance of

[56] This idea that the artist has the *ability not to be able* redirects to Agamben definition of potentiality that for Agamben is intrinsically linked to the concept of freedom: "(…) the root of freedom is to be found in the abyss of potentiality. To be free is not simply to have the power to do this or that thing, nor is it simply to have the power to refuse to do this or that thing. To be free is (…) to be capable of one's own impotentiality, to be in relation to one's own privation." (Agamben, 1999a: 182-83).

aesthetics, according to Nietzsche, is the ability to *choose not to*, hence, the potentiality of freedom (98).

Forces as Aesthetic Experience in Contemporary Dance

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the immaterial condition of the energetic and of force has been permeating reflections in the field of performing arts, from dance to theatre and performance art. Energetic processes and transformational forces operate in individual performers or collective assemblages, human and non-human, producing singular effects in the theatrical context.

One can trace the root of the word energy to the late Latin *energia*, deriving from the Greek word *energeia*, used by Aristotle in the sense of "actuality, reality, existence," opposed to potential, and later signifying "force of expression."[57] It could also report, on the one hand, to the ancient concept of *dynamis* or the concept of force developed by Newtonian physics (Huschka, Gronau, 2019: 8). A synonym of life, transformation and movement, energy and forces may closely be related to the ephemeral art of dance, to the body and space processes of mobilization, activation, dislocation, transformation, improvisation, somatic, just to name a few. The energetic as a field of strength, power and labour can also appear as a discursive and political technique to address the use of the bodies as materiality, reflecting the choreographic as a biopolitical technology, or even as a mode of inquiring the means of production in the context of a performance driven capitalism. Moreover, the energetic has been elaborated as an aesthetic quality in choreographic practices that discharge forces as tools for bodily and figurative transgression, transformation, and intensity in the theatrical apparatus. Marlene Monteiro Freitas' dance work can be included in these practices that focus particularly on the transmission of forces, and not in the representational character of dance.

Since the beginning of modern dance, one can trace a diversity of choreographers that experienced strategies beyond the mere formal and representational character of classical or traditional dance, namely, the American choreographer and dancer Isadora Duncan, who proposed the dancing body as the ground for an aesthetic source of primordial movement, anchored in a Dionysian relation to the forces of nature, rescuing an idealized and essentialist

[57] In https://www.etymonline.com/word/energy#etymonline_v_8666 (accessed August 16, 2020).

concept of human nature. The choreographer Martha Graham, pioneer of the American modern dance, developed a technic that explored aesthetic figuration departing from the energy of the vitalist body. From the context of German expressionist dance, Mary Wigman and Valeska Gert were clear examples of choreographers and dancers that operated with and through the energetic as a vehicle for the transmission of *pathos*, emotion, expression, and pain, in the search of the most profound inner expressivity, countering again a formal approach to classical dance. In addition, in the 1920s, the German choreographer Rudolph von Laban also developed the practical-theoretical programs called *choreutics* and *eukinetics* for the notation and training of efficient spatial movement sequences, classifying movement qualities and dynamics of flow. Later, in the 1940s, during his exile in London, Laban developed the *Effort Theory*, a theory elaborated upon his analysis of movement under industrial labour processes.

However, we can relate Marlene Monteiro Freitas' work to the energetic field of forces produced through dance movement in the theatrical context more closely attached to a Nietzschean approach of the Dionysian artist that uses its own force as unchained intoxication, propelling transformation, excess and transfiguration. The use of forces in Freitas' dance reveals the rift within the human, a rift diagnosed not only by Nietzsche, but also by Freud's uncovering of the unconscious, or by Michel Foucault when the French philosopher, in his book *The Order of Things* (2002 [1970]), disclosed how the constituting of the (Western, white) modern subject came with a doubling of the human, with an obscure side of the subject, the negative of its rational self-conscious being.

Similarly, if Nietzsche calls this intoxicating unchaining of forces a mode of living, also Foucault makes use of expressions such as "movement, energy and pulsation", refers Gerald Siegmund in his essay *Energetic Forces as Aesthetic Forces* (2019), to elaborate about that other side of man, which, as a field of knowledge, he also calls "existence" (Siegmund, 2019: 88). Contrary to the Kantian science of nature that locates certainties in the laws of science, for Foucault there is always a field of the not known that exceeds the immediately given, locating phenomenology as a response of being as experience, dislocating the primacy of the cogito. Hence, considering the relevance of the energetic, dance as an artform that works with and through the body constitutes a privileged media, refers Siegmund, to challenge the primacy of the cognitive self both in the side of the artist and the spectator. These energetic fields and forces unleashed through dance performances, similarly

to what Artaud pointed regarding theatre, have the ability to suspend rationality and the coherent logos. In this sense, Marlene's work not only escapes representational strategies of dance and the figurative, as it implodes the tendency for any comprehensive linear narrative, as we will analyse further ahead. Those sort of transgressions towards the unthought of the subject through choreographic figural work also produce a field of political transformation, opening and rendering visible that exteriority of the unknown intrinsic to the subject.

In contemporary dance, this transgression of the borders of the subject operates in order to excavate that exteriority, that other side that nonetheless integrates the becoming subject. Marlene's work not only avoids representation, as she adopts the hybrid as a way to dislocate the figurative. According to Gerald Siegmund, such acts of transgression and transformation in contemporary dance create fluid bodily figures and assemblages with the purpose of producing fewer visual effects than physical ones, that operate in an emotional and visceral level that impacts the audience, disturbing any rational coherent comprehension of the dance events. This search for the hidden potentiality that resides in the bodily transformation in dance seems to aim, Siegmund continues, in this inquiry towards that doubling or otherness that is perpetually constituting and reconstituting the human (89). We can also add that a general lack of emphasis on text in contemporary dance enhances its potentiality for being an event that results more through forces and less through rationalized messages to be transmitted.

Thus, dance and politics share, as we have seen, the ability to mobilize forces (not particularly alien to the bodies but inherent to them) that can expand or collide in order to produce, not only physical difference in modes and states, but also allow a transformation in both sensible experience and knowledge, constituting one of the grounds for its politicality. Although the political potentiality of these acts of transgression may be relevant, it can also be problematic in the ambivalence between freedom of exploration and the fuelling of a system that thrives on wishes for perpetual flow. As we mentioned in the beginning, the exploration of new technologies of subjectivation, and the creation of processes of self-fabulation are the perfect tools for capitalizing on difference, and that is what a creative and performative capitalism aspires to. This permanent mobilization of transgressive and transformational forces feeds the desire for new emerging markets, permanently commodifying and fetishizing individuation, and difference.

Nowadays, the potential for the exploration of subjectivation seems, at first sight, to be immense and infinite, especially if we consider that the stage for the self has expanded into the social networks. This context of infinite possibility of transformation is illusory because it produces alienation through the creation of images of the self, which are immediately commodified and discharged.

If "neoliberal consumer capitalism thrives on wish", as Siegmund notes, promising to fulfil and invent the consumer's next upcoming wish, on the other hand, "desire remains faithful to its object precisely because it cannot own it" (95). Being the body a desiring body, it is ready to affect and be affected and, thus, able to move and mobilize. However, for mobilization to continue effecting change, without crystalizing the subjects and communities endowed with agency in self-identical subjects, it demands an *openness* and rupture in the processes of subjectivation (96). In other words, a dance performer on stage can become an aesthetic subject when they unchain a force of unknowability that allows for the mobilization of its permanent transformational potentiality. To avoid the capitalization of these forces and changes, the performer and the dance work should remain open through a process of disidentification, thus, grounding its politicality in its ambivalence, ambiguity, and impurity. In fact, ambivalence, ambiguity, uncanniness, and indeterminacy lie at the core of Marlene's key choreographic lines — openness, impurity, and intensity — as we will demonstrate.

This openness plays both with the limits of the media and the frontiers of the figures it brings on stage, preventing it from being consumed and commodified because "it is always over- and under-determined" (*idem*). One can never see the dance piece once and for all because it is, and will always be, *open* to new, situated, and relational understandings. Thus, similarly with Marlene's work, the desire for it will never be completely fulfilled, and the bodies and figures on stage and in their play of transgression will keep the veil of opacity that perpetually incites the spectator's imagination. Appealing to both memory and imagination, Siegmund concludes, the dance work *remains* with and through desire. This desire is not distant from the energetic and the unchained intoxicating force that is life, as Nietzsche demonstrates, the aesthetics as a mode of life that one could learn from the artist's ability to unlearn. It is, perhaps, in this desire and unchained force where may reside art's ethical and political dimension.

Part II

Openness, Intensity, and Impurity in Marlene Monteiro Freitas’ Work

Openness

Carecemos de um pensamento viável sobre o corpo, um pensamento capaz de traduzir as transferências de forças afetivas, entre inconscientes, ou essas forças que dependem de outros instrumentos como a voz, o movimento ou a presença, que nada têm que ver com a transmissão de conceitos.

José Gil, *O Caos e o Ritmo*

He who chooses only to know will have gained, of course, the unity of the synthesis and the self-evidence of simple reason; but he will lose the real of the object, in the symbolic closure of the discourse that reinvents the object in its own image, or rather in its own representation. By contrast, he who desires to see, or rather to look, will lose the unity of an enclosed world to find himself in the uncomfortable opening of a universe henceforth suspended, subject to all the winds of meaning; it is here that synthesis will become fragile to the point of collapse; and that the object of sight, eventually touched by a bit of the real, will dismantle the subject of knowledge, dooming simplereason to something like a rend.

Georges Didi Huberman,
Confronting Images. Questioning the ends of a certain history of art

We can easily recognize the confusion that happens when two or more opposites are placed in simultaneity, as demonstrated the French philosopher Michel Foucault in his seminal book *The Order of Things* (2002 [1966]). With its destabilizing qualities, Marlene's dance work has the ability to unleash contradictory reactions among the audience, from astonishment and amazement to repulsion, confusion and anxiety. This plurality of emotional reactions results not only from the singularity of each spectator's "hetero-affection" in relation to the event, but also from the disruptive potentiality of her work — where uncanniness emerges from the contradictory simultaneity and overdetermination of her choreographic universes — for which we probably need alternative tools beyond mere conscious rationality.

Similarly, as in Foucault's reflection upon a passage by Jorge Luis Borges that quotes a strange Chinese encyclopedia with an unusual taxonomy, there is a disconcerting effect on the act of placing extremes in proximity, or in the sudden vicinity of things that apparently have no relation with one another, but that nevertheless cause astonishment and enchantment. Although their propinquity seems odd and uncanny, it is nonetheless guaranteed by the conjunctions such as the *and*, the *in* or the *on* that place these things in a same "*common locus*" (Foucault, 2002: xviii). The uncanniness of Borges enumeration, as well as the strangeness caused by Marlene's choreographic worlds, may reside not only in the vicinity of apparent unrelated things or figures, or in their metamorphosis and impermanence, but in the supposed impossibility of a coherent *common locu*s where to make its existence viable. In the case on Borges, for its strange taxonomic enumeration to exist it is only viable in the "non-place of language." Even though the referred taxonomy unfolds in language, rendering possible its legibility, "it can do so in an unthinkable space" (*idem*), as Foucault further clarifies:

> Absurdity destroys the *and* of the enumeration by making impossible the *in* where the things enumerated would be divided up. Borges adds no figure to the atlas of the impossible; nowhere does he strike the spark of poetic confrontation; he simply dispenses with the least obvious, but most compelling, of necessities; he does away with the *site*, the mute ground upon which it is possible for the entities to be juxtaposed. (…) What has been removed, in short, is the famous 'operating' table; and rendering to Roussel a small part of what is still his due, I use the word 'table' in two superimposed senses: the nickel-plated, rubbery table swathed in white, glittering beneath a glass sun devouring all shadow — the table where, for an instant, perhaps forever, the umbrella encounters the sewing-machine; and also a table, a *tabula*, that enables thought to operate upon the entities of the world, to put them in order, to divide them into classes, to group them

> according to names that designate their similarities and their differences — the table upon which, since the beginning of time, language has intersected space (xviii-xix).

For Foucault, the uneasiness that remains after reading Borger's improbable Chinese taxonomy lies, perhaps, in the awareness that the disorder caused by the "*incongruous*, or the linking together of things that are inappropriate" is less disturbing than the disorder caused by several fragments of distinct orders placed in sites so different from one another, in the "dimension, without any law or geometry" that Foucault has called the "*heteroclite*", where it is impossible to identify a *common locus* beneath and for all of them (xix).
If "[u]*topias* afford consolation", Foucault refers, even if in the domain of the fantastic, "*heterotopias*", as in Borges taxonomy or in Marlene's choreographies,

> (…) are disturbing, (...) because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this *and* that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy the 'syntax' in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and also opposite one another) to 'hold together'. This is why utopias permit fables and discourse: they run with the very grain of language and are part of fundamental dimension of the fabula; heterotopias (…) desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the very possibility of grammar at its source; they dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences (*idem*).

Thus, in Marlene Monteiro Freitas' choreographies it is not exactly the discourse that is dissected and the words that are interrupted in their logical and coherent sequence, since there is neither a theatrical text to be staged nor a linear message to be transmitted. On the other hand, the disturbing non-place of language occurs, particularly, in the role of the spectator while attempting to establish a coherent *common locus* for the impermanent and unstable figures s/he is witnessing, whose gestures and images interrupt any possibility of linear and rational understanding of the dance work. One may consider her dance pieces as heterotopic territories, in the sense that they open space for operative fields of overdetermined elements and figures, where strategies of displacement, transfiguration, and the fleshing out of body-images, with their consequent release of forces and emotions, are played out. Therefore, the non-place of language and the obscure forces that cement the heteroclite in her work cause anxiety, restlessness, and bewilderment.

Making the operative plan of rational discourse to collapse, and *opening* space for a heterotopic territory, the spectator can witness how the transfigurability not only of the human figures, but also the objects and props on stage concur to the destabilization of the

coherent plan of discourse. As an example, in Marlene's dance piece *Bacchae – prelude to a purge* (2018), the orchestra music stands can either embody the figurability of a shotgun or a nose, a typewriter or a golf club, and the hoses also undergo numerous metamorphoses while being manipulated by the performers on stage. Moreover, in her dance solo *Guintche* (2010), as we will further elaborate in the third part of this dissertation, Marlene's body is one and several simultaneously, in permanent figural transgression and uncanny mutation of emotional states generative of its *composite-figure*. The open potentiality of her dance work can only find an existence in the non-place of language, or in the field of imagination, of the unconscious, or in the place of dreams.

Thus, the Openness and the Impurity that traverse and result from her dance pieces contribute to the empathetic dimension of her work. Empathy is here proposed in the sense of *pathos*, the Greek word for suffering, emotion, and intensity. As previously referred, heterogeneous in the singularity of each dance work, the choreographer seeks the creation and transmission of a force and a *pathos*, to the detriment of the transmission of a meaning or a message. Hence, this dance works that happen as aesthetic experiences of force, *pathos* and emotion constitute the locus that allows for the third common denominator to be released—*Intensity*—intertwined with *Openness* and *Impurity*. It is, then, through this choreographic *Openness* that Marlene *opens* artistic space, in the non-place of rationality, working upon *Impurity* in its figures, through its dramaturgy and methodology, which, in turn, catalyzes energy and aesthetic forces, producing the *Intensity* that characterize her dance performances as ethical, aesthetic, and political experiences. Therefore, we will then elaborate on some influential critiques of modern onto-epistemologies, disclosing how the interwoven fields of Openness, Impurity and Intensity in Marlene's work become choreographic tools for the criticality of some of those modernity's onto-epistemological premises.

Openings that Counter Western Modern/Colonial Onto-Epistemologies

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, according to Foucault's critique of modern epistemes, the law of discourse became detached from representation and language itself became scattered and fragmented. What became relevant for thinkers such as Nietzsche, who performed a philological critique, was not particularly the meaning of words themselves, but to what grammatical system they were paying obedience, in whose hands was the power of discourse, who decided what was significant and what was not, and in accordance with what rules.

> For Nietzsche it was not a matter of knowing what good and evil where in themselves, but of who was being designated, or rather *who was speaking* when one said *Agathos* to designate oneself and *Deilos* to designate others. For it is there, in the holder of discourse and, more profoundly still, in the possessor of the word, that language is gathered together in its entirety. To the Nietzschean question: Who is speaking? Mallarmé replies — and constantly reverts to that reply — by saying that what is speaking is, in its solitude, in its fragile vibration, in its nothingness, the word itself — not the meaning of the word, but its enigmatic and precarious being (Foucault, 2002 [1970]: 333).

What was, then, the relation between language and being? Does everything in the world, in our fear, our dreams, our gestures speak? And how does it signify? The true critique of positivism, according to Foucault, lies not so much in a return to experience, but in posing the question "[d]oes man really exist?" (351). This seems indeed a paradoxical question, because we cannot conceive of a world order and human beings without the existence of the human, and we forget that this conception is the empiric-transcendental modern doublet as the ground of production and validation of truth as discourse (about the human and the world). The question is not what kind of experience of nature produces knowledge but how can the human think what s/he thinks, as Foucault inquires:

> The question is no longer: How can experience of nature give rise to necessary judgements? But rather: (…) How can he be the subject of a language that for thousands of years has been formed without him, a language whose organization escapes him, whose meaning sleeps an almost invincible sleep in the words he momentarily activates by means of discourse, and within which he is obliged, from the very outset, to lodge his speech and thought, as though they were doing no more than animate, from a brief period, one segment of that web of in numerable possibilities? (352)

In his time, Descartes was concerned on elaborating thought as a general form to be applied also to the forms we consider to be the unthought—the irrational, error or illusion—so that they would become comprehensible, passive of being analyzed, and thus, harmless, fostering man's freedom in relation to the shadows of the cogito. On the other hand, Foucault

argues, the modern cogito cared to demonstrate the clear frontier and distance between thought and what, existing within it, was considered the unthought. Hence, for the modern cogito, the "I think" cannot be reduced to the "I am," because this affirmation is dependent on a "density" of a "quasi-present," of a language system that results from a process of sedimentation that the subject thought will never be able to master (353). Hence, although the human considered her/himself a rational being, this awareness happened at the same time as the awareness of an unthought within and outside itself, "born not of man, nor in man, but beside him and at the same time, (...) in an unavoidable duality" (355-6). Thus, the very possibility of the existence and entry of man into the field of modern *episteme* implies, as Foucault highlights, "an imperative that haunts thought from within" (*idem*): a thought that is also an action, a dangerous action because it is both knowledge and the modification and transformation of what it knows. Therefore, modern thought has not been able to propose a morality, because the act of thought was in itself a technology of control and mastery of the Other, towards a region "where the human's Other must become the Same as [her/]himself" (358).

In addition, anthropology, being a "human science," also became a relevant tool for modern thought, in the sense that it replaced the role played by representation. Since the "thinking I" had lost its sovereignty, anthropology became a tool for elaborating the necessary synthesis of the empirical, subsuming it under a transcendental fold in the effort of determining what the human is in its essence, contributing to what Foucault named "the anthropological configuration of modern philosophy" (372). And the first effort to release thought from this anthropological rooting was announced through Nietzsche's philological critique, proclaiming not only the death of God but also that of the human. This announcement constitutes that void and openness that is, in its own right, "the unfolding of a space in which it is once more possible to think" (373).

On the other hand, psychoanalysis, and ethnology, as counter-epistemes or counter sciences in the Foucauldian sense, question not the human but the locus from which the knowledge about that human is produced. Psychoanalysis, making use of strategies of transference, tries to reveal "on the outer confined of representation, Desire, Law and Death," some of the concrete figures of man's finitude (412). On the other hand, ethnology is situated within the relation that Western *rationale* establishes with other cultures. Moreover, what illuminates the space of their discourse, according to Foucault, "is the historical *a priori* of

all the sciences of man" (*idem*), the caesuras and dichotomies that ground the foundation of the human within the Western epistemes and converted his conceptualization as an object of knowledge. Moreover, linguistics, by dissecting language in a discursive mode, demonstrates language's instability and heterogeneity and infiltrates the human sciences foundations, threatening together with the other two "counter-sciences," what "made it possible for man to be known" (416).

If Nietzsche asked, "Who speaks," and Mallarmé with his literary visual poetry replied, "Word itself" (*idem*), this inquiry on language also had consequences in the works of Artaud, and in a certain extent, establishing a parallel with the language of dance, i. e., choreography, we may also relate it with Marlene's work. In the case of Artaud's theatrical work, language was rejected as discourse and replaced by "the plastic violence of the shock, (…) referred back to the cry, to the tortured body, to the materiality of thought, to the flesh" (418).

In Marlene's dance, linear and rational theatrical narrative have also been rejected, and replaced by a figural work upon the overdetermination of body-images, figures, and dramaturgical structures, through the choreographic tools of condensation, dislocation, and transfiguration. These strategies disturb the *common locus* of rational understanding, welcome incoherence and indeterminacy of discourse, and *open* place, through aesthetic experiences of force, *intensity,* and *pathos*, to a criticality that, we argue, questions some of Western modern premises of rationality. In fact, it is often to encounter interruptions and breaks in her dance works that disorient the spectator and destabilize the clear bounderies between the stage and the audience.[58] Moreover, her work is influenced by strategies of the absurd, of excess, of dislocation, and transfiguration that seek to unravel any expected linear

[58] As an example, that we will see in the detail in the third part of the dissertation, in the middle of her piece *Paradise – private collection* (2012), while performing on stage, Marlene gives the technicians the indication to do a break, the music is cut, the lights turned on in the whole theatre. The performers stop dancing and adopt positions of relaxation on the floor, cross the structure that limits the scenario. Marlene does the same, sitting on a lateral sound speaker and begins to eat by hand a piece of meat, what looks like to be "roasted chicken", or what the Portuguese call "frango de churrasco". This unexpected stop in the choreographic flow, disrupts the audience normal expectations. Slowly, the spectators realize it is not a normal break, but the interruption "as break" they are witnessing is part of the dance dramaturgy. This is an element one could contextualize in the line of post-dramatic theatre, a concept coined by Hans-Thies Lehmann in his book *Post-dramatic Theatre* (2006), where the author traces some traits of a theatrical practice from the sixties less focused on the text and the drama itself. More interested in the creation of effects than remaining true to a message, the post-dramatic theatre involves a performative aesthetics that considers the multi-modality of perception, the materiality of the performative event, combining heterogeneous styles that allow for a unorganized structure, and including the performers as theme and protagonists. Marlene adopts some of these traits, namely in the paradise piece, dislocating any possible coherent narrative and destabilizing the public expectations.

dramaturgical narrative. This permanent dislocation echoes psychoanalytical procedures heirs to the Freudian dream-work operations, which engage the choreographer's and the performer's unconscious, as we will analyze in detail further ahead.

Moreover, we believe that it also tends to grasp an *unthought* of a culture, namely, that of Western European culture to which Marlene relates, not only for having double nationality (Cape Verdean and Portuguese), but mainly because Cape Verde was under Portuguese colonial power. In fact, in Cape Verde, the Portuguese colonization took the form of a perverse and ambivalent play of power forces on the status and identity of the colonized territory and its inhabitants. We will analyse this in detail further ahead in the chapter *Openings across a relational geo-ontopoetics: on Cape Verde, creolization and the arquipelagic.*
Furthermore, as we will demonstrate, by countering the modern transcendental and anthropological mapping of man, Marlene's choreographies also contribute to this opening to think anew by subverting some of the modern binaries of *thought* and *unthought*, of gender, raciality, and the hybridity between the human and the nonhuman collectives, as we will further see in the chapter *Impurity*.

Her hybrid figures and disruptive choreographic worlds also evoke other critiques of Western modern categorical premises, namely, Bruno Latour interdisciplinary studies that unravel the Western modern convictions and belief systems inherited from the Enlightenment. These were also foundational for discourses and practices around essentialism and clear categorical distinctions as features of hegemonic European modernity. His work focuses on two main concerns: firstly, the production of the scientific fact and its place of production—the laboratory—de-naturalizing the constructing processes; secondly, the deconstruction of Western history of ideas, namely, Western modern ontology and metaphysics.

In a broader sense, Latour's intellectual project may be defined as an attempt to rethink the modern world beyond the dominance of science and epistemology, to unravel the different truth-production sites that make Western civilization, namely, science, but also techniques, religion, law, among others (Blok and Jensen, 2011: 11). Through his research on American science laboratories and using anthropological research methods, Latour demonstrates how scientific facts emerge from practical human processual tasks, negotiations and information that enter the laboratory space. Thus, the scientific fact is neither a given, nor a universal, but a hybrid between nature and culture. This anti-epistemological approach to

scientific facts is merely one element in a network process that attempts to demonstrate that the world should be seen beyond dualistic constructions: scientific and non-scientific knowledge, spirit-matter, modernity and non-modernity, reason and non-reason, culture and nature. Therefore, we can situate Latour's intellectual endeavor in the zone of controversies that have accompanied Western thought, namely, between dualism and monism, or between the heritage line that comes from Cartesianism (after Descartes) and the one of vitalism.[59]

Thus, by challenging the duality between nature and culture, constitutive of Western modernity, Latour attempts to demonstrate how nature should no longer be consider the cause but the product of scientific practice and knowledge production. According to Latour, scientific knowledge is based on processes of human interests, practices, and technologies in a hybrid network of actants that are both human and nonhuman, placing society, technology, and science in the same plane of immanence. The dynamic relations that unravel the referred dualisms are at the core of the actor-network-theory (ANT) for which Latour is one of its representatives. Latour articulates those actor-networks in terms of processes and relations that he names as "translations," "mediations," "circulations," or "hybridizations" (13). Contrary to the modern conception of Nature as a cause and the human as the subject, these relations of mediation and translation in Latour's ANT are considered primary, while the conceptualization of "society" and "nature" become the secondary effects of these hybrid processes.

Therefore, Latour argues, it is not accurate to say that we are or have ever been modern, if by "being modern" we consider the existence of a clear separation between Nature and Society. Latour traces the beginning of this effort of separating Nature and Society around the 1600s, not only through natural sciences but also through the groundings of modern politics. In his groundbreaking *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993), Latour presents his

[59] Latour's thinking emerges in a conceptual landscape influenced, namely, by Whitehead's process philosophy for whom reality is fundamentally processual and relational; Gilles Deleuze's conception of immanence, countering concepts of transcendence in the shape of "something absolute, fundamental, and 'other' (such as God, History, the Subject or Nature)" (14) or expressed in terms of dualities; and Michel Serres' ontology of mediation, where Latour encounters an example of how to disrupt the lines of demarcation not only between established knowledge, but also "temporal epochs, special territories and analytical categories" (16). Michel Serres focuses more on the "excluded third" than on the elements that define the duality poles. This "excluded third" can also be compared to Latour's "hybrid" or the "quasi-object". A term adopted directly from Serres, the "quasi-object" can mean the hybrid that links social relations together. In addition, by eliminating meta-discourses, such as science, religion, literature, and mythology, and placing them in the same plane of immanence where their relations take place, Serres proposes a body of work based on a mixture of genres that was of great influence for Latour's thinking.

anthropological elaboration on the philosophy of modernity, while at the same time, contributing to more a realistic and comprehensive insights into the current scientific, technological, and political culture. Hence, unravelling modernity's purifying practice of separating nature from society, subjects from objects, humans from nonhumans through scientific reasoning, Latour demonstrates how this practice increased the proliferation of that which it intended to negate: the hybrids.[60] In fact, in line with Latour's thinking, we are all hybrids dealing with relational networks of the fields of nature and culture that, although conceived as separated since modern epistemes and their disciplining features, are absolutely interconnected.

The term modernity, in general, has been perceived as a rupture from a past considered somehow archaic or pre-modern, recalling the famous Western quarrel between the *Ancients and the Moderns*.[61] Implying a teleologic perception of time and history, modernity has also established some beings as the dominants and victorious, and others as the vanquished and dominated. However, according to Latour, no longer able to rely on this symmetry, the term "moderns" depends on two sets of practices that to be effective had to remain separated, although they were never so independent. These are, on the one hand, the work of "translation" or "mediation," and on the other, the work of "purification" (*idem*). The former corresponds to what Latour calls "networks"—allowing for mixtures between human and nonhuman agents, hybrids of nature and culture—, while the latter, the work of "purification," has served the purpose of purifying the modern onto-epistemological fields, creating the dichotomy between the so-called natural and human spheres.

To demonstrate this, he abstractly summarizes what could be considered a constitution[62] for the moderns, assembling information from the fields of natural sciences, society,

[60] Hybridity is a key feature in Marlene's choreographies, as we will unravel further ahead in the chapter *Hybridity and Composite Beings*.
[61] Held in the early seventeenth century in England and France, this Quarrel began as a literary and artistic debate, praising modern discoveries and achievements as means to distinguish modern practice and culture from Classical grounded knowledge and institution authorities. With the rise of modern science that challenged the validity of ancient science, was a strong argument to challenge the privilege of ancient literary and artistic superiority. For detailed information consult https://www.britannica.com/art/Ancients-and-Moderns (consulted 10 November 2020).
[62] Latour demonstrates this modern constitution through the analysis of the role played, in the field of natural sciences, by Robert Boyle, acknowledged today as the father of experimental science, and in the field of social sciences, by Thomas Hobbes, considering the relevance of the *Leviathan or The Matter, Form and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil* (1651), commonly referred as *Leviathan*, for the modern social contract. In each of their fields, Boyle and Hobbes develop a set of discursive and practical arrangements that became relevant for modern culture. In the case of Boyle, with the appropriate material nonhuman conditions (the laboratory, its tools, and technologies), a selected group of human witnesses (a distinguished collective of scientists), and the establishment of a distinction between "matters of fact" and "matters of opinion," the scientist would emerge as the "authoritative spokesperson for nature" (Blok and Jensen, 2011: 58), and thus, the

politics, and religion, from the 1600s until the present, the sets of practices and theories, and the relations of "purification" and "translation" in play between them. Therefore, through the work of "purification," the moderns have put in place the belief on the distinction of pure categories, such as the subject, the object, mind, body, the human, the nonhuman, or even further, the economic, the scientific, the political, the cultural, etc. Thus, through a set of practices and discourses, the work of purification was an effort to define and distinguish between the two ontological fields of nonhuman nature and human culture, the first modern dichotomy. However, for this to happen, the so-called moderns have surrounded themselves with ever-more extensive hybrids, through practices and discourses of the work of translation, that created mixtures of entities from those separated fields, even if those mixtures, the hybrids, were neglected in the conception of modern onto-epistemologies.

From an anthropological perspective, Latour claims, the so-called pre-modern cultures placed attention and care in hybrids that related the human, nature and the divine, tending not to disrupt a cosmological order (59). On the other hand, the moderns, seem to have had no restraint or concern in the consequences of their processes of purifying the natural from the social and vice-versa, neglecting that the proliferation of hybrids resulting from those processes also play a role in the natural, as demonstrated by the current climate crisis, and in the social sphere, if we consider that nonhuman actants, such as bots, communication networks, virus or technology play a role in what we call society.

Hence, in the context of the so-called Western modernity, there exist critical partitions that do not allow for an analytical continuity between objects and subjects, natural facts and the issues pertaining to society. Furthermore, the hybridity that would make this analytical continuity possible, has only been considered when applied to "geontologies" (Povinelli,

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producer of scientific representations. In the field of the social sciences, Thomas Hobbes invents a political and social terminology that describes, by way of the social contract, how the individuals may have their interests represented through one single sovereign political and social "body," the *Leviathan* (*idem*).

They both claim to make clear separations: Boyle between nature and culture, and Hobbes between society and politics. However, what Latour demonstrates is that Boyle tries to represent a portion of "pure" nature isolated in his laboratory, claiming that the subjective and the political remain excluded from the laboratorial context. However, that is a task he can never rigorously certify since all the laboratory scientific procedures result from hybrid networks of human and nonhumans. Hobbes, in the same token, defends that his social contract concerns solely the human subject. However, the *Leviathan*, or the sovereign "state apparatus," is nothing but a complex network of human and non-human entities. Therefore, this modern intention of separating the representation of nature from the representation of culture, while neglecting and obliterating the hybrids produced in the process, is nothing more than an anthropocentric positioning regarding nature and the nonhuman world.

2016)[63] and epistemologies beyond Western European territory and their collectives, namely, in the other territories subjected to Western modernity imperialism and colonialism. Thus, modernity, often conceived in terms of humanism, neglected that the definition of the human also implied that from which it was being separated—the field of the nonhumans—, which included things, nonhuman animality, and the premodern racialized and colonized who were considered not yet humans. And this prominence of the human, and its anthropocentrism in the onto-epistemological hegemony of Western modernity was only possible after "the equally strange beginning of a crossed-out God, relegated to the sideline" (Latour, 1993: 13).

Our present task, Latour proposes, would be to reconnect these two branches of divisions: firstly, the separation between the humans and the nonhumans, and secondly, between that which was consider of a higher order—the Western moderns—and those placed below, the non-moderns, hence, the hybrids (*idem*). In this sense, it is crucial to reconsider and contest the argument of "pre-modern" attributed to non-western nature-cultures and that grounded Western modern power relations of domination, imperialism, and coloniality towards these subaltern Other.

As a conclusion, Latour suggests that one should acknowledge not only the hybrids that are embedded in our culture and find a way for them to be accountable, but also the dynamic and continuous relations that are played by and through those hybrids and between the so-called nature and society. Proposing a non-modern constitution that considers collective assemblies that "have never been modern," it aims to extend democracy to these entities, proposing a "parliament of things" (Latour, 1993: 142-45), a clear political positioning in opposition to an anthropocentric Western hegemonic view in an ever-more global hybrid world.

Remaining in the line of the anti-humanism critique but with a feminist, queer, multispecies, and decolonial lens, we wish to convey Donna Haraway's intellectual work as a

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[63] We evoke Elizabeth Povinelli's concept of "geontologies," developed in *Geontologies. Requiem to Late Liberalism* (2016), as a pertinent reflection on the current conditions of power beyond Foucault's biopolitics, evident in the context of settler late liberalism, but now more globally entwined. Povinelli thinks geontologies between *bios* and *geos*, *life* and *nonlife* that co-compose to produce singular modes of existence and empowerment. In relation, she addresses *geontopower* that articulates the borders between Life and Nonlife through the figures of the Desert, the Animist, and the Virus, clashing Western male critical theory with Australian indigenous cosmologies opening towards a rethinking of present cultural politics.

contribute to unveiling Marlene's key terms of *Openness*, and *Impurity*, in particular, to reflect on the ways the choreographer explores de dissolution of the boundaries between nature and culture, the human and the nonhuman.

In *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. The Reinvention of Nature* (1991), Donna Haraway deconstructs stories and narratives of Western evolutionary account of science and technology, unravelling foundational ideas around the creation of nature, living organisms and cyborgs, and proposing the cyborg as a hybrid creature in-between the organic and the machine. The cyborg, according to Haraway, could represent an escape route to modernity's binary of culture *versus* (what may account as) nature, and an emancipatory conceptual frame for feminists and queer in a post-gender world.

Moreover, in *Primate Visions. Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (1989), Haraway investigates how desire, race, sexuality, gender, nation, and class have been written, since the end of the eighteenth century and through the development of science, our western conception of nature. In the wake of post-World War II movements of decolonization, of feminist, civil rights and anti-racists demonstrations, together with an emergent ecological awareness of the threats of nuclear energy, and the repercussions of a fossil fuel dependent industrial capitalism affecting the fragile web of earthly ecosystems, Haraway investigates how western interest in nonhuman primates reveals their interweaving of the relation between nature and culture, between materiality and symbolism in the conceptual fabric of nature in the late past century. Simians, as Haraway refers, occupy border zones in those western onto-epistemological (mythical) constructs around nature and culture, but also in the investigation of what it can mean to be "almost human" (Haraway, 1989: 2).

In addition, Haraway analyses how primatologists have engaged in research practices that implied, not only discipline and objective measurement strategies, but also intimate connections of love and knowledge with the animals to which they had direct access, coming from countries from the Global South. Primates, Haraway demonstrates, were considered privileged subjects for the fields of both natural and human sciences, such as, "anthropology, medicine, psychiatry, psycho-biology, reproductive physiology, linguistics, neural biology, paleontology, and behavioral ecology" (*idem*), particularly in the American, European, and Japanese context. These animals, coming mostly from countries of the Global South, served as "surrogates for 'man'", as Haraway refers, in order for primatologists to elaborate theories and narratives from the scientific field to general cultural and social production, that "craft

a view of nature as it is constructed and reconstructed in the bodies and lives" of these animals (*idem*).

We convoke Haraway's multi-species deconstructions of the history of science, her elaboration on the hybrids and cyborgs, as well as her feminist and anti-racist lens that investigate how nonhuman primates have served as laboratory experiments for both the natural and human sciences, because in all Marlene's choreographies there is a permanent elaboration of choreographic figures for which hybridity, animality and animism are key words. Her dance pieces are populated with hybrids between the organic and the machine, the animated and the inanimate, queer hybrids that challenge the species and gender boundaries, and are never stable nor crystallized once and for all. Her dance works exist in this permanent play of subject instability and impermanence, where it is frequent to encounter the cartoon or the marionette that have gained a life of their own, figures that unravel the boundaries between the human, nonhuman animality and thingness; fauns half-human/half-animal, such as when the dancer Andreas Merk embodies a centaur, half horse-half man in *Paradise – private collection* (2012), or when the same performer incarnates a primate in the dance piece *Of ivory and flesh – the statues also suffer* (2014); not to mention the permanent gender fluidity of her figures, which give place to those cyborgs Haraway suggested as antidotes to the western modern onto-epistemological Grand Divides, as we referred, between nature and culture, subject and object, male and female, human and nonhuman animal.

Moreover, although recognizing the suspicion that the prefix *post-* might elicit, we wish, nevertheless, to include the contribution of the posthumanism critique by authors such as Rosi Braidotti, in her essay *Posthuman, All Too Human. Towards a new process ontology* (Braidotti, 2006), in *The Posthuman* (Braidotti, 2013), and in addition, by Cary Wolfe in her book *What is Posthumanism?* (Wolfe, 2009), that counters continental anthropocentric humanism, opposing the fantasies of disembodiment and autonomy of the modern human subject, and the anthropocentric cosmologies.

In addition, considering how Marlene also endows objects with vital forces and, often, with a figural subjectivity, we will also convoke a reference from the field of materalism, [64]

[64] Although recognizing the relevance of the anti-humanism critique from a materialist philosophical perspective, the so-called *Speculative Turn* from the first decade of the twentieth century that proposed as a counter point to the posthumanist, post-structuralist continental critical and linguistic turn. It was influenced, namely, by the 'object-oriented ontology' of Ian Bogost, Levi Bryant, and Graham Harman, Quentin Meillassoux's *Après la finitude* [After Finitude] in early 2006 and exemplified in works such as *The Speculative Turn. Continental Materialism and Realism* (Bryant, Harman, Srnicek, Eds., 2011). This speculative turn proposes to

namely, by political theorist Jane Bennett in her renowned work on nature, ethics and affect *Vibrant Matter. A political ecology of things* (2010), that claims for the political pertinence of nonhuman things in events. Moreover, Bennett's argument for a "vital materiality" that runs through both human and nonhuman entities, fosters a more ethical, responsible, and extended politics that considers the entwinement of animate and inanimate forces affecting current global situations. In addition, considering that such a choreographic process of animating objects evokes the concept of Animism, we will also address it in Part II under the constellation of I*mpurity*.

For the moment, we will synthesize our reflections on posthumanism strands, signalling those that will be more relevant to this study. Hence, regarding Rosi Braidotti's ideas on "Posthuman, All Too Human. Towards a new process ontology" (Braidotti, 2006), the philosopher refers how in our current condition of advanced technological and mediated social relations in a global world of network communications, one needs to consider nonhuman agents in geopolitical, economic, and relational ecologies (Braidotti, 2006). The debate on the posthuman has diverged into several lineages. The posthumanism followed the lineage of past twentieth century continental philosophy anti-humanism critique, since Nietzsche's announcement of the death of God, to Freud's deconstruction of subjectivity, but notably since the seventies with Foucault's archaeology of the human sciences in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences* (2002), originally published in 1966, followed by Derrida's deconstruction, as we have demonstrated previously.

The other lineage, according to Braidotti, that departs from posthumanism is named transhumanism and argues for different arguments: through the technological computational, biogenetic, and neuroscientific development, it reflects on the ethical and philosophical enhancement of the human cognitive capacity, in order to be paired with the advancing of artificial intelligence.[65]

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focus not on texts, social practices, discourses, and in the critique of the human Cartesian cogito, but to speculate about the nature of reality and matter independently of thought and humanity. We acknowledge this theoretical production, but we will not follow that line of research for the present dissertation.

[65] One of its European main representatives is Nick Bostrom, the Swedish philosopher and director of the *Future of Humanity Institute*, a multidisciplinary research centre in Oxford University, that connects the field of mathematics, science and philosophy with the purpose of researching "humanity's deep future", namely, "existential risk, astronomical waste, (…) nanotechnology, the great filter, infinitarian paralysis, prediction markets, and analysis of superintelligence, brain emulations scenarios, human enhancement, transhumanism, and anthropics". For detailed information on this institute consult https://www.fhi.ox.ac.uk/about/mission/ (accessed on December 1, 2016). In response to this pioneering institute, another was created in Cambridge with the name *Centre for the Study of Existential Risk*, also a multidisciplinary research centre, founded by a philosopher, a scientist, and a software entrepreneur, "dedicated to the study and mitigation of risks that could

Nevertheless, Braidotti signals the relevant fact that the "human" is, first, an abstract category. Hence, there is not a "we" that is universally human, and the concept of posthuman neither redeems nor restores power relations of class, gender, race, or religion. In response to the current atmosphere of fear and anxiety towards the future, the task of the posthuman critical theory, Braidotti argues, is "to offer alternative ways of being human in the world," connected to a vital materialist politics, where "the nature culture continuum points into the direction of a monistic political ontology, of embodied and embedded selves where embodied entails the *inbrainment* of the body and the embodiment of the brain, as a thinking-living-intelligent self-organized matter", and regrounding our (post)human condition in a relational understanding of our subjectivity (Braidotti, 2015).

Moreover, in *What is Posthumanism?* (2009), Cary Wolfe attempts to propose posthuman theory as an alternative, within the humanities, to address the redefinition of humanity's placement within a world that recognizes, on the one hand, the technological input, and on the other hand, that considers human life as part of a general life continuum, as one among many living matters. Wolfe's posthuman is not a disembodied proposition, as it criticizes the modern humanist Cartesian subject, as well as its anthropocentric positioning in relation to the construction of subjectivity, but also in the representation of reality and in the production of meaning. Moreover, this stance of posthumanism considers human embeddedness not only in the biological but also in the technological world, "the prosthetic co-evolution of the human animal with the technicity of tools and external archival mechanisms" (Wolfe, 2009: xv), such as language and culture.

Beyond the framework of posthuman critique, we consider that Marlene's choreographies also have a decolonial potentiality, through their disruptive criticality of some of modern/colonial onto-epistemologies. Her work conveys counter-hegemonic choreographic fabulations, queer and hybrid body-images and performative figures on stage. For this matter, and although acknowledging the relevance of both the revolutionary anticolonial critiques for the decolonization and liberation movements of the twentieth century — by Frantz Fanon (1952, 1959, 1961), Aimé Cesaire (1955), or Amílcar Cabral (2013, 2015),[66] just to name a

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lead to humanity's extinction". For further information on this centre please consult http://cser.org/about/ (accessed on December 1, 2016).

[66] In the chapter *Openings across a relational geo-ontopoetics: on Cape Verde, creolization and the arquipelagic*, we will provide a closer insight into Amílcar Cabral's contribution to the anticolonial theoretical and practical struggles against the Portuguese colonial power.

few — as well as the critical consciousness raised by postcolonial authors — such as, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1999, 2012), Homi Bhabha (1994), and Edward Said (1978, 1993, 2003), particularly, in relation to British colonial powers in India and Palestine — for the present investigation, we will privilege the decolonial critique for its premise of unveiling the logic of coloniality and its proposition of engaging in epistemic rewritings. In addition, we will also evoke intersectional theory, for its ways of articulating a matrix of race, gender, class, and local cultural singularities as interlocked multiplicities for the unveiling and deconstruction of Western modern, white, heteronormative, capitalist, and (neo)colonial powers and discursive formations. In this sense, we will briefly address Anibal Quijano (1999) and Walter Mignolo decolonial critique (1995, 1999, 2011), Sylvia Wynter's (1979, 1992, 1995a, 1995b, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2015) intersectional critique of Western onto-epistemologies, as well as Denise Ferreira da Silva (2007)'s reflections on Western post-Enlightenment's construction of race.

Without the purpose of fetishizing history, and not giving in to the essentialist and universalistic fallacy but emphasizing the premises of interconnectedness of structures of domination that characterize both decolonial and queer intersectional theory, we will try to elaborate on their relevant critical infrastructures of "epistemic reconstitution, resurgence, and re-existence" (Mignolo, 2017), distinguishing this strand from postcolonial studies.

Although both share the struggle against Western colonialism, according to Walter Mignolo postcolonial and decolonial practices are historically grounded, and each one of them have their own conceptual and political background.[67] Generally, in anti- and postcolonial theory, we can recognize several strands of struggle, each one in relation to different colonial Empires. One was represented, namely, by Frantz Fanon, Aimé Cesaire, or W.E.B Du Bois in relation to the decolonization struggles in the Caribbean and in African colonies; other represented by the postcolonial intellectual and material struggles countering the British colonial models in India and Palestine by authors, such as Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, Dipesh Chakrabarty, or Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (just to name a few); other represented

[67] Decolonization/decoloniality has a founding moment in the *Bandung Conference* (1955), and from this moment several threads of events unfolded, from the decolonization struggles to the Non-Aligned Movement (1961), established in the former Yugoslavia and that gathered 120 member states non-aligned political and economically with none of the world powers at that time between the West and the Eastern Block. A great majority of the member states were part of what at that time were called the Third World countries, and now is often called the Global South (Mignolo, 2017: 2).

by Amílcar Cabral and his fellows intellectuals and fighters, against the Portuguese colonial force in Africa, just to name a few. Each struggle had its own cultural, political and historic singularities.[68]

In addition, according to Mignolo, the concept of the postcolonial (that could also be related with the postmodern) is trapped in a linear progressive timeline that is, once again, grounded in the teleological Western cosmological time oriented by Western civilizational principles (Mignolo, 2017: 2). On the other hand, decoloniality[69] has as its background the historical experience of the colonization of America and European Imperialism and Renaissance, hence, its point of departure seemed to be different. The so-called New World was simply unknown, and thus, it was monopolized by the colonizers, its populations exterminated or turned into forced labour, in order to fully take control of the land natural resources and territory. Thus, decoloniality seems to adopt a more profound approach to colonialism by considering that the modern capitalist world-system, and the Europe's industrial revolution, only came to exist thanks to the exploitation of the America's natural resources, to the implementation of the plantation slave-labour system which implied trade of (mostly) African enslaved people, and the exportation of the land primary resources, a process that continues long after direct political rule is abolished. Therefore, in the framework of decoloniality, capitalism is considered as an interdependent system existing since and as a consequence of the America's colonization, considering culture and political economy intertwined. Coloniality, a key term for decolonial thinking, comes to underline that, although

[68] In the case of India and the British colonial Empire, for example, the Eastern part of the world was already acquainted and recognized for centuries through commercial relations by the political and religious sovereign powers in Europe. Hence, its process of colonization was different, the territory was known, and according to Judaeo-Christian church, it just needed to be reclaimed for civilizing purposes. In his seminal book *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said explains how "the Orient" could be seen at the same time an integral cultural and material part of Europe, that helps to define it — as the source of its civilization and languages, and the place of its greatest and richest colonies, — as well as it was fabulated as a place of exotic beings, fantastic tales and haunting memories, a perfectly imagined creation of Europe's otherness (Said in Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin, 1995: 87). However, the concept of Orientalism is something different from the Orient. It has been created as a "style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'" (88), entering the academia but expanding, roughly from the eighteenth century on, as a discourse of "systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—an even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period" (88-89).

[69] The terms used are decoloniality, decolonial thinking or decolonial practice (instead of decolonial theory) since its purpose it to untangle Western European hegemonic thought production and hence include different modes of thinking and doing, articulating pluriversal and multimodal forms of liberatory thinking and praxis. Since decoloniality wishes to be seen as a form of "epistemic disobedience" (Mignolo, 2011: 122-23), epistemic reconfiguration, and a move at "de-linking from contemporary legacies of coloniality" (Mignolo, 2007: 452), it would make no sense to create an enclosed theoretical body of work, hence the preference for the referred terms above.

political colonialism is over, its complex structural and imperial powers perpetuate today through other means and forms.

We will, then, proceed by dedicating some attention to the conceptual matrix modernity/coloniality developed in tandem, since 1998, by the South American research group *collective modernity/coloniality/decoloniality* (Mignolo, 2017: 1), starting by the distinction the collective established between the concepts of decolonization and decoloniality. Decolonization was a term used during the Cold War period to address the decolonization processes in Asia and Africa, and its purpose was to take hold politically of the nation state. The process was half-successful: if, on the one hand, the native elites of the colonized countries were able to replace the imperial power institutions in charge and assume sovereignty for their countries, on the other hand, these same native elites often repeated the same colonial power structures, and the political theory and economy as inherited by imperialist powers, i.e., capitalism and modern bourgeois Western state-form of governance" (*idem*).

Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano, involved in decolonial debates in South America, developed two key concepts: "coloniality" and the juncture "modernity/coloniality." Quijano made a distinction between colonialism and coloniality. Colonialism referred to Western imperial/colonial expansion,[70] taking into consideration that this notion of West goes back to Western Christianity, and it laid the foundations for modern/colonial globalization, and of the earlier phase of global capitalism. Quijano then proposed two moves: firstly, introduced the term coloniality as *modus operandi* and an epistemological positioning, in order to unravel Western colonial imperialisms; and secondly, this move has another one implicit: presenting coloniality as the dark side of modernity. Thus, there is no modernity without coloniality and the juncture modernity/coloniality is indissociable.

Moreover, according to Quijano (1999), the matrix of coloniality has four interrelated domains: political interference through institutional administration and borders control; control of economy, by manipulating labour conditions, allocating extracting activities, and exporting natural resources in order to feed a global systemic capitalism; the manipulation of subjectivity, by imposing Eurocentric onto-epistemologies; and finally, the control of gender

[70] According to Walter Mignolo, Quijano located colonialism's starting point in Christianity, then Castile and Portugal mainly with the conquest and colonization of the Americas, but also the expansion to Asia (Macao was the first Portuguese colony in Asia; Spaniards were in the Philippines and Formosa [today Taiwan]). After Castile and Portugal came the Dutch, the French and the British mainly (Germany and Italy were "minor" imperial powers). The US maintained colonialism, but without colonies (Mignolo, 2017: 1) in https://www.e-ir.info/2017/01/21/interview-walter-mignolopart-2-key-concepts/ (accessed August 15, 2020).

and sexuality, exporting heteronormative reproduction and nuclear family structure (Canli, 2017: 32).

In addition, grounded on this decolonial theoretical frame, Quijano propounds that there can be no decolonial processes without an epistemic reconstitution, in the line with what other thinkers would later propose, such as Mignolo or Boaventura de Sousa Santos. Quijano insists on this epistemic reconstitution capable of undoing five hundred years of a civilizational rhetoric that portrayed the West as the developed saviour, and the rest of the world in need of salvation: "salvation by conversion to Christianity, salvation by progress and civilization, salvation by development and modernization, salvation by global modern democracy (e.g., neoliberalism)" (Mignolo, 2017: 2). Thus, the rhetoric of modernity would be a constant updating of the former rhetoric of salvation, but with its underlying matrix of coloniality, based on dispossess, destruction, war, raciality, patriarchy, and other imposed inequalities.

The failure of the decolonization processes during the Cold War, according to Mignolo, was because these processes did not engage enough in a questioning the prevailing onto-epistemological structures inherited from Western framework of knowledge, anchored, firstly, in Christian theology, and secondly, in secular science and philosophy, as well as its political and social structures. These were the institutions and actors responsible for creating the colonial matrix of power, perpetuated in the colonies. Thus, this colonial matrix of power that underlies the two pillars of Western Civilization—modernity/coloniality—can only be delinked or detached from through an epistemic reconstitution. A reconstitution of ways of thinking, languages, beliefs, religious practices, cosmologies, and ontologies that modernity has always disavowed and that coloniality has annihilated. Decoloniality, as Mignolo concludes, "opens up to the multiple times of cultures and civilizations upon which Western Civilizations impose its conceptualization of time". The "de" of decolonial practices, indicates the need of a several "re": "epistemic reconstitution, re-emergence, resurgence, re-existence. That is neither new nor post" (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018: 3).

Hence, decoloniality is not only a theory but also a praxis focused on relationality, that wishes not to sketch liberation discourses or propose a decolonial universal truth, because that would be an imperial/colonial positioning. With a praxis of relationality, decoloniality propounds to interrelate local practices and decolonial embodiments, engaging in conversation and build understandings across other geopolitical contexts and differences. Drawing

upon Andean indigenous thinkers, decoloniality echoes their vitalist proposition called "vincularidad," that refers to the integral relation and interdependence between all living organisms, together with the land and the cosmos, in the search for balance and harmony (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018: 1-2). This "vincularidad," or relationality, seeks to establish connections and correlations, instead of establishing monolithic and an authoritarian body of discourse.

Another valuable critical contribution comes from Jamaican scholar and writer Sylvia Wynter that proposes a decolonial and intersectional critique of Western modern epistemo-cosmological narratives, from Western modern conception of time and space, and most particularly, to Western modern ontology, the elaboration of the conceptual framework of what (and who) is to be a human, and how these Western modern colonial hegemonic modes of thinking and doing still pervade in the current global order. We will convey her work, firstly, for her illuminating critique and overarching analysis of the Iberian colonial enterprise and its onto-epistemological consequences in the present, and secondly, for her proposal of an ecumenical humanism that sees the *human as hybrid*.[71]

In her essay "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Over-representations — An Argument" (2003), Wynter elaborates how in our present order of things, "a certain ethnoclass (i.e., the Western bourgeois) concept of human, Man, over-represents itself as if it were the human itself" and how this over-representation can be considered what Wynter calls the "Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom" (Wynter, 2003: 260). Unsettling this coloniality which was put in place by the Western modern world from the fifteenth/sixteenth century onward demands a critical deconstruction of this over-representation of the human as Man, as the second and now purely secular version of what Anibal Quijano calls the "Racism/Ethnicism complex" (*idem*).

Considering that the modern world anchors itself on the basis this foundational colonial difference, all the contemporary struggles relating race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity (to name a few), and all those other relating to the climate crisis, to social and economic inequality, to the exhaustion of Earth natural resources, and to a persistent global coloniality that perpetuates a neocolonial design between a *selected* elite in a Global techno-

[71] We decided to include Wynter's intellectual endeavor in this chapter, instead of the chapter around *Impurity*, although we will also develop there the themes of hybridity related to Marlene's work, because Wynter's work has such an extensive onto-epistemological spectrum of decolonial criticism that it seemed more appropriate within the theoretical umbrella of *Openness*.

industrial over-consumerist North and the *dysselected* population in a global South of dis-possess, subjugation and poverty, demand this deconstruction of the over-representation of Man, opening new alleys of thought for an ecumenical perspective of humanness. Therefore, Wynter proposes her conceptualization of Man1 and Man2, relating these two Western modern hegemonic descriptive statements of the human to the political, social and ethical implications of the European colonial project, in particular, departing from the Iberian colonial enterprise. These two descriptive figures of the human — Man1 and Man2— correspond to two ethical orders: one the one hand, to the religious ethics of Scholastic thought, and on the other, to the ethics of early secular philosophical program of Western modern juridical-political stance, i.e., the state and juridical law.

Wynter extends Foucault's premise that the modern episteme[72] — as a consequence of Kantian transcendental subjectivity, and further engaging anew with language as a vehicle that relates to knowledge in diverse ways — produced an epistemological consciousness of "man". In the classical age, according to Foucault, there existed a concept of the human who possessed the ideas that represented the world, thus, at that time, to think meant to represent. From Kant on, Foucault refers, the figure of "man" becomes an epistemological concept because representations (thoughts and ideas) were not only the product, but they were constituted by the mind. Then, these were not just representations of historical and natural reality but were constituted by a particular and more relevant epistemic realm: transcendental subjectivity (Gutting and Oksala, 2019).[73]

Therefore, reading Wynter against Foucault's premise that modern episteme conceives reality and its categories of difference through the Eurocentric hegemonic conception of the transcendental-empirical modern subject, the Brazilian scholar and author Denise Ferreira da Silva highlights that Foucault (and other Continental philosophers) seemed to have neglected in his critique of modern Man "the idea of race"[74] (Silva in McKittrick, 2015: 91).

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[72] Foucault developed his terminology of episteme or discursive formations, key terms in his archaeological methodology of investigation, to express how systems of thought are not only governed by rational rules of logic, but also operate unconsciously beyond each individual subject and determine the conceptual system of possibilities in a determinate period and field of knowledge. Archaeology was for Foucault an alternative method to a progressive and linear historiography because it did not rest on the primacy of the subject's consciousness, but it allowed for an excavation at the unconscious level. For a further reading, please see Foucault, Michel (1969), *L' archéologie du savoir*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard.

[73] In Gutting, Gary and Oksala, Johanna (2019), "Michel Foucault", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2019 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2019/entries/foucault/>. (Accessed January 5, 2021).

[74] Regarding the elaboration of the racial as a discursive operation, in *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (2007), the Brazilian scholar Denise Ferreira da Silva has also elaborated an extremely relevant critique of modern

Hence, Wynter elaborates how the category of the racial becomes "an ethico-political signifier" (*idem*), contributed not only to the conception of modern Man, but also to disavow its others, considered by several means non-human. As Anibal Quijano refers in his *Qué tal Raza!* (2000), the 'idea of race' would come to be the most efficient instrument of social domination invented in the last five centuries, contrary to gender which has a biogenetically anatomical differential correlate onto which each culture's system of gendered categories would be founded. Therefore, Wynter's radical move was that beyond recognizing, like Marx and Engels, that social and political dominant structures reflect the conditions of economic production, but contrary to the conventional historical-materialist critique that do not relates the ascription of race to economic relations, Wynter relates the ontological questions — who/what we are — in direct correlation to the "racial" predicate. Hence, she analyses how the juridical-economic colonial infrastructures were established along diverse moments and places, in close interrelation and dependence of what it meant to be human, and how humanness was being reimagined along the formulation of the idea of race (Silva in McKittrick, 2015: 96).

Thus, we will consider Wynter's genealogy of Western secularization and the dominant descriptives of the human that Wynter names as Man1 and Man2, until the current secular bio-economic global figure of the human. This figure is supported by Western scientific premises of the human as a bio-natural organism, and by a global capitalist system that thrives on accumulation and consumption, hence perpetuating the figure of Western bourgeoisie "Man" as the only subject that seems to have ontological sovereignty.

We will then expose Wynter's theory of the symbolic over-representation of Man, her exposition of the secularization of medieval Judeo-Christian Europe and the subsequent emergence of the physical and natural sciences—the Copernican and Darwinian epochs—that forever changed our understanding of what it means to be human. We will demonstrate how this process of secularization was, according to Wynter, an aporia, since it was, on the one hand, a human and cognitive emancipatory process, but on the other hand, it was a process of humanness subjugation, predicated on the Western scientific and philosophical

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thought demonstrating how Western epistemological construction of the racial as a political signifier is intertwined with contemporary neocolonial power structures and the current global production of space.

orders of knowledge, and on the inscription of categories, such as, the rational/irrational, the selected/*dysselected*, and the category of race as biopolitical signifier.

Beginning in feudal Latin-Christian medieval Europe with its theological order of knowledge, where the human as Man was predicted as the "*homo religiosus*", the first stage of secularization of the human occurred through the Renaissance's humanism, an epochal shift from Judeo-Christian symbolic representation and cultural system to its later secular variants (Wynter, 1995b: 13). Wynter claims that this first secular move was based, above all, in the transference of the "Genesis's narrative of mankind's enslavement to Original Sin," no longer interpreted in sexual terms that opposed Holy Spirit/Sinful Flesh, to another behavior-oriented goal proper to the state, that of "*civitas secularis,*" where redemption from human's enslavement to the irrational or sensory aspects of its nature should be effected through individual rationality (Wynter, 1995b: 14). This figure is what Wynter names Man1, the *homo politicus* of a civic humanism in a system of political absolutism that replaced the former theological absolutism. A rational individual citizen that was mediated by the state, while also guaranteeing the state's stability, security, and prosperity.

Furthermore, the early Renaissance humanists proposed a pivotal change in the relation between man and God: naturalizing the human and 'degodding' God by proposing that God had created the universe not for His own glory, but for man's sake, proposing a poetics of "*proper nos homines* (for our human sake)" (Wynter, 2003: 278). This epochal shift of Man1 provided the ethical-political context for the "Copernican rupture with the Orthodox Christianized astronomy" (*idem*), as Wynter clarifies:

> [i]t was the new premise that God had created the world/universe for mankind's sake, as a premise that ensured that He would have had to make it according to rational, non-arbitrary rules that could be knowable by the beings that He had made it for, that would lead to Copernicus's declaration (against the epistemological resignation of Ptolemaic astronomy, which said that such knowledge was not available for mere mortals) that since the universe had been made for our sake by the best and wisest of master craftsmen, it had to be knowable (*idem*).

Thus, from the sixteenth century Renaissance up until the eighteenth century, in the wake of the invention of "descriptive statement" of Man 1, as Wynter refers, it became possible to conceptualize "natural causality," and "nature as an autonomously functioning force in its own right governed by its own laws" (Wynter in McKittrick, 2015: 7), creating the ground for the gradual cognitive emancipation that allowed, firstly, for the Copernican leap and the

physical sciences and, secondly, from the eighteenth century until the present, for the Darwinian evolutionary theory and the biological sciences.

The second secularizing moment according to Wynter corresponds to the invention of Man 2, "a figure based on the Western bourgeoisie's model of being human" articulated, since the end of the nineteenth century, as "liberal monohumanism's *homo economicus*" (10). This symbolic over-representation of Man has been perpetuating an idea of being human represented as a white bourgeois cisgender heterosexual male subject, as if that subject would be the only mode of complete humanness.

These figures of Man1 and Man2 were sedimented and inflected according to systems of thought also adjusted to each epochal power configurations. Christopher Columbus and the first Spanish and Portuguese colonizers were operating under their sovereign Crowns and the papacy. According to the theological geographic order, European continent and its Eastern territory were considered the habitable lands. The African territories, although known, were considered the *torrid* zone, hence inhabitable, and the lands in the New World territories considered, until then, non-existent. After Columbus arrival, and for the colonization purpose, the New World lands were considered no man's land (*terra nullis*), which allowed for the early colonization of indigenous populations, and the appropriation of their lands, securing wealth and land for the Crown and the Pope, and converting pagans to Catholicism.

However, there were limitations in the theological justifications for appropriating land and enslaving Native Americans, because since the New World was considered inexistent, Wynter refers, "indigenous peoples (…) could not be classified as Enemies-of-Christ, since Christ's apostles had not reached the New World, never preached the Word of the Gospel to them" (Wynter, 2003: 291). Therefore, as Wynter refers reading historian Anthony Pagden, the Spanish crown engaged in efforts to obtain juridical, theological, and philosophical justifications for its colonial enterprise, gathering jurists and theologians (*idem*). Drawing upon Greek theories of knowledge, namely Aristotle's' *Poetics* and his category of the natural slave, they adapted this category "in order to represent the indigenous peoples as ones who *were by nature different from the Spaniards* (…) expressed in degrees of rationality (…) seen as an *innately* determined difference" (Wynter, 1995b: 35). Therefore, with the purpose, on the one hand of elaborating the necessary arguments for expanding the colonization of New World, and on the other, in order to ease the European conscience for a purpose that

was mainly political and economic, the early Renaissance humanism invented the concept of non-homogeneity of the human species based on degrees of rationality (also inspired by Aristotelian philosophies). Therefore, not only the New World indigenous populations, but further on, the enslaved peoples from Africa, were made to occupy the category of human Otherness, as Wynter clarifies, becoming the "physical referent of the ideal of irrational/sub-rational Human Other" (Wynter, 2003: 266). Hence, Wynter explains how Western European secularism is from its foundation closely intertwined with the Judeo-Christian matrix, and how these two perspectives operated together to form "contemporary hegemonic global West centric modalities of thinking and being" (*idem*).

Within the context of intellectual revolution of liberal humanism in the nineteenth century, to reinforce the definition of non-homogeneity of the human, Charles Darwin's *Origins of Species*, would shatter the "knowledge through categories" prevailing until then, and counter the argument of divine design encoded in the Christian feudal order, the line of noble caste that had been mapped onto the physical universe and in the geography of the earth and, consequently, in the colonial classification of humanness categories (Wynter, 1995: 38). Hence, in the aftermath of Darwinian evolutionary theory, a system of representations based on a "bioevolutionary notion of order. (…) mapped onto the range of human hereditary variations" replaced the previous one and let to the inscription of what "W. E. B. Du Bois (…) define as the *color line*" (39).

Therefore, a "bioevolutionary determined difference of genetic value" which differentiated, "*one* selected *human hereditary variation,*" perpetuating the dichotomy that Wynter names the "eugenic line of descent (the line of Descent within genetic Grace)," versus a series with varying degrees of nonselected (or *dysselected*), and therefore "dysgenic Others" (*idem*). Concomitantly, Wynter underlies how this dichotomy is still inscribed in the "white/nonwhite global-systemic hierarchies," with its extreme manifestation anchored in DuBois's "color line": the *white*, or the unmixed people of Indo-European descent, versus the indigenous, but particularly, the *black*, the African and Afro-mixed ex-slave descent. Wynter resumes how this bioevolutionary determined differentials still function as organizers of or contemporary global world systemic order:

> (…) by making conceptualizable the representation, in the earlier place of a line of noble hereditary descent, of a bioevolutionary selected line of eugenic hereditary descent, the symbolic construct of 'race' mapped onto the color line has served to enact a new status criterion of eugenicity on whose basis the global bourgeoisie legitimates its ostensibly

> bioevolutionarily selected dominance — as the alleged global bearers of a transnational and transracial line of eugenic hereditary descent—over the global nonmiddle (or 'working') classes, with its extreme Other being that of the 'jobless' and 'homeless' underclass, who have been supposedly discarded by reason of their genetic defectivity by the Malthusian 'iron laws of nature' (Wynter, 1995b: 40).

Hence, besides Darwin's new paradigm, Wynter also recalls the influence for the descriptive of Man2 of the theory of "Natural Scarcity" developed by clergy-economist Thomas Malthus in his 1795 *Essay on the Principle of Population*. Malthus advances that while earth population growth is unlimited, natural resources are finite, thus, suggesting a law of self-regulation that exempts the state of interference in terms of egalitarian distribution of the scarce natural resources. If, on the one hand, these socio-economic theories protected the land-owners hegemonic power in detriment of the poor who would be submitted to the Malthusian process of natural selection, it also made possible, from the end of the eighteenth century and in the wider context of a liberal and economic political humanism, the rise of the non-landed, capital-owning bourgeoisie as a new ruling elite, as Wynter illuminates:

> [s]eeing that if at one level Man2 is now defined as a jobholding Breadwinner, and even more optimally, as a successful 'masterer of Natural Scarcity' (Investor, or capital accumulator), what might be called the archipelago of its modes of Human Otherness can no longer be defined in the terms of the interned Mad, the interned 'Indian,' the enslaved 'Negro' in which it had been earlier defined. Instead, the new descriptive statement of the human will call for its archipelago of Human Otherness to be peopled by a new category, one now comprised of the jobless, the homeless, the Poor, the systemically made jobless and criminalized—of the 'underdeveloped'—all as the category of the economically *damnés* (Fanon 1961), rather than, as before, of the politically condemned. With the result that if inside Europe, it will be the Poor who will be made to reoccupy the earlier proscribed interned places of the Leper and the Mad, in the Euro-Americas, it is the freed Negro, together with the Indians interned in reservations, or as *peons* on *haciendas*, who will now be interned in the new institution of Poverty/Joblessness (Wynter, 2003: 321).

The empowerment of this elite was, hence, secured by the Darwinian and Malthusian macro-origin stories, keeping the bottom role of the African descent peoples, as well as all the other (still current) systemically expendable global archipelagos of poverty, that also include the jobless, the homeless, the "underdeveloped," to perpetuate what Wynter calls the "Two Culture organization of our present order of knowledge" (Wynter, 2003: 322). Therefore, in the current era the human is understood as a biological mechanism subordinated to the accumulation of capital in the name of the well-being and (economic) freedom, a bioeconomic human.

Sylvia Wynter reimagines a different human narrative possibility related to hybridity, recurring to one of her primary theoretical influences, the black Francophone Caribbean philosopher, psychiatrist and anticolonial thinker Frantz Fanon. Departing from his experience in practicing psychiatry with both "native" colonial and his black Caribbean patients, Fanon disputes the liberal humanist conception of the human as biological organism and autonomous subject. In his seminal book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1964), he proposes an alternative to that biogenetic premise of the human by identifying the transindividual and systematic organizing principle that lay behind both the reflex and autophobic nature of his patients' behaviors (Wynter, 1995: 44). Fanon locates these self-aversion and auto-phobic behaviors beyond Freudian psychoanalytical theory, which sought responses for his own patient's behaviors in their individual autonomous psyche, or in their family Oedipus complex. Instead, Fanon proposes that the "aberration of affect" that lead to his patients' behavior was related to a "specific socio-systemic organizing process that had (…) induced the 'aberration of affect' itself" (Wynter, 1995b: 45). Hence, Fanon considers *the mode of being a subject* as a *heteronomous* acting, thinking, and feeling expression that intertwines ontogeny, phylogeny and sociogeny (Fanon's concept that refers to our human codes, masks, or myths). It is only by means of a system of symbolic representations that each social and cultural modes of empirical reality can be put in place as a "form of life", that function as sociogenic principles, allowing for a languaging existence. Wynter, hence, explains the relevance of Fanon's concept of sociogeny:

> [w]hat Fanon recognized was the central role played in our human behaviours by our always linguistically constituted criteria of being (that is, our human *skins*, represented *masks*). For it is on the template of these masks/criteria and governing codes of symbolic life and death...which they express, that all individuals can alone be socialized as the condition of their realization not only as culture-specific subjects, but also as ones able to experience themselves as symbolically conspecific with the other members of the 'we' with whom they are narratively/linguistically bonded as they are biologically programmed to be (Wynter, 1995b: 45-46).

Departing from Fanon's premise that "phylogeny, ontogeny and sociogeny, *together, define what is to be a human*" (McKittrick, 2015: 16-17), Wynter underlies and expands Fanon's conceptual leap of reimagining the human as a hybrid being, both *bios* and *logos*, or in her own words "*bios* and *mythoi*" (*idem*). Therefore, Fanon challenged the foundational Western epistemological premise that each individual subject can objectively cognize him/herself without the referent of his/her socio cultural symbolic representational system,

and that these transindividual modes of thinking and doing also constitute and are constituted by each individual subject's biological aspects and action upon the system within it operates. In addition, he also challenges Western science assumption that humans can relate objectively to a phenomenon and produce objective knowledge upon it. Therefore, Wynter criticizes the role that scientific origin narratives play in conforming our dominate genre-specific Western symbolic representational system, and the perpetual iteration of the referred dominate "bio-economic" descriptive statement of being human.

Expanding from Fanon's thought, Wynter proposes that our poetic task, as hybrid beings, would be to reimagine the human transcosmogonically:

> (…) all of us, too, will also be able to begin to come to grips with the ecumenically human — thereby meta-Freudian and meta-Darwinian — implications of our having been, from our species origin, *hybridly* (skins / masks, phylogeny/ontogeny/sociogeny, *bios*/*mythoi*, and thereby always hitherto, *relatively*) *human*. We might, then, not only learn to think cosmogonically, …but also *transcosmogonically*. With this, we will find ourselves, whether white or nonwhite, black or non- black, now cognitively empowered to, as Fanon urges us, 'tear off with all [our] strength, the shameful livery put together by centuries of incomprehension' (McKittrick, 2015: 54).

For Wynter, then, the word "human" should be read as a verb and less as a noun, since to be human should be a "praxis of humanness" that calls for more than just to signal the underside of the Western concept of human bio-economic but is predicated on what Maturana and Varela have called in *Autopoiesis and Cognition* (1980) "the realization of the living" (McKittrick, 2015: 4). Thus, every biologically born individual subject is transformed into a *homo narrans*, a storytelling being, a "fictively charted and encoded, thereby hybrid, *bios*/*mythoi* autopoietic form of symbolic life" (McKittrick, 2015: 68). In this sense, each and every individual subject has the ability to engage in a "*referent-we* poetics" that extends the premise of Renaissance humanists *proper non homines* (for the sake of Man) remade to the "now species-oriented 'measure of the world'" (McKittrick, 2015: 73), hence, a nonessentialist, but an ecumenically, hence, *open* possibility for the human.

Openings Through Image, Montage, and Formulas of P*athos*

The dynamic montage of images that migrate between mediums, geographies and temporalities, living and fugitive visualities in permanent flux and that negotiate interculturalities, compose individual and collective imagery constellations. Images, hence, inform the visual perception, as well as the mental and physical production of visual materials, in a hybrid and unstable multisensory process, both conscious and unconscious. And visuality has the ability of expanding beyond physiological optical capabilities towards the sensorial multimodality of touch, taste, and smell, in a process that is always contingent, and cultural and historically situated.

This chapter evokes the complex visuality that acts in the construction of the social, of culture, and art, and aims to reflect how images, their montages and imaginary fictions are central to Marlene's artistic process. For the choreographer, images are privileged heterogeneous and fertile fields of openness, impurity, and intensity.

This is not the moment for a detailed reflection on theory of visuality or visual perception, as it has been developed by several fields, such as visual cultures, history of art, or image anthropology. Nevertheless, we wish to demonstrate how both singular images and their montage constitute privileged choreographic tools in Marlene's creative process, since their relationality *opens* the sphere of knowledge, imagination, and fiction. In fact, while starting each work, and departing from a main idea or a trigger, Marlene prepares a collection of visual, literary, musical, and cinematographic references, among others, with which she composes a living, hybrid and moving atlas of references. This creative methodology is, in a certain sense, heir to the work of German historian of art and culture Aby Warburg (1866-1929), and his process of knowledge production through images. Therefore, after a brief contextualization of the intricate complexity surrounding images and visuality, our reflection will focus on the epistemological and artistic ruptures triggered by Warburg's investigation, as a psycho-historian, who tried to "diagnose the schizophrenia of Western culture through its images" (Figueira, 2009: 102). In fact, Warburg considered images as fluid, heterogeneous and heterochronic vehicles of other images, and of reminiscences, symptoms, and emotions, polarized by artists in their own time. Hence, through his groundbreaking project *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* [Mnemosyne Atlas of Images], he developed a methodology of image

montage aimed at rethinking Western art history and culture through images montage and beyond textuality.

Finally, in addition to the reflection on images as relevant choreographic tools for Marlene, we will also address the Freudian concept of overdetermined images and of the symptom, showing how these play key roles in Marlene's artistic methodology.

In the third part of the dissertation, we will propose an imagery atlas as an entry point to each choreography addressed (to be consulted in volume II, annexes).

In *Literacia Visual. Estudos sobre a inquietude das imagens* (2011), Isabel Capeloa Gil elaborates a comprehensive inquiry on the complex field of visuality, showing how images in contemporary times have acquired a cultural, epistemological and ethical prominence, becoming privileged means not only for social construction, but also for critical speculation about contemporary discourses and practices.

As Gil demonstrates, vision exceeds the physiological capacity of seeing in a healthy subject. Moreover, visual matter (an artifact or a visual experience) is disconnected from its representation, which is a situated phenomenon, conditioned to each individual socio-cultural context. (Gil, 2011: 13-14).

Moreover, from the sixties of the past century — in the line of Barthes' criticism of the linguistic anchoring of images (Barthes, 1961, 1964, 1980) and Foucault's critique of the textualization of the real (Foucault, 1970), to the most recent developments on the anthropology of image (Didi-Huberman, 1992; Belting, 2001; among others) — several authors have demonstrated that visual matters are not dependent on the subject's conscious and hegemonic formulations, but that images have their relational character. Hence, images have the ability to return their gaze to the beholder, to reconfigure sign systems that demand a more attentive and critical look, disrupting stable and univocal perceptions and constructions of the real. For this reason, Gil underlines the relevance of visual literacy as a practice of citizenship, which goes beyond a reflection of images as visual representations in their historical-cultural context but aims at investigating how imagery devices and visual power infrastructures may define frontiers of visibility and invisibility (15). In this sense, a multimodal and multisensory visuality as a political practice can operate as a tool for critical navigation in the contemporary complexity of visual productions and interactions, enabling reflections

around the *distribution of the sensible* (Rancière, 2010), demonstrating how imagery is relevant in constructing the social (Mitchell, 2004), the cultural and the political.

Thus, images, whether of technological, of artistic production, or mental ones are complex cultural artifacts, with no direct indexation to reality, whose deciphering will always be singular, and demands transdisciplinary cultural skills (Gil, 2011: 24 -25). Furthermore, such a visual practice refuses the hegemony of Cartesian subjectivity, the premise that the real is constructed upon the subject's mental representations, and the hierarchy of the textual over the visual. As Rancière acknowledged, the reduction of the privilege of language over imagery underlined the body as a medium for visual production, interconnected to an economy of affects, which has also been recovering its prominence in regard to rationality. In fact, in his aesthetic sensible, Rancière highlighted the paradoxical relation between *pathos* and *logos*, considering feelings and emotions as producers of knowledge in the same way Freud acknowledged that emotions, such as love and death, were always major driving forces (and images) in life (Figueira, 2009: 21).

Moreover, in the attempt to grasp images in their wide spectrum of meanings and purposes, the German scholar Hans Belting has elaborated an approach of image anthropology grounded on images, medium and the body. The medium is understood as "the agent in which images are transmitted, while body means either the performing or the perceived body on which images depend no less than on their respective media" (Belting, 2005: 302).

According to Belting, images include both mental images as physical artifacts, and they do not exist by themselves, but they happen as moving images. With this perspective, the author proposes an iconology that bridges past and present in the life of images and is not limited to art (303). Belting proposal rests on the assumption that both internal or external images are ambivalent and interact on several levels, thus, should both be part of a contemporary political inquiry on images. Moreover, the "what of an image is indissoluble from the how in which it happens" (304), hence, mediality is not replaceable by the materiality of images (305). Moreover, the mediality of images exceeds the visual realm, and our own body, our brain, and the language we produce can also function as a medium to transmit images.[75] In fact, Belting underlies our bodily experience in the awareness of the dualism inherent in visual media:

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[75] As refers Hans Belting, "[w]ords stimulate our imagination, while the imagination in turn transforms them into images they signify. (…) But here too, it needs our body to feel them with our personal experience and meaning (…). (Belting, 2005: 306).

> We know that we all have or that we all own images, that they live in our bodies or in our dreams and wait to be summoned by our bodies to show up. Some languages, like German, distinguish a term for memory as an archive of images (*Gedächtnis*) from a term for memory as an activity, that is, as our recollection of images (*Erinnerung*). This distinction means that we both own and produce images. In each case, bodies (that is, brains) serve as a living medium that makes us perceive, project, or remember images and that also enables our imagination to censor or to transform them (Belting, 2005: 305-6).

This highlights the relevance of both an archival and producer bodily memory for the experience of visuality. In addition, and regarding a dance performance, sound and movement also change the visual experience of the event, in the sense that this multisensorial perception alters the affect it provokes on the spectator.

On the other hand, from time immemorial, humans already communicated through images and accepted them in the place of bodies. In that case, Belting demonstrates, to experience these images alive, humans animate their media, and this activity of *animation* "describes the use of images better than does perception—perception of images as if they were bodies or in the name of bodies—that is, perception of a symbolic kind" (307). Hence, the body is a living media, able to desire, to perceive, remember, and create images, and in the case of the performer's body, it acts as media in its most complete sense. According to Belting, the bodies, for their "initial monopoly on mediating images" may be seen "as the archetype of all visual media" (316). In this sense, a contemporary iconology able to include art and other visual materials should also reincorporate the body that, in the present context of fascination with media and virtuality, has been reduced to a marginal condition of dematerialization and strangeness.

With an emphasis on the body as media, its conscious and unconscious capabilities of perception, archival, remembering, desiring, imagining, and producing visual materials, we wish to discuss open images made of heterogeneous and heterochronic materials, impure images that activate the gaze and the desire of the beholders or spectators. It becomes apparent, firstly, that images result from other images in processes of reminiscence, transformation, and distortions; and secondly, that images are "thought-forms" resulting from conscious and unconscious production; that images "convey and displace affects," hence, images are "fluid and impure patchworks" and "open intensities" (Figueira, 2009: 20-22).

Edward Wind, although believing in the necessity of a textual hermeneutics in regard to images, nevertheless embraced the idea of the ambivalence and ambiguity of images (28).

Wind acknowledges that signs do not have fixed and univocal meanings, but that are "constituted by gaps, the vocation of which is to make imagination wander" (29). Iconological and universal readings of images serve the purposes of knowledge and of power (of iconologists). "Chimerical images are overdetermined[76] and open to imagination," (…) "images that communicate by gaps, by prompting the exercise of imagination and desire" (30). Hence, the intention to interpret images by trying to fill all its gaps with an obsessive desire for univocal textual meanings does not captures the full power, force, and intensity of an image.

Contrary to Panofsky, the iconologist that tried to disclose the meanings of images and symbols through a hermeneutical procedure in a determined contextual framework, the German *Kulturwissenschaft* [Science of Culture] thinker Aby Warburg, "aimed at understanding the force, power and life of symbols and images, researching in an unprejudiced manner their constitution and itinerancies," understanding that "matters of empathy were also strongly at stake" (32).

From the beginning, Warburg disengages artforms from art-related literature and history, beginning by studying artworks in terms of their images, and the relations they establish not only with their cultural, social, and material context of production, but also to heterogeneous and heterochronic ramifications in historical space and time. Namely, when speaking of the Renaissance, Warburg adopts rather "the renewal of pagan antiquity," in which "this notion of 'renewal' supposes that of 'survival,' *Nachleben*, so that the Ancient world never really disappeared but continuously metamorphosed" (Figueira, 2009: 32), manifesting the plurality of temporalities interweaved in images. Hence, the Warburgian conception of this "Ancient World" was less a grammar of style and meanings, as in the Panofsky categorical understanding, but more a "system of forms-forces, of errant ghosts making way into the future, embodying a number of promises and threats" (33), oscillating between the pole of culture and that of magic, and hence conveying art as fundamentally *impure*.[77]

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[76] Overdetermined image is a concept in Sigmund Freud's work on the structure of the formations of the unconscious, namely, of the work on dreams and on the symptom, that will be developed further ahead. In chapter *Dream-work operations as choreographic tools*, we will dedicate our attention to the dream-work operations according to Freud, and how they influence Marlene's choreographic methodology.

[77] This notion of art as *impure* evokes one of the three key strategies that crosses Freitas' choreographic work: *impurity*.

Essentially, for Warburg, “art was a ‘social organ’ (echoing his Burckhardtian background), at the intersection of social and artistic determinations, where reality, imagination and affects intertwine” (Figueira, 2009: 91).

Through the prism of an anthropologist, philologist and psychologist, focusing not particularly on the image main theme of representation, but dedicating attention to details such as accessories, garments, hair flows, Warburg became aware of the multiplicity and fluidity of threads implicit in images, and consequently, that the tools to approach them could not be confined to narrow disciplinary categories, but open to undisciplined approaches, as the ones structuring his *Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg*.[78]

Moreover, beyond material, visual, and literary sources, Warburg also considered gestural and ritual traces in musical and theatrical performances as relevant manifestations of something also present in images. In fact, these gestures, bodily postures, and movements also “convey emotional states which constitute reminiscences of ancient rituals, likely Dionysian ones (echoing Warburg's fundamental Nietzschean background)” (97).

Adding to the relevance of bodily gestures was Warburg’s interest for the expression of human emotions,[79] understanding that there was “unconscious memory at work in the expression of emotions, that perpetuates and actualises primitive expressive movements and detaches them from straightforward physiological or psychological necessity” (*idem*). This contributed to his formulation of *pathosformel* as formulas that make visible emotional states, and that can also be open to cultural reappropriations.

One of Warburg most elaborated research on *pathosformeln* can be traced in his study of the Ninfa, a perfect example for the opposite emotions that can be embedded in this kind of *formulas of pathos* across times, polarized by each artist with and through a situated context. The Ninfa was a figure that could express joyfulness or eroticism in some contexts, while in others could be related to fear, pain, or terror. It reveals how images can be mobile, fluid, and ungraspable as floating signifiers, that exceed the domain of art history and touch upon the realm of intensity and emotions, of the unconscious and the psychic symptom.

[78] *Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg* was Warburg’s library for Culture Science created in Hamburg, in 1926 as an interdisciplinary forum for the science of culture, art history and iconology. In 1933, the Warburg Haus was closed, and the library shipped to London to escape the Nazis. Today the collection is held at the Warburg Institute, London.

[79] “From Darwin's *The Expression of Emotions in Men and Animals* (1872) Warburg learnt that besides reasons of inner necessity (physiological, the need to dissipate emotional states, etc) and their ancestral biological necessity, outward expressions could be associated to causes that barely justify them (i.e. they could be displaced) and intensified” (Figueira, 2009: 97).

In his reading of Warburg's project, the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben refers that each time an artist makes choices that are not only formal neither stylistic, these choices are ethical, defining the artist's position in a particular time but also in relation to past legacies. He called this process "the interpretation of the historic problem," which becomes "a diagnostic of the western subject, fighting to solve its own contradictions and to find, in-between the ancient and the new, its one vital dwelling" (Agamben, 2004a: 17, my translation). According to this perspective, which considers "culture always as a process of *Nachleben* [*survival*], transmission, reception, and polarization," we understand why the study of the "symbols and their life in the social memory" played such a relevant role in Warburg's *Kulturwissenschaft* (18).

According to Agamben, the symbol and the image for Warburg "resemble an engram of human's nervous system," because in them "an energetic charge and emotional expression is crystallized which, then, survives as a heritage and is transmitted through the social memory" along the time. Symbols, according to Warburg's thinking, can be seen as "dynamograms" which, when transmitted to the artists, are polarized through their work into "passive, active, positive, or negative" energy (Agamben, 2004a: 18-19). The artists, in Warburgian words, could be seen as "hyper sensible seismographs," who respond to symbols by polarizing them. Hence, symbols "belong to an intermediary sphere between the consciousness and the primitive reaction," thus, allowing the possibility of both "regression and of a higher level of knowledge" (20).

The image and the symbol are, then, places of that in-betweenness, of the interval, the *Zwischenraum*, where the polarities and torments of social memory are played out and await to be received and transformed, in each historical moment. Agamben proposed to name Warburg's methodology as "iconology of the interval," into which converged "philology, ethnology, history and biology," a science that would allow man to exit its ethnocentrism, and its schizophrenia (30-31).

Thereafter, it is not randomly that argue that Marlene's work has a seismographic politicality. It evokes Warburg' heritage, particularly, his project *BilderAtlas Mnemosyne* [Mnemosyne Image Atlas],[80] in his own words, "a kind of condenser that would gather all

[80] In fact, projected on 1905, the *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* only began effectively in 1924 when Warburg, recovered from his psychoses, returned from a clinic in Switzerland, where he was treated by psychiatrist Ludwig Binswanger. The *Bilderatlas* remained incomplete at the time of Warburg's death in 1929, and was recently

the energetic currents that animated and would continue to animate the memory of Europe, anchored on its ghosts" (Agamben, 1999a: 95). *Mnemosyne* is the Greek word for memory, as is the name of the Greek goddess who, in her relationship with Zeus, became the mother of all muses.

The fact that Marlene's starts all her artistic works by gathering an atlas of references, which evolves along her creative process in studio and is shared with other performers, underlies the potentiality of openness such a strategy of montage entails, countering both aesthetic purity and epistemological hegemony. If Warburg intended to deconstruct the linearity of art history and Western culture unravelling a mistaken conception of Western European cultural hegemony, also in Marlene, the assembly of heterogeneous and overdetermined visual and figural elements open the history of art and dance, creating space for choreographies of impurity and intensity, hence, that resist categorization and rational comprehension. Thus, here we can grasp how her key strategies interelate: *openness* allows for *impurity* to find its way into the artistic practice, working with and through *intensity* as a tool to dislocate Western aesthetics's legacy grounded in rationality, categorization, and self-certainty. Then, Marlene's works acquire a seismographic quality of diagnosing a time that, although being in the present, finds its legibility (in the line of Warburgian thought),

> [f]or daring to do. . . the attempt to descend to the depths where the impulses of the human spirit are interwoven with the achronologically stratified matter. Only there do we discover where the expressive values of the pagan shudders derived from the original orgiastic experience were coined: the tragic *thiasus* (Warburg, 2010: 4).

The *thiasus*, in Greek mythology, was the ecstatic procession in the honor of Dionysus, the god of the vine, wine, fertility, theatre and religious ecstasy, performed by their most significant members, the human female devotees called the maenads. In the Greek vase-paintings and bas-reliefs, the maenads would be depicted brandishing the thyrsus, a staff of giant fennel covered with ivy vines and leaves and topped with a pinecone, symbol of Dionysus that could signify both a beneficent wand and a weapon used to destroy those who oppose his cult and the freedoms he represents.

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exhibited at the HKW, in Berlin. For detailed information on the exhibition please consult: https://www.hkw.de/en/programm/projekte/2020/aby_warburg/bilderatlas_mnemosyne_start.php.

Both the *thiasus* and the *thyrsus* were fertile choreographic elements in the figural development of Marlene's dance piece *Bacchae – prelude to a purge* (2018), which we will elaborate in the third part of this dissertation.

Image Atlas, Overdetermined Images, and Image-Symptoms

An image atlas proposes erratic and fertile relationalities from image to image. It is a visual form of knowledge that, according to Didi-Huberman, reconciles the aesthetic paradigm of the visual form with the epistemic paradigm of knowledge. This visual form of knowledge contradicts the Platonic postulates that privilege ideas over sensible perceptions. Hence, being a creative practice through images, it introduces an exuberant and fundamental impurity that opposes both epistemic purity—introducing the fluidity and opacity embedded in each image—as well as it opposes aesthetic purity, unravelling the multiple and the hybrid that result from every montage.

In addition, visual montages also create interstitial spaces and heuristic relational intervals, usually not tolerated by axiomatic and univocal fields of knowledge. These expose any thinking or creative process to the potentiality that can result from the imponderable, the incoherent, from overdetermined images or simultaneous contradictions. It is, thus, a methodology that allows the inexhaustible opening to new images and that operates, above all, through imagination. We are considering imagination, as refers Didi-Huberman, neither as a personal fantasy, nor a sensibility, but as a process that seeks to understand, beyond philosophical methods, the intimate relations between things, their correspondences and analogies (Didi-Huberman, 2010: 16, my transl.).

In effect, the Latin word *imago* shares the same etymological root with image and imagination. Moreover, *imago*, symbolized in the butterfly, also refers to the process of metamorphosis from a larval state[81] to the animal final stage. Furthermore, *imago* can also be considered a founding image for the symbol of the psyche and the unconscious, since the "uncanny" performative process from a larva to the butterfly may evoke the abyssal space that underlies, on the one hand, the doubling within the human, between conscious and unconscious, and the transitional and relational nature of the human, transcending stagnation,

[81] It is interesting to note that one of Marlene's early pieces is entitled "larvar," thus, her interest in exploring transformational or metamorphic states rests at the center of her investigation from the very beginning.

and permanence, always in a process of becoming. Thus, contaminated by the symbolism of *imago*, the imagination may be considered a technology of fabulation of the self and of the world that embodies this potentiality for transformation, by placing in relation previously disconnected or oppositional elements.

Walter Benjamin exposed both the risk and the fertility that results from this ambivalence of reading the world (*Lesbarkeit*) not only through language, but also in the phenomenological, immanent, and historical conditions of visuality. For Benjamin, dialectical images, "as 'crystals of historical legibility', as well as all reading, even that of a text, must include the potentiality of similarity (Didi-Huberman, 2010: 17, my transl.). Hence, an atlas of images may be considered, in the line of Benjamin's concept of *Lesbarkeit*, as an apparatus for reading the world beyond language, hence, trying to *read what was never written* through dialectical images and their constellations. According to Benjamin, in nis Notebook "N", "On Epistemology, Theory and Progress" of the *Arcades Project* only dialectical images could be considered historical images, since "only the image that is read—which is to say, the image in the now of its recognizability—bears to the highest degree the imprint of the perilous critical moment on which all reading is founded" (Benjamin, 1999 [1916-1939]: 463).

In addition, an image atlas also provides a critical tool for rereading the human sciences, namely, anthropology, psychology, and history of art. In fact, since the end of the nineteenth century to the first decades of the twentieth century, imagination and images unraveled these disciplines through the work, namely, by Georg Simmel in sociology of forms, Marcel Mauss in anthropology, Sigmund Freud in psychoanalysis (from the imagistic clinical work, to the free associations of meanings, the dislocation of images and symptoms, etc.), to then Warburg's "iconology of the interval," funded in the "natural coalescence of word and image, "*die natürliche Zusammengehörigkeit von Wort und Bild*" (Warburg, 1990 [1902]: 106, my translation).

Moreover, the image atlas is also an anachronic or heterochronic apparatus since different images from different times coexist in the same montage. However, not only diverse temporalities coexist but also, Warburg refers, a great "diversity of relational systems in which man finds himself engaged" (*verschiendende Systeme von Relationen, in die der Mensch eingestellt ist*)" (Warburg, 2000 [1927-29]: 8, my transl.) and that magic thinking presents as a mixture or amalgam. Thereafter, Warburg understood that thought and

knowledge result not from founded forms but from transformation, indebted to migratory forces, images, symbols, and emotions, in perpetual wanderings or, in his own words, *Wanderungen*.

In the case of Marlene's methodology, the image atlas is not only a reading apparatus, but also an apparatus to reimagine the world through artistic creation. As we will see, her atlas of references is at the same time fertile and uncanny, producing unexpected connivance between reason and imagination, order and disorder. Like all atlas, it does not aim to establish knowledge in a definitive way. It is, indeed, an operative field capable of making heterogeneous orders of reality coincide and of constructing this encounter as a place of overdetermination. As Didi-Huberman said, these are "cartographies of strangeness," operators of conversion between forces of nature and the powers of culture, between brutal materialities and organized signs, between the unraveling of *monstra*—the *monsters*, representing chaos, disorder, the irrational, including the figures of madness, insanity, as well as all that was related to the so-called "low" body, the emotional and visceral body—and the constellations of the *astra*—the stars symbolizing the realm of ideas, the rational, the spiritual, the order, etc. (Didi-Huberman, 2010: 40).

In fact, Warburg has replaced both the Vasarian art history model of "life and death," and the Winkelmann model organized according to linear progressions of "grandeur and decay" for a cultural model of art history where time was organized through rhizomes and stratification, honoring its specific complexity, hybridity, and where images were considered privileged vehicles of survivals (*Nachleben*) and their ghosts, emotions, symptoms, and formulas of *pathos*, as Didi-Huberman clearly describes:

> (…) Warburg substituait um modèle résolument non naturel et symbolique, un modèle culturel de l'histoire où les temps n´étaient plus calqués sur des stades biomorphiques, mais s'exprimaient par strates, blocs hybrides, rhizomes, complexités spécifiques, retours souvent inattendus et bus tourjours déjoués. Au modèle ideal des "renaissances", des "bonnes imitations" et des "sereines beautés" antiques, Warburg substituait un modèle fantomal de l'histoire, où les temps n'étaient plus calqués sur la transmission académique des savoirs, mais s'exprimaient par hantises, "survivances", rémanences, revenances des forms. C'est-aà-dire, par non-savoirs, par impensés, par inconscientes du temps (Didi-Huberman, 2002: 27-28).

In fact, this phantasmatic model of art history can also be considered a psychic model, not a return to a certain theoretical ideal of the psychic, but the possibility of its decomposition. It is then a symptomatic model of thinking history and art, in which the emergence of

forms should be analyzed as processes of tension and polarization, as explains Didi-Huberman:

> Il s'agit donc d'un modèle symptomal où le devenir des forms devait s'analyser comme une ensemble de processus tensifs: tendus, par example, entre volonté d'identification et contrainte d'altération, purificacion et hybridation, normal et pathologique, ordre et chaos, traits d'évidence et traits d'impensé (Didi-Huberman: 2002: 29).

Hence, with Warburg, just as art history became disquiet and troubled, it is not possible today to stand before images and to look at them without taking into account their constitutive paradoxes: the different temporalities and geographies that cross them, their inherent polyrhythms; their phantasmatic nature and ability of returning and haunting; their power to transmit emotions and *pathos* through fundamental gestures, theorized in the Warburgian concept of *Pathosformeln*; their symptomatic structure where latencies and crises intertwine, as well as memory and desire, repetitions and differences.

Warburg's investigation was also marked by psychotic episodes that took him some years to recover in a clinic in Kreuzlingen, Switzerland, under psychiatrist Ludwig Binswanger. This encounter was extremely relevant for Warburg's recovery from madness, which happened after his famous lecture held at the clinic called *The Serpent Ritual* (1927). A conference that focused on some rituals by the Hopi Indians he had the chance to see in his trip to Arizona, New Mexico, namely the "snake dance," and how such experience was crucial for Warburg's awareness of the indestructibility of primitive man who remains the same through all epochs, through the survival (*Nachleben*) and wandering (*Wanderung*) expressed in performative gestures, captured in images and symbols along times and geographies.

Moreover, Binswanger, an attentive follower of Freud, shared with his patient some of the Freudian recent investigations. Although Warburg refused any systematic thinking in general, one may find some convergence between Freudian notion of the symptom, of the overdetermination of dreams and its visual content with Warburg's concepts of *Nachleben*, which aimed at a metapsychology of time, and of *Pathosformeln*, aiming at a metapsychology of gestures (Didi-Huberman, 2010: 275). In fact, the notion of "overdetermination"[82]

[82] Overdetermination refers to an effect that has multiple causes, each one of which sufficient to "determine" the effect. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), Freud demonstrated that "many of the dreams features had multiple causes, from recent daily memories to deeply repressed traumas and unconscious wishes, these being potent thoughts." In https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overdetermination (accessed January 10, 2021).

could evoke some of Warburg's concerns, namely, the "plasticity of symbols and images, their mobility throughout times and cultures (grasped by the *Nachleben*), throughout meanings, gestures, and emotions (grasped by the *pathosformel*) and briefly, the stubborn persistence of this phantasmagoria" (Figueira, 2009: 101).

Regarding the symptoms, what Freud brought to light in his analysis was the particularity of the hysterical symptoms. If in the case of a medical symptom like pain, the cause can be diagnosed; in the case of the hysterical symptom, according to Freud's analysis, they seem to be residues of emotional experiences that were dissociated from the affect and unconsciously repressed. In that case, the hysterical symptoms could be considered residues, or symbols, determined by traumatic memories, repressed in different levels of the unconscious, like geological strata. The symptoms are, then, also overdetermined in the sense that each symptom can result from more than one mnemic trace, and each trace can produce more than one symptom (105).

Furthermore, considering images as theatrical stages for intensities, and heterogeneous and heterochronic forces, we will elaborate on Warburg's concept of *Pathosformeln*, its multiple polarities, and then, in its convergence with Marlene's choreographies of composite figures, which release forces, and intensities on stage.

The Warburgian concept of *pathosformeln*, or formulas of pathos, was developed to answer one of his fundamental inquiries: what are the bodily forms and gestures of the surviving time, the *Nachleben* of Antiquity that Warburg traced, namely, in the Italian *Quattrocento*? In fact, Warburg began early his investigation[83] on the survival of movements and gestures from classical Antiquity, inquiring why Renaissance and modern artists would return to ancient formulas to express an affective gestuality of presence. How the pagan representations also influenced Christian religious artistic manifestations of both the sacred love and sorrow lamentations? How this pagan antiquity found its way for survival in the hybrid style and instability of the early Renaissance, manifesting cultural and geographical exchanges between the north, namely through Dürer, and the south, namely through the Italian Mantegna? (Didi-Huberman, 2002: 193-94). In effect, Warburg recognizes in these artists the polarity and mobility of intensities "*all'antica*," a new "pathetic" style of the

[83] As Didi-Huberman refers, Warburg began developing his investigation around the appropriation of movement and gestural formulas of classical antiquity by artists early in his essay "Fragments for a foundation of a monist psychology of art" [*Grundlegende Bruchstücke zur einer monistischen Kunstpsychologie*] (1888-1905), and later in the unpublished manuscript *Pathos, Pneuma, Polarität* (1928) (Didi-Huberman, 2002: 192).

Quatroccento which is reflected, for example, in gestures of Dionysian lamentations and orgiastic mornings in the free rhythms of ancient corporeality, evidencing the presence of a tragic *pathos*, hyper nervous and sensible, where religious figures are reconciled with gestures of Greek maenads (194-95).

Other art historians, such as Winckelmann, shared the same fascination as Warburg for the Classical world and its representation, although they analysed their subject from different perspectives. While Winckelmann was fascinated by the Enlightenment revival of antiquity, he associated the Greek ideal with the Apollonian premises of tranquillity, stability, and rationality, transmitted to the beholder as the classical serene *grandeur*. To this passive contemplativeness, Warburg would counter the restlessness and emotive character of figures and motifs from the classical era, as well as their capacity to carry and communicate psychological complexities through gesture, form, and expression. Countering Winckelmann's concept of Classical serenity, Warburg demonstrated the survival of antique pagan and Dionysian source materials through time in the emotive force of visual imageries, through the "pathetic" tempestuousness of gestures conveyed.

According to Didi-Huberman, Warburg's concept of the *Pathosformel* aligns with Friedrich Nietzsche's conceptualization of an Apollonian-Dionysian primal unity[84] inherent in Western civilization. Warburg's *Pathosformeln* similarly concerns the inherent opposition between the recurring static classical forms and the intrinsic drama of the psychological states they pictorialize, proposing an unprecedented relationship between form and content, an indissoluble convolution between emotional charge and iconographic form. This intricacy is a configuration of heterogeneous elements and times, polarities placed in simultaneous contradiction, impossible to synthesize and untangle. These formulas of *pathos*, Didi-Huberman refers, interweave "Eros and Thanatos, the fight against death and desire, the symbolic montage and the pulsion disassembled, the mineralized fossil and the vital energy of movement, the durable crystallization of graphemes and the fleeting expression of emotions" (Didi-Huberman, 2002: 201).

Overcoming the academic opposition between action and passion, Nietzsche

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[84] In fact, in his aesthetic treatise and work of classical philology *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* (1872), Nietzsche's conceptualized a continually unresolved painful and tragic conflict inherent within a representational union of contained, rational and stable Apollonian and troubled, impassioned Dionysian tendencies. From this intertwining of opposing forces resulted, according to Nietzsche, a continuous impulse that was both creative and destructive, and forever in a process of becoming.

demonstrates exemplarily the potential of *pathos*, as Didi-Huberman underlies: "when pain becomes the art of tragedy, when 'the unconscious force [becomes] a producer of forms', then *pathos* reveals its dynamism, its exuberance, its pregnancy” (Didi-Huberman, 2002: 211).

Similarly, through his proposition of *Pathosformeln*, Warburg emphasized the transformative plasticity of the “pathetic” paradigm, opening each cultural and visual phenomenon to the potentiality for affect, conveying *pathos* not only as a vehicle that engenders form, but that takes it to its highest intensity level, endowing it with life and movement.

Freitas’ choreographic work also operates through a “pathetic” and “empathic” structure, since *pathos* not only engenders forms, body-images and figures in her choreographic realms but also opens the event of her dance works to the potentiality of affect, towards the highest level of tension and intensity, contaminating the spectators in the encounter of forces it produces.

Openings across Relational Geontologies: on Cape Verde, from Creolization to the Arquipelagic

Born on the island of Sal, Cape Verde, it was in the island of São Vicente that Marlene lived her childhood and youth before moving to Lisbon with a grant to begin her dance studies. The main key lines that cross her artistic work—Openness, Impurity and Intensity—are also interwoven and related to other geontologies[85] anchored in Cape Verde, with its historical, social and cultural constellations, beyond her diasporic and transnational path.

For this matter, we will address Cape Verde historical and cultural context. An archipelago located in the Atlantic Ocean, about 500 km off the coast of Senegal, Guinea-Bissau and Gambia, Cape Verde has a geopolitical and economic past founded in the colonial and slave trade triangulation between Europe, Africa, and America. Having been constituted since its foundation with and through miscegenation and creolization processes, with migratory and diasporic movements since the nineteenth century until the present, this chapter aims to elaborate a brief contextualization of the processes and concepts of creole, creolization, and creoleness, starting from a general conceptual framework to, then, the particularity of the Cape Verdean case, unravelling the cultural and identity politics around Cabo-Verdianidade [Cape-Verdianity] and creoleness. Our purpose is to analyze how these political, and cultural subjectivation processes may show its traces in Marlene's choreographic work, and how they may relate to hybridity, another strong choreographic element in Marlene's work.

Further ahead, in the chapter *Music, Dance, Rituals: on some Cape Verdean performative expressions*, under the umbrella of "Intensity," we will dedicate some attention to the singularity of some Cape Verdean traditional performative practices, with a particular focus on São Vicente, in order to reflect, in Part III, how some of these traces find resonance in Marlene's work.

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[85] We evoke Elizabeth Povinelli's concept of "geontologies," developed in *Geontologies. Requiem to Late Liberalism* (2016), as a pertinent reflection on the current conditions of power beyond Foucault's biopolitics, evident in the context of settler late liberalism, but now more globally entwined. Povinelli conceives "geontologies" between bios and geos, life and nonlife that co-compose to produce singular modes of existence and empowerment. This concept entwines with another, of "geontopower" that dislocates the borders between life and nonlife, entangling human and nonhuman existence, opening towards a rethinking of present cultural politics. We use geontologies regarding Freitas' work, considering a politics of ongoing subjectivation that is situated, hence, relating to its respective transindividual context of transformability.

Creole, Creolization and Creoleness

The study of creole and creolization extends to several fields, with predominance in linguistics, social history, anthropology, culture studies, among others. Creole languages, creole populations, or creole denominations are intrinsically related to the first phase of European colonization, with its correlative creation of socio-economic configurations predicated on the trade of enslaved people from non-European territories (mostly African) to plantation systems in the so-called New World around and through the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific oceans. We are referring, namely, to the Americas, the Caribbean, the Mauritius, Reunion, among others. In the case of Portuguese colonization, creolization processes took place mainly in Brazil, in the archipelagos of São Tomé and Príncipe, and in Cape Verde. Hence, the term creole and creolization processes are indissoluble from Eurocentric ideologies of racialization and the earlier stage of colonial capitalism. Therefore, several historians, linguistics, anthropologists (Brathwaite, 1971; Chaudenson, 2001, Mintz, 1971, Trouillot, 1998; Vaughan, 2005, Vergès and Marimoutu 2004) have analyzed the conditions of violence and deprivation in which creolization processes generally took place.

The term creole had different meanings according to its diverse locations[86], and as all terms with a long history, the concept 'creole' has also creolized itself. In its earliest reference, as social identity, creole could mean the offspring of European progenitors, generally Spanish or Portuguese, born and raised in the so-called New World.

According to Portuguese anthropologist Miguel Vale de Almeida in his study *The Crioulo Project - Cape Verde, colonialism and creolity*[87], beyond all its several meanings, the term creole remains broadly associated with the New World, meaning from some kind of mixture, and existing in opposition to what was considered the Old Word, with its corresponding ideas of roots and origins.

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[86] Etymologically, creole was a "person born in a country but of a people not indigenous to it," from Spanish, *criollo* meant a "(person) native to a locality," from Portuguese *crioulo*, could be the diminutive of *cria* "person (especially a servant) raised in one's house," from *criar* "to raise or bring up." in https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=creole (consulted in 17-02-2021). In other contexts, the concept acquired different meanings, refers Almeida. In Réunion, the term refers to all those born in the island as opposed to those born in France. In Mexico, creole means someone originally from Spanish colonization, as opposed to the local community of *mestizos*. In Trinidad, the term is used to designate all Trinidadians, except those of Asian origin. In Suriname a Creole is someone of African origin, while in French Guiana he is a person who has adopted a European way of life. In Brazil the term is used pejoratively to mean 'black'. (Almeida, 2011b).

[87] Almeida, Miguel Vale de (2011b), *O Projecto Crioulo – Cabo Verde, colonialismo e crioulidade (Parte II e III)*, in https://www.buala.org/pt/a-ler/o-projecto-crioulo-cabo-verde-colonialismo-e-crioulidade-parte-ii-e-iii (accessed in December 12, 2020).

Since at that time the emigration of Europeans to other territories was considered to be degenerative, the term had, at first, negative connotations (Stewart, 2007: 1). However, from the periods leading up to the independence processes of these creole communities, namely in the Caribbean and also in Cape Verde, the concept was re-appropriated and re-imagined, recasting creolization as a positive process of creating cultures and subjectivations different from those of the colonizers, anchoring emancipatory identity politics and national projects. Hence, historical, and sociological different backgrounds and periodizations have fractured and inflected the meaning of 'creole,' and in the current postcolonial context, the term still has different denotations in different places.[88]

Regarding the term 'creolization,' meaning the complexity of interrelations that generate creole languages, people, and cultures, it is found only in the nineteenth century, but by that time, the Portuguese and Spanish meanings had been widely diffused and widened (Cohen and Tonitato, 2010: 3).

In the field of linguistics, Philip Baker and Peter Mühlhäuser show that, from the seventeenth century on, "creole" languages meant mixed languages or variations of an accepted language (Stewart, 2007: 2). Saliloko Mufwene (2002) distinguished pidgins and creole languages as new variations developed from the encounter between established European languages and non-European languages around several locations in the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans, between the 17th and 19th centuries.[89] While pidgin languages developed in the context of commercial ports, with reduced and functional purposes, creole languages developed mostly in the context of socio-economic plantation systems using non-European slave labor. Therefore, creolization in the field of linguistics refers to the restructuring process of a language from the encounter between two different languages, resulting in the formation of the creole as vernacular language, with grammar, phonology, lexicon, and syntax.

Being considered one of the earliest creole formations, the Cape Verdean creole language has been widely studied since the twentieth century, having as one of its

[88] As Stewart demonstrates the complexity of the historical development of "creole" as an identity figure in the postcolonial period: "In Haiti, which won independence early, and expelled the white population, *créole* could refer only to black people, whereas on Martinique, which remained within the French orbit, the same word referred to white people, as it did in Louisiana. In Mauritius, according to Chaudenson (2001:6), creoles are those who cannot claim the term "white" following the 'one drop' rule" (Stewart, 2007: 8).

[89] According to Mufwene, pidgin languages differ from creole languages in the sense that they were formed in trade colonies, with a more reduced and specialized function, serving as non-native *lingua franca*. Some have also developed into a vernacular, particularly in more urban contexts. Creole languages developed as vernacular, mostly, in the economic system of rise or sugar plantation employing non-European slave labor.

representatives the Cape Verdean writer and linguist Baltazar Lopes da Silva, with his work *O Dialecto Crioulo de Cabo Verde* (1957). For the Cape Verdeans, the term creole has the same meaning as the term Cape-Verdean, hence, it includes its culture, mother language and identity.

According to Miguel Vale de Almeida, the linguistic fascination with creole languages is mirrored with an anthropological fascination with the populations where they were formed. These creole societies formed an "interstitial conceptual space between European nation-states with its formed ethno-linguistic unity and the 'tribal' ethnic entities of the colonized and exotic world" (Almeida, 2011b – my transl.). Thereafter, Almeida points out two distinguished axes of creolistic research: "the concrete contexts of its formation (coasts, ports, warehouses and, above all, Afro-America) and the contemporary contexts of its postmodern and postcolonial metaphorization (diasporas, hybridisms, globalizations, etc.)" (*idem*). Hence, as travelling concepts, creole and creolization expose their diachronic plurality, Stewart opines, thereby making creolization "a platform for multiple theoretical departures" (Stewart, 2007: 6).

Regarding the study of the creolization process, it was anchored in the Afro-American and in the Afro-Caribbean plantation context (Herskovits, 1941; Brathwaite, 1971; Minz and Price, 1976, Édouard Glissant, 1981; Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confiant, 1989; Yelvington, 2001, Françoise Vergès, 2001, among others), with some incursions in the Brazilian and Cape Verdean cases as comparative terms. In the anglophone context, Edward Kamau Brathwaite was the most prominent creolization theoretician, and Édouard Glissant was the most notorious in the francophone context, followed by Françoise Vergès, and having largely influenced, in the eighties, the *Créolité* [Creoleness] movement developed by Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau e Raphael Confiant, manifested in their *Éloge de la créolité* (1989).

In the anglophone colonial context, Brathwaite describes the Jamaican process of creolization, since the first years of seasoning when slaves were 'marked,' given a different name in order to begin their creolization process with existing slaves; he also condemns the mimicry of the white colonial master, and diverse processes of subalternity to which the slaves would submit, either as survival strategies, or in an effort of countering the diminishing of the black or creole subject (Brathwaite, 2006: 152-3). For the author, creolization was considered an "historically affected socio-cultural continuum," where nothing was stable

and monolithic, and although there were "white/brown/black," there were many ways of asserting identity" (154). Furthermore, in this anglophone context, the study of creolization is directly linked both to the Pan-Africanism movements, and with the North American racial struggles from the twentieth century until the present.

Regarding the francophone context, Françoise Vergès (2001), in her study on the French colonial creole islands, such as Reunion, describes how slaves from different provenances were placed together, thus, complicating strategies of identity building and resistance movements. Furthermore, in the context of the twentieth century, Vergès notes how the creole intermediate elites from different French colonies, navigating between Paris and their contexts, realized that the colonization/creolization binomial rendered impossible any conception of stable origins and authentic identities. Thus, in the deterritorialized contexts of colonization, members of these creole cosmopolitan elites, such as Aimé Cesaire, Frantz Fanon, or later Glissant, among many other, debated issues of miscegenation, assimilation, blackness, *Négritude*, or racial ideologies, in the way to build up an identity that Vergès called "cosmopolitism" (Almeida, 2011b).

After the independence struggles, the disenchantment with Pan-Africanism and with the inability of postcolonial societies to reinvent themselves without co-opting (neo)colonial strategies, creole cosmopolitanism follows other lines of thought, such as the one by Édouard Glissant, that we will analyze further ahead.

In another line of creolistic research, some anthropologists have been appropriating creolization as a metaphor for global contemporary processes of interculturalism, hybridity and transnationalism. In this thread of thought, refers Stewart, some anthropologists such as Hannerz (1987) have been interested in the "creole linguistic model of a creole as continuum (or post-creole continuum)," trying to apply this model of "linguistic continuum to the apparent continua of cultural repertoires in world societies" (Stewart, 2007: 2). For Hannerz, the concept of creolization could be expanded to the globalized world of movement and mixture as a tool for analyzing cultural complexity. Relating to this debate, and even if the creation of autonomous linguistic systems such as creole languages is inherent to creolization socio-cultural processes, Mufwene alerts us to the danger of generalizing and appropriating creolization as a conceptual tool to other cultural processes emerging in quite different contexts of those of the colonial plantation system. This would be a variation of the old and

problematic tendency to consider language as the base metaphor for culture, or culture as a metaphor for language (Almeida, 2001b).

Moreover, Almeida refers by citing Yelvington (2001) how current studies around the processes of globalization, migration, transnationality, hybridism, among others, often neglect the foundational theoretical production on African diaspora studies in the Americas by authors such as W. E. B. Du Bois, St. Clair Drake, or Jean Price-Mars, among many others (Almeida, 2011b).

In the francophone context, French writer Édouard Glissant from Martinique, in his work *Le Discours Antillais* (1981), proposes to expand the concept of *Antillanité* to a global context, however, without presenting an essentialist theory based on identity assumptions, but through a relational poetics. First, for Glissant, creolization differs from miscegenation not only because of the imbalance of power relations inherent in the first process, but also because of the unpredictability of its results, unlike the miscegenation that produces more predictable outcomes. Furthermore, influenced by post-structuralist theories, for Glissant creolization does not produce identities anchored in assumptions of origin or roots, whether geographic, of filiation or ancestry. According to Glissant, creolization is very different from multiculturalism or postmodern identity fragmentation, since it produces identities based on rhizomatic relations, which do not depend on territorial assertions to emerge, and which tend to exist and evolve in permanent states of diffraction and transformation. For Glissant, following Deleuze and Guatarri thought on the rhizome, although creolization still keeps a sense of rootedness, it excludes the possibility of a totalitarian and essentialist conception of root or origin, presupposing a *Poetics of Relation* (1997a [1990]), according to which all identity processes extend in relation towards the Other.

Influenced by both Glissant's concept of creolization as a *poetics of relation*, and by Aimé Cesaire's *Négritude* movement,[90] but at the same time distancing themselves from both mentors, Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau e Raphael Confiant proposed, in the eighties, the *Créolité* movement, manifested through their *Éloge de la créolité* (1989). Through

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[90] Négritude is a literary and critique movement developed by several francophone black intellectuals during the thirties, such as Léopold Sédar Senghor, Martinican poet Aimé Césaire, and the Guianan Léon Damas. Translated as *Blackness*, this was relevant in establishing an identitarian black link among intellectuals in order to counter French colonial racism, as well as it was a precursor of the Pan-Africanism movement. For detailed information please consult https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Négritude.

the Creoleness movement, the three Martinican writers proclaimed their creole identity, theorizing their social and cultural history.

In relation to Cesaire's *Négritude*, the *Créolité* movement also claimed the need to counter the colonial and neocolonial connections to European culture, but instead of sharing the belief in a common African heritage, as in the case of Césaire, they turned to their proper context and proposed a shared root in the cultural and artistic value of the Antillean people. However, if Glissant proposed creolization as an open and rhizomatic process, a vision and not a theoretical construct, Barnabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant tried to crystallize creolization in the identity concept of *Créolité*, what was criticized by Glissant and several other thinkers. If their project aimed at a pan-Creole or pan-Caribbean movement, according to Gallagher, these intellectuals lacked not only the awareness of the heterogeneity of the creole universe beyond the Caribbean context, but also the consciousness that otherness, as Bhabha refers, is "never outside or beyond us" (Gallagher, 2007, 231).

With the gradual appropriation of the concept of creolization and creoleness to the globalized world, discourses and artistic practices have also adopted these themes in the perspective of situational flows, radical cultures, or even in contexts of migration and contemporary displacements. One of the moments that reveals the contamination of this conceptual and processional framework in the artistic field occurred in Documenta 11 (2002), when its curator Okwui Enwezor selected the theme "*Créolité* and Creolization" for one of the exhibition pavilions (Tolentino, 2013: 43). Although globalization tends towards homogenization, Enwezor conceives creolization as a decolonial relational process of thinking and curating contemporary art that tends, simultaneously, towards differentiation and dispersion, proposing a destabilization of centralized intellectual and artistic authority. Since then, this decentralizing decolonial perspective has become increasingly evident, if not mandatory in the global art context.

Moreover, we can relate this view of creolization as differentiation/dispersion to Glissant's idea of the "arquipelagic thought," as an antithesis to centralized and hegemonic epistemologies that tend to impose themselves to other structures of thought. The arquipelagic embraces the global diversity and encourages, in a way, decolonial epistemic rewriting and reimagining. In addition, Glissant also proposes the poetic figure of *Trembling Thought* (Glissant in Diawara, 2009), a thought that "is not uncertainty nor fear, it is not what paralyses us," but it includes all the "thought of utopia" (Tolentino, 2013: 44). This utopia points

to a scenario of global dialogues in which local differences are not neglected nor erased, but produced, preventing the stagnation of homogeneity and the danger of hegemonic discourses. Furthermore, this *trembling thought* is a thought that does not crystallize in stable definitions, that dilutes disciplinary borders between philosophy, poetry, truth, and fiction. It emphasizes that whatever is unknown in each one of us—our opacity— it is not something uncanny that divides us, but it is what connects us. In a time that tends to constantly diagnose and produce systematic thinking, a *trembling thought* remains open, allows for opacity to take place, resists being located and reified, it vibrates, staying multiple and leaving its identity undefinable and ungraspable.

Marlene's choreographies also work upon this openness that allows for opacity to take place. Trembling and vibrating, her figures and choreographies remain non crystallizable, and undefinable, and here also lies the politicality of her work.

Cape Verde: Colonialism, Creolization, Cape-Verdianity

In this chapter we will address the case of Cape Verde, with a brief contextualization of its colonial and creolization process. Moreover, we wish to critically reflect on how the concept of creoleness in Cape Verde, or Cape-Verdianity [*Cabo-Verdianidade*], since the second half of twentieth century, has been appropriated as an emancipatory identity and political tool for reimagining the nation.

Cabo Verde is an archipelago formed by ten islands and some islets, located about 500 km from the coast of Senegal.[91] Although it is difficult to ensure its uninhabited state, it is generally accepted (Barcellos, 1899; Ribeiro, 1955; Brásio, 1962) that the islands were discovered by Portuguese navigators on successive voyages between 1460-62 (Andrade, 1996: 32, my transl.).

As the maritime expansion proceeded,[92] in 1462 the Portuguese settled in Cidade Velha, in Santiago Island, which became a relevant outpost of Atlantic trade between Africa, Europe and the so-called New World.

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[91] According to Elisa Silva Andrade citing Jaime Cortesão, in the opinion of some historians there may have been incomplete references in previous geographical maps of the location of some islands off the coast of Senegambia (Andrade, 1996: 32).

[92] It is relevant to mention that these voyages of maritime expansion, with its consequent appropriation of lands, goods, capture of populations for the slave trade (the so-called infidels) and the evangelization of the

Since few Portuguese women settled in Cape Verde, for colonization purposes the Portuguese had interracial offspring with African enslaved women, and created, through complex relationships of race, power, identity, and sexuality, the first population described as creole (Cohen and Tonitato, 2010: 3).

> Creole populations, in particular in Cape Verde, had been conceptualized since the establishment of the colony in both continuity and discontinuity with Portuguese identity and [in respect] of the reproduction of the Portuguese presence in West Africa. The Creoles were useful for maintaining the Empire, in particular in West Africa, where they acted — depending also on their own agency and trade interests — as 'natural' allies of the Portuguese presence in the tropics. (…) They were seen as both 'cultural brokers' between Africans and Europeans and as biologically better suited to endure the difficult tropical conditions of Guinea and the Senegambia region (Rodrigues, 2003: p. 13-14).

During the first years of colonization, Portugal tried to implement the plantation system (sugar and cotton), like what had been done in the Azores and Madeira archipelagos, resorting to enslaved West African people for the necessary labor. Moreover, beyond Portuguese men, African women and their offspring, Jews escaping inquisition, or looking for new opportunities and to reaffirm Judaism, joined the Cape Verdean community, playing also a significant role in establishing trading routes (including slave trade) between Lisbon, Amsterdam, Salvador in Brazil, and Venice (Cohen and Tonitato, 2010: 3). However, since the islands had unfavorable mountainous terrain and unattractive climatic conditions to the plantation economic system, the colonization occurred with few European white settlers, mostly men, and numerous enslaved African people. According to Andrade, there exist references of the main African ethnic groups, proceeding from Cacheu, Genba and Bissau from the coast of Guinea, namely, Manjacos, Mandingas, Fulas, Bijagós and Balantas, which came to constitute the Cape-Verdean population (Andrade, 1996: 38, my transl.). These were later joined by white Portuguese colonizers and condemned people from Madeira archipelago, by Spanish, French, English, and Dutch, and later in the 19th century, by Jews from the Maghreb who would join the existing Jewish community.

Thereafter, according to David Hopffer Almada, miscegenation in the archipelago was largely due to the economic degradation of the islands and their consequent abandonment by a large part of the initial and descendant colonizers, to the progressive decline of

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indigenous people was legitimized in several Papal bulls. As Andrade points out, these include the Papal Bull *Dum Diversus* (1452), *Romanus Pontifex* (1456), *Inter Coetera* (1456), among others (Andrade, 1996: 29).

mercantile trade, and to the increasing competition with other European colonial powers (Tolentino, 2013: 49-50, my transl.).

Although the *Sotavento* [Leeward] islands group were populated earlier than those of the *Barlavento* [Windward], Cape Verdean community was relatively heterogeneous due to its great ethnic diversity. However, argues Andrade, at the time of the country independence in 1975, one could speak of the existence of a Cape Verdean population, with its own language called Creole, even with variation in pronunciation between islands, and with more predominance of the lexicon of Portuguese origin. In addition to being an instrument of discursive thinking of the Cape Verdean people, Creole has also become the language for their artistic expressions of a popular nature, such as the poetic-musical compositions of Santiago, the lyrics of coladeiras and mornas. The latter, a musical form with close references in Guinea-Conakry, became a symbol of popular music that crossed all the islands, with its languid rhythms and verses that, although expressing feelings of nostalgia, love, and evasion, was a subtle vehicle for criticism towards the society and colonial power of the time (Andrade, 1996: 52, my transl.).

Despite the fact that the enslaved population brought from Africa was subjected to human, social and cultural repression during centuries of colonialism, uprooted, and dispersed across the different islands, they have also brought with them traditions and cultural marks that still persist in Cape Verde. Among these, and with resonances in Marlene's work, we can find, namely, the *tabanca*[93] and its celebrations and processions; the *batuque*, a dance with a strong hips movement whose rhythm is marked by the clapping of hands on a compacted cloth that a group of women hold between their legs, accompanied by singing, generally, with a critical stance; the *funaná* and the *cola San Jon*, a popular dance to the sound of drums and whistles that is danced in open-air fields by the time of S. John's or St. Anthony religious fests (Andrade, 1996: 52, my transl.). According to Andrade, one can trace other influences of African heritage: the social distribution of domestic roles to women, while men after sowing dedicate themselves to rest or leisure; the use of a stick, the *pilão* and gourds as instruments of food preparation; the habit of carrying children on their backs with a cloth, among other techniques and instruments for cultivation, weaving, ceramics, dyeing, among others (*idem*).

[93] We will analyze in detail these performative practices, mainly existing in Santiago Island, in the chapter *Music, Dance, Carnival: Cape Verdean and São Vicente performative practices.*

Cape Verdeans adopted the way of dressing from the Portuguese, as well as the type of housing, the villages' urban design, administrative institutions, and the patriarchal family institution,[94] with an accentuated matrifocality that was also common in the Antilles. In addition to some agriculture techniques, from the colonizers they also adopted the festivities of the Catholic Church, and other contents of popular tales, which were not simply transplanted but transformed and adapted (Andrade, 1996: 52-3, my transl.). Hence, despite the assimilation policies imposed by Portuguese colonization, and their repression of the references considered primitive aimed at maintaining their colonial cultural supremacy, the heterogeneous Cape Verdean culture retains much of its African heritage.

Creolization did not mean a convergence of the groups involved, but the conditions created for an ambivalence in the infrastructures of socio-cultural interaction and in the game of power correlations. In fact, the societal creolization in Cape Verde occurred as a necessary response to the absence of white *reinóis* (descendants of Portuguese born in the colony) and to the insufficiency of metropolitans, and not by a progressive recognition of a higher status to blacks or mestizos (Fernandes, 2006: 69, my transl.). Due to that, the creolization process disturbed the racial and land-belonging classification system by neutralizing some traits between colonizers and colonized, and some segments of the Creole population demanded rights attributed only to the most powerful and prestigious group, perverting, and displacing the colonial logic. This allows us to understand the complex game of simulation and dissimulation that characterized the relationship between Portuguese colonial power and the Cape Verdean Creole elite, and which lasted until the country's independence in 1975. For the metropolitan power, in the scale of national belonging, Creoles or Cape Verdeans, regardless of their administrative, economic, and intellectual status, never acquired a status higher than that of "escusos"[95] (Fernandes, 2006: 70, my transl.), demonstrating the racialization infrastructure inherent to colonization.

Between 1646 and 1769, political power was intermittently exercised by the *filhos da terra* [those born in Cape Verde], the Creoles, a peculiar situation in a colonial context of

[94] As Elisa Andrade refers, it was a "sworn monogamy, but a "de facto polygamy", also due to the influence of African customs, which were adopted by both white and religious white settlers, who in debauchery possessed several concubine black enslaved women. (Andrade, 1996: 53, my transl.).

[95] "Excusos" (from the Latin *absconsus*, meaning "put away", "to lose sight of") is a Portuguese word whose meaning relates to what is hidden, restricted, but also what raises doubt about its legality or legitimacy. In Dicionário Priberam da Língua Portuguesa, 2008-2021, https://dicionario.priberam.org/escusos (accessed March 16, 2021).

racial subordination. That testifies, Fernandes argues, the preponderance of creole population in the administrative, political, and military spheres, and the uprooting of the colonizers and the metropolitans in the colony's jurisprudence (Fernandes, 2006: 71, my transl.). This fact reiterates, as Boaventura Sousa Santos notes, the subaltern character of Portuguese colonial capitalism in the European context at the time (Santos, 2006). Consequently, at the symbolic level, this fact leads to the mischaracterization of the classificatory mapping, both political and ethnic, so that ethnic belonging no longer completely determines the individual's place in power structures (*idem*). Due to the lack of representativeness, the colonizer is forced to include subaltern subjects in the power structures, although never granting them the highest hierarchical status (*idem*).

From 1750, with the arrival of the Marquis of Pombal to power, the so-called Portuguese second colonial wave began, with the dismantling and demoralization of the local elite, whose ascension became blocked, subjected again to racial domination, with metropolitan white subjects strengthening of political, ethnic, and economic control in the archipelago (78). After decades of experience of self-governance, elites are confronted with a new modern colonial model, founded on the exploitation and spoliation of the territory and its populations that affects them not only in the socio-economic level, but also in its Creole self-representation and symbolic structure.[96] This loss of any political sovereignty and commercial autonomy constituted one of the pillars for the emancipatory process of Cape Verdean society. The political and economic crisis that the Creoles went through was aggravated by the periods of drought and famine between 1773-75, which decimated about half of the Cape Verdean population, for which the metropolitan and local administrative structures were also responsible (87).

The 1820 Liberal Revolution in Portugal[97] triggered armed actions and political revolts that, regardless of their degree of achievement, constituted a mark in the history and political imagery of both parties, allowing for some (re)negotiation of political-institutional ties (90-92).

[96] One of the most notorious gestures was the concession, for twenty years, of trade and political rights of governance of the archipelago to the Grão Pará and Maranhão Company, located in Brazil. The Company had control over the local products' trading price, and was entitled to its profits (Fernandes, 1996: 85).

[97] After the Liberal Revolution, the 1822 Portuguese Constitution included the "principle of unity of political status and legislation between the colonies and the metropolis." Thus, in 1832, the colonies came to be called "províncias ultramarinas" [overseas provinces], ascending the indigenous to the status of Portuguese nationals (Fernandes, 1996: 94).

Later, with the recognition of Brazil's independence in 1825, the 1885 Berlin West Africa Conference[98] and the 1891 British *Ultimatum,*[99] Portuguese colonialism acquires a renewed model. It had to prove its colonial power, at the expense of losing its colonial territories to other European colonial forces. Hence, facing the threat to its national sovereignty and to overcome its European fragility, Portugal was forced to "Africanize" itself, hence, to expand its positions in Africa. This process creates, according to Fernandes, one of the most evident ambivalence of the so-called Portuguese Empire.[100] In fact, if the nationalist metropolitan discourse defends African territories as an integral part of the nation, Africans are relegated to the subaltern condition of indigenous people, subjected to a racial colonialism, driven by a social Darwinism. Thus, the same process that "forced the nationalist fervor forced the colonialist impetus" (93).

In Cape Verde, responses to changes in the colonial system were as ambivalent as the ambivalence of the socio-political status attributed to Creoles in the archipelago. Initially, according to Fernandes, the elite volunteered to collaborate in the pacification processes of the African territories and the indigenous civilizational mission, supported by the conviction of their differentiated civilizational status. However, with the perception that the

[98] "European nations such as Great Britain, France, and Germany began looking to Africa for natural resources for their growing industrial sectors as well as a potential market for the goods these factories produced. (…) Inevitably, the scramble for territory led to conflict among European powers, particularly between the British and French in West Africa; Egypt, the Portuguese, and British in East Africa; and the French and King Leopold II in central Africa. Rivalry between Great Britain and France led Bismarck to intervene, and in late 1884 he called a meeting of European powers in Berlin. In the subsequent meetings, Great Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, and King Leopold II negotiated their claims to African territory, which were then formalized and mapped. (...) Neither the Berlin Conference itself nor the framework for future negotiations provided any say for the peoples of Africa over the partitioning of their homelands. Although the Berlin Conference did not initiate European colonization of Africa, it legitimatet and formalized the process. (...) Following the close of the conference, European powers expanded their claims in Africa such that by 1900, European states had claimed nearly 90 percent of African territory." In https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195337709.001.0001/acref-9780195337709-e-0467 (Accessed 16 March 2021).

[99] "The ultimatum was a memorandum sent to the Portuguese Government by Lord Salisbury on 11 January 1890 in which he demanded the withdrawal of the Portuguese troops from Mashonaland and Matabeleland (now Zimbabwe) and the Shire-Nyasa region (now Malawi), where Portuguese and British interests in Africa overlapped. It meant that the UK was now claiming sovereignty over territories, some of which had been treated as Portuguese for centuries." In https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1890_British_Ultimatum (Accessed March 16, 2021).

[100] According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos, since the seventeenth century, Portugal is a "semiperipheral country in the modern capitalist world-system" that, although evolving along the centuries it kept its main features: "an intermediate economic development and a position of intermediary between center and periphery of the world-economy". The Portuguese state, Santos refers, has been "both product and producer of that intermediate position", and even after the liberal revolution of the nineteenth century, never fully assumed the characteristics of the modern state core. Furthermore, for the author, the Portuguese society did not adjust to the Western modern binaries, such as "culture/nature, civilized/uncivilized, modern/traditional", and it may be understood as "originally hybrid, or even if ultimately merely different" (Santos, 2006: 143).

metropolitans did not recognize them the principle of liberal equality, the Creole elite engages in deconstructing the colonial hegemonic discourse and its scientific postulates, for which education, the press and diasporic movements[101] were relevant, influencing the emergence of Cape Verdean Creole subjectivation (97).

According to Miguel Vale de Almeida, three moments can be highlighted during the mediation process between the intellectual elite in Cape Verde and the colonial power. The first is located between the Berlin Conference (1884-85) and the regime of the First Republic (1910-26), in which the creation of the St. Nicolau seminary in 1869 stands out, which allows the formation of an elite that will have administrative influence in the Portuguese colony of Guinea. At this moment, in Cape Verde, the so-called Nativists stand out, reiterating loyalty to the nation by means of their Portuguese citizenship, preventing an Africanist or even a Cape Verdean emancipation.

The second moment, Almeida continues, is triggered by the dictatorship of the Estado Novo and extends until 1960s under the influence of the literary movement *Claridade* [Clarity], which was relevant to question the cultural hierarchical patterns of Portuguese over the native (Almeida, 2011b). During this dictatorial period that did not contemplate any independentist stance, and where ethnic racial values overlapped citizenship rights and the ideology of the Empire unity, the islanders had to demonstrate their loyalty to the nation, accept Portuguese political hegemony and colonial territories. It was left to Cape Verdeans to prove their "Portuguese character" and the civilizational state of the archipelago, in order to obtain a different treatment from the other colonized territories.

In this context, in Mindelo, São Vicente[102] island, in 1936, the literary movement *Claridade* was created by Baltasar Lopes da Silva, Jorge Barbosa and Manuel Lopes, with a strong Brazilian influence (Jorge Amado, Jorge de Lima, among others, such as academics Gilberto Freyre and Artur Ramos), and in dialogue with the *Négritude* movement of Césaire

[101] According to Fernandes, emigration and diasporic movements are relevant not only to fulfill the population's material needs, but also their symbolic lack of representation, resulting from a long socio-historical subaltern process in which the Creole is seen as in a state of incompleteness (Fernandes, 1996: 116). This diaspora will be relevant, in addition to economic improvements, to Creole educational emancipation and international expansion. That influenced, on the one hand, the 1930s movement *Claridade* and, on the other hand, the later anti-colonialist movements of Africanist tendency prefigured in Amílcar Cabral.

[102] According to Andrade, the settlement of São Vicente (the last island in the archipelago to be populated) took place after the creation, by the English consul John Rendall, of a coal warehouse in Mindelo, between 1850-1860, to supply transatlantic ships. This was followed by other English companies, supply warehouses and the creation of *Porto Grande* [the Big Harbour] in Mindelo. This fact contributed to São Vicente demographic growth, and to the island europeanization (Andrade, 1996: 50-51).

and Senghor.[103] The *Claridade* movement focused on local Creole culture, its language and history, evoking themes such as hunger, poverty, and immigration, with social and political criticism. On the other hand, it operated through the negotiation of Cape Verdean identity, justified by the affirmation of Cape Verde as a role model of assimilation and colonial integration in the Portuguese nation. Emancipatory strategies were thus played in two ways: on the one hand, affirming Cape Verdean's civilizational state like the Portuguese and, on the other hand, defending its regional idiosyncrasies, affirming the singularity of Cape Verdean Creole culture.[104]

For the *Claridosos* (those engaged in the *Claridade* movement), the archipelago was seen as a region of metropolitan Portugal. As Fernandes refers citing Baltazar Lopes, they tried to be "intransigently regionalist," while remaining "intelligently Portuguese" (Fernandes, 2006: 156, my transl.). There was no claim to independence, but an effort to prevent the civilizational distinction between Portuguese and Cape Verdeans. Therefore, shifting the discursive field from the colonial to the regionalist plan, Cape Verdean elites speak as though they were "Portuguese," offering their loyalty to the Portuguese colonizing mission. Hence, the theories of the intellectual elite around *Claridade* placed Cape Verde, on the one hand, as a most successful example of Gilberto Freire's Luso-tropicalist miscegenation theories, thus, positioning the archipelago as a region of the metropolitan area, distinguishing itself from other Portuguese colonized territories. Justified with both the distinction modern anthropology makes between race and culture, and with Luso-tropicalist postulates, the African heritage in Cape Verde is devalued.[105] On the other hand, the focus on Cape Verdeans' living

[103] *Claridade* is the Portuguese word for clarity. According to Almeida quoting the *Claridosos* (those involved in the Claridade movement), this dialogue operates with a curious play on words: "For them it was a question of *négritude*, but for us it was a question of clarity" (Almeida, 2011b). We consider that this shows the complex ambivalence surrounding this movement, which seems not to be exempt from racial ideologies, highlighting Cape Verdean European influence, and disdaining its African heritage.

[104] As Fernandes points out, the project "fincar os pés no chão" [*firm feet on the ground*, my transl.] developed by Baltazar Lopes, which influenced the intellectuals around *Claridade* magazine, shifted the discourse to themes around the archipelago's problems and the islanders' living conditions, becoming an emancipation strategy for Cape Verdean Creoles (Fernandes, 2006: 149).

[105] According to Almeida, during the Estado Novo colonial redefinition, the debate involving Portuguese technicians (Almerindo Lessa, among others) and the local elite focused on the biological and psychosomatic consequences of miscegenation, and the sero-anthropological studies of the islands of Cabo Verde, in terms of biological anthropology (ABO sero-anthropological blood tests and comparison with the population from southern Portugal), and in terms of cultural anthropology (assessment of the moral and civilizational status of Cape Verdeans). Thus, it elaborated on the differences between identity categories of mestizo in the racial sphere, and categories of miscegenated/Creole in the cultural sphere. Moreover, it also raised questions around the possibility of a third civilization resulting from the encounter of two different ones, the identification of African characteristics (reiterating stereotypes of indolence and sexuality), and the validation of a proper culture, based on the ethno-linguistic paradigm of a culture (Almeida, 2011a). For detailed information consult

conditions, its language and local culture, settle the groundings for a Cape Verdean creoleness (albeit with Europeanist tones). Cape Verde emerges as an example of complete assimilation, where the *Estatuto do Indigenato*[106] [Indigenate Statute, my transl.] does not apply as in the other Portuguese colonial territories.

After the Second World War, in response to increasing international pressure towards decolonization,[107] Portuguese institutional colonialism becomes more strict and severe. In regard to Cape Verde, this moment has two lines of response: one that follows the discourse of Claridade, and the other that follows the assumptions of the so-called "Generation of 50," a youth movement anchored at the *Casa dos Estudantes do Império* [Empire Students' House], in Lisbon, legatees of the *Négritude* movement, of anti-colonial movements and future members of PAIGC.[108] At that time, Cape Verdeans had long been assigned administrative functions in Guinea Bissau and in some posts in northern Angola (Almeida, 2011b), therefore, the colonized Africans were in a subaltern position in regard to Cape Verdeans.

In this context, the *50s'Generation* anti-colonialist intellectual movement starts a process of deconstructing the *Claridosos* pro-Portuguese hegemonic representations, for whom

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the extensive study by Miguel Vale de Almeida at https://www.buala.org/pt/a-ler/o-projecto-crioulo-cabo-verde-colonialismo-e-crioulidade-parte-i (Accessed January 15, 2021).

[106] In Cape Verde, the *Estatuto do Indigenato* [Indigenate Statute, my transl.] was not applied, unlike other territories colonized in Africa. According to the different legal diplomas that enshrine the rights and duties of indigenous peoples in Portuguese colonies, the Cape Verdean population did not fit in the classification of indigenous. The first of these diplomas was the *Estatuto Político, Social e Criminal dos Indígenas de Angola e Moçambique* [Political, Social and Criminal Statute of the Indigenous of Angola and Mozambique] (1926), followed by the *Acto Colonial* [Colonial Act] (1930), the *Carta Orgânica do Império Coplonial Português e Reforma Administrativa Ultramarina* [Organic Charter of the Portuguese Colonial Empire and Overseas Administrative Reform] (1933) and, finally, the *Estatuto dos Indígenas Portugueses das Províncias da Guiné, Angola e Moçambique* [Statute of Portuguese Indigenous People from the Provinces of Guinea, Angola and Mozambique] (1954), the latter being a legal diploma on indigenous people assimilation into colonial culture. The statute was abolished in 1961 with the reforms of Adriano Moreira, Minister of Overseas, in order to grant indigenous people a more simplified access to Portuguese citizenship. *In* https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Estatuto_do_ind%C3%ADgena (Accessed February 15, 2021).

The indigenous person was considered to be in a state of inferior civilizational development, and as it can be read in article n.º 2, Decree-Law n.º 39.666 from *Estatuto dos Indígenas Portugueses das Províncias da Guiné, Angola e Moçambique*, May 20, 1954: "(...) *o Estado estabelece não um cerceamento, mas a diversificação de poderes e deveres, retirando antes eficácia normativa a certa parcela do direito comum para regular situações entre indígenas (...). retrai-se, sim, o âmbito de aplicação do direito comum, privado e público.*" In https://governodosoutros.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/ferreira-josc3a9-carlos-ney-estatuto-dos-indc3adgenas-portugueses-da-provc3adncias-da-guinc3a9-angola-e-moc3a7ambique-annotado-e-le1.pdf (Accessed February 15, 2021).

[107] The end of the World War II condemned the project of hegemony and racial purity of Nazi Germany, and demonstrated that freedom and independence should be universal rights. Further ahead, the 1945 United Nations Charter consecrated the principle of self-determination of all colonized countries and the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Men in 1948 included self-determination as a fundamental right, pressuring the colonial powers to prepare their colonized territories for future independence.

[108] PAIGC is the acronym for "Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde" [African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde].

the return to African matriarchal origins seemed impossible. The *50s'Generation* is composed by young, assimilated people from the Cape Verdean intellectual elite who, in Portugal, experienced "their most painful *négritude*" (Almeida, 2011b).[109] Manuel Duarte, one of the *50s' Generation*'s precursors, justifies the "Africanist propensity of the movement" in response to the "colonial phenomenon" (*idem*). Thus, this movement results in an anti-colonial political action that would create the PAIGC in 1956, with the distinguish contribution by Amílcar Cabral.[110] The polarization between the colonizers and the colonized was reinforced, and Cabral returned to the countryside for armed struggle alongside the people of Guinea-Bissau against the colonizers, with the geopolitical purpose of uniting the states of Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau in order to foster their capacity for independence.

The assassination of Amilcar Cabral in 1973 and the Portuguese April Revolution in 1974 trigger two political wings in Cape Verde: one that defends the union of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, and another more pro-European represented by the intellectual elite that defends Cape Verde's autonomy, but in the context of proximity to Portugal and Europe. The Africanist path prevails, and in 1975 the political union Guinea Bissau-Cape Verde is constituted, which is, however, ended by a coup in Guinea Bissau in 1980 (Almeida, 2011b). After independence, Almeida refers, and especially after the pluri-partisanship in 1991 and because of the economic dependency on Portugal, Cape Verdianity or Cape Verdean creoleness gains prominence. In the political sphere, the Africanist link loses relevance, with the recovery of the Lusitano-Creole identity model with its European link.

Thus, the debate around miscegenation, creolization, and creoleness in the Cape Verdean case is long and complex. Creoleness results from the local elites' process of identity construction, initiated by the *Nativists*, developed in a late context of Portuguese colonialism by the *Claridosos*, with a regionalist perspective and supported by the arguments of a Luso-Tropicalism. This attempt to map discursive formulations around Cape Verdean creolization and creoleness reveals the complexity of their historical, ideological, and onto-epistemological intricacies, and the impossibility of a consensual, linear, and univocal definition of Cape

[109] According to Almeida, the following period recovers the Africanist characterization that Freire elaborates from Cape Verdean misceginezation, with echoes in *Consciencialização na literatura cabo-verdiana* (1963), byOnésimo Silveira, or in *Caboverdianidade e Africanidade* (1954) by Manuel Duarte, that evokes the *Négritude* movement (Almeida, 2011b).

[110]Amílcar Cabral, agronomist graduated in Lisbon, laid the foundations for the construction of the state union between Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde. His project presupposes the valorization of both popular and literate culture, as well as the value of educational, agricultural, and economic infrastructures.

Verdean identity, or *Cabo-Verdianidade*. Moreover, we believe that the need for identity policies as pillars of individual subjectivation and national re-imagination is a problematic issue that cuts across any nationalist formulation.

Regardless of racial, ethnic, classist or geographical ideologies, to be a Creole in Cape Verde means to be a Cape Verdean. According to Carmo Santos, considering the notion of creoleness for Glissant as a "self-conscious miscegenation," the Cape Verde society recognizes itself as the mixture. In this case, the archetypes of belonging are Africa and Europe (or Portugal) and have been varying over time according to historical and political circumstances (Santos, 2015: 792). Cape Verdean creoleness, Santos adds, contemplates not only genealogical and phenotypic markers, but also behavioral everyday elements (793), which may also vary between islands, namely, between *Barlavento* [Windward] and *Sotavento* [Leeward] islands.[111]

According to Almeida, the return of the debate around Cape Verdean creoleness, and especially around Creole language, demonstrates the overlap between "creoleness" and "nationality" (Almeida, 2011c). From this perspective, creoleness could be described as Cape Verdean identity traits, their "ethnographic — folkloric, gastronomic, physical (in people's bodies) and above all linguistic manifestations — extremely anchored in a discourse of geographical location and root origins" (*idem*, my transl.). This connection between language and nation is problematic, since it evokes nationalist postulates grounded in essentialist notions of origin, roots, and belonging, which are inseparable from the also problematic idea of purity (*idem*).

According to Santos, Cape Verdean creoleness is ambivalent because it is based on the equation of two different and antagonistic elements — whiteness and blackness, European and African, colonizer and colonized, among others, based on racial, ethnic, political, and class ideologies — and ambiguous because they can take on different connotations depending on the context. Such ambivalence and ambiguity result from the complexity of their

[111] Cape Verdeans from the Windward islands, namely São Vicente, are called in Creole *Sampadjudos* and are considered closer to a European matrix, and Cape Verdeans from the Leeward islands, are called in Creole *Badios* (Santos, 2015: 796). These islands have a greater geographical proximity to Africa and were the first to be populated, hence, for some they denote a higher African influence, and that has been used as a racist argument against stereotyped ideas of *Badio* behaviors. As Santos says, it is possible to witness episodes of racism in Cape Verde from Creoles towards whites or directed at *Mandjakus* (hegemonic denomination in Creole based on ethnic parameters for an Other, the West African) or even between *Sampadjudos* and *Badios* (799).

inherent practical-discursive fields, inseparable from the historical and political conditions of the country's formation. In the local context, these discussions around creoleness and *Caboverdianidade* are not limited to the academic and ideological spheres, but they cross daily society as a whole. In this context, Santos refers, the semantic plurality of the term creole and creoleness is linked with a multiplicity of meanings and understandings of what is Cape Verde, and what it means to be Cape Verdean (Santos, 2015: 798).

As an alternative to such identity politics (*Caboverdianidade* or Cape Verdean creoleness) conceived as crystallized and univocal, we advocate an open understanding of the complex web of relations between political, social, and ontological formulations, as well as historical, cultural, and ideological configurations, that seem more attuned to demonstrate how identity can only be understood as a process, a becoming, a relational openness. We consider that Marlene choreographies counter such identity politics and propose, instead, figures and constellations that echo these perpetual processes of relationality, impermanence, hybridity, and transformation.

Impurity

Everything changes; nothing dies; the soul
Roams to and fro, now here, now there, and takes
What frame it will, passing from beast to man,
From our own form to beast and never dies.
As yielding wax is stamped with new designs
And changes shape and seems not still the same,
Yet it is indeed the same, even so our souls
In their migrations ever-changing forms.

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*

Human beings are magical. Bios and Logos. Words made flesh, muscle and bone animated by hope and desire, belief materialized in deeds, deeds which crystallize our actualities. . . And the maps of spring always have to be redrawn again, in undared forms.

Sylvia Wynter, *The Pope Must Have Been Drunk, The King of Castile a Madman. Culture as Actuality, and the Caribbean Rethinking Modernity*

The Figure, and the Figural

Marlene's foundational interest in *Openness*, *Impurity* and *Intensity* manifests itself, namely, in her choreographic strategies of figurability, the creation of composite figures where the frontiers between the human, nonhuman animality and thingness are entangled and complicated. In addition, objects and props in her choreographies are also often manipulated into different figures, rendered an animated performativity. The result on stage is an uncanny figural work that dislocates those categorical distinctions through an overall play of instability, contradictory simultaneity, and fugitivity of form, content and affect, that calls upon the spectator's critical engagement.

Thus, instead of naming the performers "dancers" or "musicians," Marlene encompasses them all under the same designation—figures—since figures allow for greater openness and instability of play and are less conditioned than the theatrical characters, who are often perceived as human subjects with an autonomous and self-reflexive subjectivity. Considering the relevance of the concept of figure in her work, we will dedicate some analysis of the term *figura*, and its derivative, the concept of *figural* work.

In effect, since the nineteenth century, in the same way artists have been questioning the mimetic relation with the real, representation and its *mise-en-scène*, playwriters and dramaturges have been questioning the theatrical character as the illusion of a plausible subject, against an installed bourgeoisie idea of mimetic representation. Indeed, with an uncertain status and a troubled mode of existence, it is hard to evoke the theatrical character otherwise than in a state of crisis (Sermon, 2004: 5).

In his well-known work *L'Avenir du drame* (1999), Jean-Paul Sarrazac unravels the complexity of the dramatic character proposing, instead, the term '*figure*' (9), a term that would signal, on the one hand, the incompleteness of the dramatic character, and the accentuation of the body movement. "*La figure*", Sarrazac refers, "*ne représente donc ni l'hypostase ni la dissolution mais un nouveau statut du personnage dramatique: personnage incomplet et discordant qui en appelle au spectateur pour prendre forme; personnage à construire*"[112] (*idem*).

[112] "The figure thus represents neither the hypostasis nor the dissolution but a new status of the dramatic character: incomplete and discordant character who calls on the spectator to take shape; character to be built" (Sarrazac, 1999: 9, my transl.).

In choreography, the work of figure could refer, on a first reading, to a choreographic *configuration*, when the dancer performs a certain recognizable figure from a scheme or choreographic repertoire. However, through a more complex lens, it could refer to a *trans-figuring* process, that unravels the figure with and through metamorphic processes (Bouvier and Touzé, 2017).[113] Hence, the former, a process of figuration, would mean to render a recognizable and archetypal visible figure. What is in place in Marlene's work is precisely an inverse and much more profound concept of figure, closely attached to the latter process and the notion of *figural* work, a process that disengages the corporal figures from choreographic typologies, mobilizing the forces of *disfigurement* and *transfiguration*, inherent of the imaginary and the unconscious, as capabilities not of creating images but of distorting them.

It is relevant to observe the historiographical mutation of the concept of *figura* and trace the cartography of its meanings and relations, since it contributed to the development of a particular way of thinking, resulting from a refunding of figurative thought in terms of a humanist symbolism, impregnating all domains of European culture.

In his foundational study *Figura* (1959 [1938]),[114] Erich Auerbach unravelled the philological evolution of the word *figura* from its origin until the Middle Ages, tracing its centrality for the Western history of representation. With the same etymological root as "*fingere*, *figulus*, *fictor* (sculptor, the one that gives shape and puts a figure on the thing)," and "*effigies* (*imago*, seal, emblem)," figura originally meant "plastic form" (Auerbach: 1959, 11), but it was always associated as something lively, dynamic, and incomplete, a changing aspect that ran through the history of the concept, since the Hellenization of Roman education, namely, through the works of Varro, Lucrecio and Cicero. In fact, Auerbach notes, the Greek

[113] From February 2016 to March 2017 *La Manufacture*, a research department from Haute École Spécialisée de Suisse Occidentale (HES.SO), in Lausanne, organized a research project entitled *Le Travail de la figure: que donne à voir une danse?* The research team is composed by the choreographer Loïc Touzé, and with researchers Mathieu Bouvier, Rémi Héritier, Alice Godfroy, Anne Lenglet, among other invited researchers. In the beginning of her career, Marlene worked as a dancer with Loïc Touzé, who was, according to her, a highly positive influence for his meticulous choreographic work, focused on every detail. For detailed information, please consult the website: http://www.manufacture.ch/fr/1895/Figure. The research outcome was published as Bouvier, Mathieu (2017) (Ed.), *Pour un atlas des figures* in http://www.pourunatlasdesfigures.net/atlas (Accessed March 20, 2019).

[114] *Figura* was first published in Archivum Romanicum 22 (1938): 436–89 and then reissued in 1939 by Leo S. Olschiki in Florence as a self-standing offprint. It was reprinted in Erich Auerbach, *Neue Dantestudien* (Istanbul, 1944), pp. 11–71 and again in his *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur romanischen Philologie* (Berlin, 1967), pp. 55–92. The first English translation was by Ralph Manheim in Auerbach, *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature: Six Essays* (New York, 1959), pp. 11–76. I will be citing from this 1959 English edition.

vocabulary was much richer and had different terms for the concept of form, namely, "*morphē*, *eidos*, *schēma*, *typos*, *plasis*," and in the rhetorical and philosophical texts of Plato and Aristotle, "a clear dividing line was drawn particularly between *morphē* and *eidos* on the one hand, and *schēma* on the other: *morphē* and *eidos* were the form or idea which 'in-forms' matter; *schēma* was the purely perceptual shape" (14). The words *morphē* and *eidos* were generally translated in Latin as *forma*, close to the idea of the model; and *figura* was a common translation of the word *schēma*, a Greek term widely used in rhetoric, mathematics, geometry, grammar, and logic.

Moreover, "side by side with the original plastic signification of *figura*, and overshadowing it, there appeared a far more general concept of grammatical, rhetorical, logical mathematical—and later even musical and choreographic form" (15). Hence, "*typos*, 'imprint,' and *plasis*, *plasma*, 'plastic form' were words often rendered by *figura*, developing from "*typos*" the use of *figura* as "imprint of the seal," as a seal stamped in wax, both in Aristotle and later in Dante (*idem*). Furthermore, *figura* expanded also into notions of "statue," "image," "portrait," "to impinge on the domain of *statua*, and even of *imago*, *effigies*, *species*, *simulacrum*" (*idem*). Furthermore, Auerbach argues, if *schēma* in Greek had already a dynamic meaning, and *schemata*, in Aristotle, could refer to the mimic gestures, especially of actors (16), *figura*, the usual Latin translation of the Greek word *schēma* had "a broader meaning, sometimes more plastic, in any case more dynamic and radiant than *schēma*" (*idem*).

In addition, in his ground-breaking work *De Rerum Natura* [*On the Nature of Things*] (first century BC), the Roman poet and philosopher Lucretius "uses *figura* in the Greek philosophical sense" (16), but in a more free and significant way, transposing the term "from the plastic to the auditory sphere" as figures of speech to other meanings, such as the "transition from the form to its imitation, from model to copy, (…) as the resemblance of children with their parents" (*idem*). *Figura*, then, was one of the terms that could serve "the play of model and copy" (*idem*), and further on, "it is in Lucretius where first *figura* is employed in the sense of 'dream-image,' (…) 'ghost'" (17). Professing "the cosmogony of Democritus and Epicurus, according to which the world is built up with atoms," Lucretius sometimes calls "*figurae*" to these atoms that in permanent motion give form to the cosmos: "(...) numerous atoms are in constant motion; they move about in the void, combine and repel one another: a dance of figures (…)" (*idem*).

Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, also an extremely influential work for Marlene,[115] gave a significant contribution to the notion of *figura* as "changing form" (21), in the sense of "imprint of the seal" in wax[116] (22), and as "mobile, changeable, multiform, and deceptive" (23).

Behind pagan antiquity, Auerbach adds, Christian theology, through the hands and voices of the Christian Fathers, gave an extremely relevant contribution to *figura*'s ambivalent concept, by interpreting the events of the Old Testament as prophetic prefigurations of the New Testament. In this *figural reading*, the *figura* of the Old Testament would correspond to *umbra* [shadow] or *imago*, as visual, abstract, and virtual, "in the sense of 'deeper meaning in reference to future things"' to come. On the other hand, in the New Testament, *figura* acquired a sense of "*veritas*" (35-36). *Figura*, then "appears also as an idol, as dream figure or as a vision," but "by far the most often, it appears as prefiguration" (*idem*), both spiritual and carnal. This was a foundational conception of the term that laid the structures for its most recent connotations in the fields of art and sciences. If a figure designates the appearance, an external contour or envelop of a thing or a body, it means that it can be the sign with a hidden sense to be deciphered and unveiled. Thus, from the static condition of configuration, the concept moved to the dynamism of interpretation, or what would later be named as figural hermeneutic.

Other than this theological exegetical universe, and to acknowledge the crucial role this key term plays in Western culture, according to Ralph Dekoninck and Agnès Guiderdoni in the introduction to *Force des figures. Le travail de la figurabilité entre texte et image* (2017), one needs to refer to another foundational field of the concept of figure—ancient rhetoric—that allows and previews the use of terms in a different sense of that which is proper to them. Thus, one encounters here not only the idea of a language that can be shaped, in the same sense the sculptor models his/her work, but similarly, the play of veiling and unveiling proper to the figural interpretation, whose end goal is the pleasure of persuasion (Dekoninck, Guiderdoni, 2017:10). The term *figura*, then, acquired a theological, rhetorical, and hermeneutical relevance, producing an alliance between spirituality and reality, truth

[115] One of the literary influences for choreographing her dance piece *Of Ivory and Flesh – statues also suffer* (2014) was the Pygmalion myth present in Ovid's Metamorphoses, Book X (Freitas in Balona, 2019: 274).

[116] Marlene often refers to the metaphor of wax as an example of the perfect material for metamorphosis, since wax allows for any figural transformation, while keeping the same materiality. In the same line, we can compare this to the subject's process of subjectivity as a process of becoming, always changing while remaining him/herself. We will come back to this idea in the third part of this dissertation, regarding Marlene's dance piece *Guintche* (2010).

and fiction, where indeterminacy and openness were constitutive of the term's richness and complexity.

Along the early modernity, the rhetorical function prevailed over the Christian fathers' traditional exegesis. Poetry and all the forms of figurative expression extended its exegetic role to the value of revelation, and the rhetorical sense of *figura* becomes prominent in the arts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, where the expression of subjectivity and passions will constitute a new terrain of the figural (*idem*). As Dekoninck and Guiderdoni highlight:

> Dans le domaine en particulier de l'éloquence picturale, on assiste alors à la convergence de la dimension plastique et de la dimension anthropologique, la figure renvoyant avant tout au visage comme espace de representation des affections de l'âme. Elle est donc conçue, ici aussi, comme l'interface entre le visible et l'invisible, l'intérieur et l'extérieur, cette dernière application ouvrant la voie à une psychologie de la subjetivité, qui correspond durante la premiere modernité à une sémiotique des émotions humaines (*idem*).[117]

Marlene Monteiro Freitas's emphasis on the choreographic work of the face, focusing on the eyes and mouth expression, is one of the idiosyncratic marks of her work, in dissonance with what is most often observed in the context of contemporary European dance, where the face often remains a place of neutrality and abstraction, while the emphasis goes to the bodily movement and conceptual propositions. Summoning the face as matter and as the disorganizing locus of the subject expression is a fundamental choreographic strategy of the figures Marlene proposes on stage, which we will analyse further on in the third part of the dissertation.

In Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, as highlighted in the opening epigraph, *figura* embodies this possibility of permanent change while remaining the same, as the wax material that can be moulded into different figures but keeps its materiality. Freitas has often referred how she is interested in the possibility of being other(s) while at the same time remaining herself, evoking Ovid's text, and this potentiality of permanent transformation embodied both in the wax and in the corporeality of her choreographed figures. Hence, her work demands a figural hermeneutics to explore how these expanded meanings of the term *figura*, anchored in a

[117] "In the field of pictorial eloquence, we then witness the convergence of the plastic dimension and the anthropological dimension, the figure referring above all to the face as a space for the representation of the affections of the soul. It is therefore conceived, here too, as the interface between the visible and the invisible, the interior and the exterior, the latter application opening the way to a psychology of subjectivity, which during the first modernity corresponds to a semiotics of human emotions" (Dekoninck, Guiderdoni, 2017: 10, my transl.)

double and ambivalent relation between the material and the conceptual, the concrete and the abstract, the sensible and the intelligible, body and language, the carnal and the spiritual may become entry points into Marlene's figures and choreographic fictions. In a play of oppositions between, on the one hand, appearance, image, and illusion, and on the other, truth, nature, and archetype, *figura* is the elected place for the circular process that not only articulates the polarities of being and appearing, but also heterogeneous geographies and temporalities combined and manipulated in Marlene's figural approach to choreography.
After Freud and his precursors, namely Lyotard, Louis Marin, or Gilles Deleuze, this articulation was named as "figurability" a concept appropriated to designate what Dekoninck and Guiderdoni have exposed as a modulation of forms that should be interpreted as dynamic forces of openness, virtualization, non-determination, close to the dream-work:

> (…) le travail du sens qui passe par un travail des forms (entre figuration et défiguration), lesquelles peuvent être interprétées comme des forces, à savoir dinamiques—au sens de la dynamis aristotélicienne renvoyant moins au possible qu'à la force—d'ouverture, d'équivoque, de virtualisation, d'indétermination, d'inchoativité, propres au 'travail du rêve' mais qui ont été transposes à l'étude du travail des images plastiques et de leur 'ouverture,' de leur potentialité plus que de leurs pouvoirs (*idem*).[118]

This notion around the openness and potentiality of figures also relates to Marlene's work, which does not aim at conveying a rational and comprehensive message, but at the production and the encounter of forces between the dancing figures on stage and the those released by each singular spectator.

In addition, Marlene operates choreographically with strategies that come close to those that Freud has termed the "dream-work" operations, which we will analyse further ahead. Thus, the path from figure to the figural allows envisioning the play of representation that implies seeing an embodied figure as *seeing otherwise*, contemplating a permanent movement of transformation, disfiguration and transfiguration of these figures which destabilize any possible expectation of a stable mimesis, and correspondent interpretation, as Dekoninck and Guiderdoni argue:

> (…) le term de jeu désignant à la fois le mouvement interne à celle-ci comme le mouvement de l'interprétation cherchant à saisir ce mouvement, ou le mouvement du plaisir

[118] "(…) a work of meaning which goes through a work of forms (between figuration and disfigurement), which can be interpreted as forces, in particular, dynamic — in the sense of the Aristotelian *dynamis* referring less to the possible than to force — of openness, ambiguity, virtualization, indeterminacy, becoming, specific to 'dream work' but which have been transposed to the study of the work of plastic images and their 'openness,' more of their more potentiality than of their powers" (Dekoninck, Guiderdoni, 2017:10, my transl.).

se laissant emporter par le mouvement de l'image invitant à voir autre chose ou à voir autrement (…). Cette dynamique naît de diverses distorsions, concretions, et autres ambiguïtés allusives et incongruités visuelles, mais aussi d'un travail sur les seuils et les écarts comme sur toutes les formes de condensation et de déplacement faisant vaciller le règne stable de la mimesis, troublant la surface lisse de la représentation pour faire advenir autre chose. Saisir cette indétermination permet de rendre compte des potentialités, virtualités, latences qui contribuent à l'efficacité de cette représentation (10-11).[119]

If the pictorial field is always and already a challenging domain for the figural work and its hermeneutics, dance, as a moving and permanently unstable embodied field is a place of potentiality for witnessing the singular work of figures. With a virtual quality beyond the limited contour of an image, the figural work of dance exceeds the figurative, and extends towards the potentiality of a force to be transmitted through the unstable figurability of a body in movement.[120]

The figure's potentiality, expressed by its ambivalence between realness and abstraction, spirituality and concreteness, *imago* and metamorphosis, simulacrum and embodiment, makes it a prominent visual and performative tool for choreography. On the wake of Freudian metapsychology, authors like Aby Warburg, Georges Didi-Huberman, Louis Marin, Hubert Damish ou Marie-José Mondzain developed further on the dislocations of the concept of *figura* by the Christian iconography demonstrated by Auerbach, and how its "tropes and ambivalences were comparable to one of Freud's dream-work processes, *Rücksicht of Darstellbarkeit*, considerations of representability, or figurability" (Bouvier, 2017). Hence, to this "Freudian revolution is attached what is sometimes mentioned [as the] figural turn" (Dumora, 2017: 13).

[119] "(...) the term of play designating both the movement internal to it as the movement of interpretation seeking to capture this movement, or the movement of pleasure letting itself be carried away by the movement of the image inviting to see something else or to see otherwise (…). This dynamic arises from various distortions, concretions, and other allusive ambiguities and visual incongruities, but also from a work on thresholds and gaps as on all forms of condensation and displacement causing the stable reign of mimesis to falter, disturbing the smooth surface of representation to make something else happen. Grasping this indeterminacy makes it possible to take into account the potentialities, potentialities, latencies that contribute to the effectiveness of this representation." (Dekoninck, Guiderdoni, 2017:10-11, my transl.).

[120] In the context of the research project by Manufacture, Lausanne (HES.SO) entitled Le travail de la figure: que donne à voir une danse? (2017), the project directors have expressed: "Ainsi, loin de désigner un quelconque type chorégraphique, le mot de figure indique pour nous l'épiphanie sensible ou la voyance qui, au spectacle du geste, fait resurrection dans le corps et effraction dans la forme, y réveille des survivances et des mémoires, anime l'oeil d'étranges excès de vision: une image virtuelle dans le mouvement, un rythme dans l'image, une force dans la forme, une dissemblance dans la ressemblance, lapsus visuel ou mirage sensible." (Bouvier and Touzé, 2017).

In the philosophical field, the concept of the figural coined by Jean-François Lyotard in his work *Discours, Figure* (1971) relates to those forces that make up the unconscious operations, "including condensation, displacement, second elaboration and all the drives that are part of the 'libidinal economy,' a title, precisely, of another Lyotard's essay (1974)" (Dumora: 2017, *idem*). In addition, in his work *Logique de la sensation* (1981), Gilles Deleuze adopts the concept of the figural to analyse Francis Bacon's paintings, which he opposes to the figurative and to representation. Remaining for Deleuze a pregnant zone of indiscernibility, the Figure (with capital F) allows for a sense beyond logical and rational signification, one that follows the forces of unconscious drives (Deleuze: 2003, 61).

As referred above, Marlene's methodology engages in some of the strategies Freud has elaborated in *The Interpretation of dreams* as the dream-work operations, to which the concept of *figura* and of the figural are intrinsically related. We will analyse in detail how these processes are deeply engrained and implicated in Marlene's work in the chapter *Dream-work operations as choreographic tools*.

Hybridity and Composite Beings

Fictions and fabulations are those open spaces where anything can happen, where only the laws of imagination come into play. In her choreographic fabulations, that often follow a methodology influenced by dream-work operations,[121] Marlene recurrently summons composite and overdetermined figures that are guided by hybridity, indeterminacy, and metamorphosis. In fact, the hybrid and hybridity have been key features explored in her choreographic work. Hence, Marlene proposes hybrids that hardly crystallize but fluidly dislocate some of the modern great divides, namely, the frontiers modernity installed between the subject and the object, the animated and the inanimate, the human and nonhuman, the human and the machine, the rational and the irrational, the earthly and the divine, among others. Hence, hybridity used as a choreographic tool also contributes to figures that dislocate assumptions on a stable and autonomous human subject.

In addition, another of her dramaturgical traits is the disruption of theatrical protocols in the line of postdramatic theater[122] experimentation. We are referring, namely, to the dissolution of the boundaries between the stage and audience, and the insertion of interruptions, cuts, and errors as part of the dance piece that complicate the public expectations, to the dissolution of the drama and the strive to produce affect and effects in the spectators through the theatrical situation. Moreover, hybridity is also present in the intermediality of some of her works that interweave dance with music, words, singing and moving image.

Therefore, the hybrid is, then, a tool for speculating a more-than-human subject, as we can witness in her solo work *Guintche* (2010) where her figural fluidly crosses the boundary between the human and nonhuman animal or marionette. Similarly, in her dance work

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[121] We will unravel this connection further ahead in the chapter *Dream-work operations as choreographic tools.*

[122] Postdramatic theatre is a concept coined by Hans-Thies Lehmann in his book *Postdramatic Theatre* (2006) that summarizes a series of traits in theatre practices from the end of the 1960s onwards that appear strange or difficult to grasp conceptually from the point of view of traditional theatre practice. Lehmann used the term postdramatic in comparison of ancient tragedy, which he coined as “predramatic” (Lehmann, 2016). Although postdramatic theatre can be read quite differently according to each culture or tradition, there are some features that Lehmann underlies: it is not primarily focused on drama and on text but strives to produce effects amongst the spectators, proposing a “simultaneous and multi-perspectival form of perceiving” (Lehmann, 2006: 16). Moreover, postdramatic theatre encompasses the “dramatic” expansion of what can be understood as theatre, including dance theatre, installation and performance works, live art or other forms of theatrical engagement. Hence, Lehmann diagnoses in these theatre practices a “mixing” [*Legierung*] of aesthetic praxis with other social forms of practices (Lehmann, 2016). Moreover, the dramatic focus shifted away from the text to the theatrical “situation, as a social, live form of praxis that connects and involves every participant in the theatre event, actors and visitors alike” (*idem*).

Paradise - private collection (2012), cartoons, animals, and Christian iconography with its mythical creatures coalesce into fluid gender and species figures. Furthermore, in the choreography *Of ivory and flesh – the statues also suffer* (2014), we can witness a clear interplay between humans and statues, humans that become mechanized entities, or statues that are animated with human or animal traits. In a similar vein, her duet *Jaguar* (2015) with Andreas Merk, also evokes a miniature puppet theatre entangled with Greek mythology tales of humans that become metamorphosed into animals or plants, and vice-versa. Finally, in her dance work *Bacchae – prelude to a purge* (2018), Marlene turns Euripides' Greek tragedy into a hybrid work in its genre: a choreographed musical concert that departs, on the one hand, from Greek vase imagery, endowing painted figures with life, and on the other hand, from objects, such as orchestra music stands, chairs, trumpets, or green rubber hoses which are metamorphosed into a multiplicity of hybrid animated figures, becoming shotguns, noses, penis, horses, bicycles, virtual reality glasses, typewriters, golf clubs, or the famous Bacchae thyrsus (just to name a few). In the third part of this dissertation, we will elaborate in detail how hybridity plays a singular role in each of Marlene's dance works.

We will now develop a brief genealogical investigation of the concept of the hybrid and hybridity, analysing how it has been a relevant critical tool in culture studies, in Bruno Latour's critique of modernity, in Stuart Hall's, Paul Gilroy's, and Homi Bhabha's thinking, as well as in some queer and intersectional elaborations.

Hybridity has become a common term for cultural critique, for postcolonial and decolonial studies, for performing studies, but also in social and cultural studies in debates around concepts and politics of identity, multiculturalism, and cosmopolitanism. From the perspective of those proponents of pure and essentialist categories, processes of hybridity can be considered a threat of contamination between different entities or fixed cultural constructs. Thus, with a capacity for transgressing borders, clear and fixed definitions, hybridity has been considered as having inherent potential for disruption and transgression. Thus, the artistic field is considered a privileged arena for experimentations with and through hybridity.

To reflect on the complexity of current debates around hybridity versus essentialism, it seems relevant to foreground the ways in which hybridity is elaborated and contested by different hierarchies of power, namely, when the term implies the mixing relations between cultures and people. Although the relevance of the concept in the field of cultural criticism,

postcolonial, and intersectional studies has been widely accepted, we wish firstly to analyze the genealogy of the term from its early records in the field of natural sciences, and how it expanded in the classification of humans and cultures for colonial and imperialist purposes. Further ahead, we will reflect on hybridity as a tool for deconstructing modernity's great divides, namely, in the work of Bruno Latour, not only in his actor-network theory, his long-time investigations of the internal workings of science and technology in the field coined Science Technology Studies (STS) but mostly, in his deconstruction of the history of modern epistemology and ontology.

Following the line of the deconstruction of Western modern epistemological foundations, but with a feminist, queer and multi-species lens, Donna Haraway has also developed groundbreaking work on the issue of hybridity, namely, in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (1991), and in *Primate Visions. Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (1989). We have analyzed that work within the framework of *Openness*, as well as Sylvia Wynter's intersectional perspective of the human as hybrid. In fact, the three chapters *Openness*, *Impurity* and *Intensity* interweave: openness allows for hybridity to take place, in the same way that it is the interplay of hybridity, figural work and migratory images, among other elements, that concur to Marlene's artistic work of intensity. Furthermore, since Marlene Monteiro Freitas is Cape Verdean, hybridity may also interconnect with other concepts that we have previously analyzed, such as the processes of creolization and creoleness, and others that will be conveyed below, such as over-determined images and composite figures.

In this chapter, we will also consider Homi Bhabha's postcolonial discourse on hybridity and mimicry in his seminal work *The Location of Culture* (1994), where the author argues how hybridity is at once a condition of the colonial subject's identity and, on the other side, how the iteration and mimicry of the hybrid disrupts the colonial power, reversing the gaze of the discriminated back upon the colonizer, destabilizing the latter through anxiety. Finally, we will borrow performing arts scholar Erika Fischer-Lichte (2010) concept of "interweaving performance cultures" in order to elaborate on Marlene's choreographic hybridity from the lineage of performance studies.

Hybridity and Miscegenation

The term hybrid was initially referred in the field of the natural sciences, especially in biology and zoology, with a meaning dating from the 1600s, as the "offspring of plants or animals of different variety or species."[123] Its etymological root is traced from the Latin *hybrida*, variant of *ibrida*, "mongrel", with references of being the "offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar," probably deriving from the Greek, eventually related to *hubris* and its correspondent Greek root *hybris*, which could mean "wanton violence, insolence, outrage," or even "presumption toward the gods."[124] Hence, although the Greeks and the Romans have borrowed from other cultures extensively, namely, from the Egyptians and the Persians, hence integrated cultural difference, they considered biological hybridity undesirable.[125] Therefore, the hybrid as the offspring of different species, or of different racialized human subjects, seemed to have had, since its inceptions, a negative meaning.

Throughout the Middle Ages into modern times, disapproval for biological hybridity continued and was even highlighted in Europe with the rise of Imperial colonialism.[126] In fact, from the eighteenth century, the effort of categorizing the natural world expanded into incorporating the classification of humans, and in the nineteenth century, even before evolutionary Darwinism had permeated society, the elaboration of taxonomies of 'race' was a central theme in Europe (Brah and Coombes, 2000: 3). The main concerns rested on the origin of species, on categories of the human, and on the consequences of polygenesis and monogenesis. The defense of the theory of racial purity, and the fear of miscegenation was grounded on assumptions of the hybrid as an aberration and degeneration. Furthermore, the opposition to unions between colonial and colonized subjects had the purpose of maintaining the colonial power, ensuring that the subjugated populations could be a source of enslaved, forced, or cheap labor, and minimizing both the disruption of colonial power and the creation of local forces of resistance. However, after the nineteenth century, and with variations

[123] In https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=hybrid (accessed January 14, 2021).

[124] In https://www.etymonline.com/word/hubris (accessed January 14, 2021).

[125] At that time, it was considered negative a Roman man marrying a non-Roman woman. Moreover, Aristotle, Plato and Pericles considered racial mixing degenerating, and biological hybridity a danger for social order (Isaac, Benjamin, 2004).

[126] The fear of racial degeneration resulting from Europeans and non-Europeans mixing encouraged scientific elaborations that attested to European racial superiority in works such as Joseph Arthus de Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inégalité des races* and Joseph. Ernest Renan's *L'Education culturelle et morale* (Acheraiou, 2011: 13-83). Moreover, pseudo-scientific models were developed, including anatomy and craniometry taxonomies in order to argue European racial superiority in relation to Asians, Native Americans, Africans, and Pacific Islanders. In fact, despite the humanistic framework of European Enlightenment, there was no possible dispute between the Europeans role in the global social hierarchy.

within each imperialist colonial legislation, a series of administrative measures were applied to implement assimilation strategies for the colonized subjects, while at the same time keeping segregation measures anchored in theories of racial difference and politics of exclusion. In fact, the historical and contemporary debate around interracial unions, ingrained in the impossible assumption of a racial essentialism and purity, had social and psychological consequences of distress, anxiety, forms of racism and violence, perpetrated by other means until the present.

Moreover, hybridity was also a theme connected to the celebrated phenomenon of cultural syncretism, which considers mutual influences between two or more cultures. The problem of today's celebration of forms of cultural syncretism, along the marketization of multiculturalism, rests in disregarding the social and political economy conditions that were at its foundation. The hybrid, then, has always been a complex and contested site. We will briefly analyse how hybridity has been a conceptual tool in postcolonial thinking, in linguistics, and in Bruno Latour's critique of Western modernity, bringing to light new perspectives.

Hybridity in Postcolonial Thinking

Since the early nineties, hybridity became one of the most widely debated terms in the context of postcolonial discourse for its criticism of cultural imperialism, and a response to a new global multi-cultural awareness. Some of the most relevant postcolonial thinkers of hybridity in relation to identity and culture are Stuart Hall (1992, 1996, 1997), Néstor Garcia Canclini (1995), Paul Gilroy (1993), and Homi Bhabha (1992, 1989, 1994).

The Jamaican-born British cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1932-2014) expanded cultural studies to the fields of race. Influenced by Gramsci's concept on hegemony, he considered culture a place for social engagement, where power relations are both established and destabilized. In his 1996 essay "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," Hall presents cultural identities not as essences rooted in a past, but as permanent processes of transformation, as positionings. Moreover, he considers that black identities in the diaspora are always being reinvented through mixing and hybridity. There is not one single black identity, but a multiplicity of cultural identities that share some traits and important differences, a concept he relates to the Derridean *differrance* (Hall, 1996).

Argentinian born academic and anthropologist Néstor Garcia Canclini (1939-), in his book *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity* (1995), analyzes

"how hybridization has altered studies about identity, culture, difference, inequality, multiculturalism," and other conflicting terms, such as, "tradition/modernity, north/south, local/global" (Canclini, 1995: xxiii). Canclini understands hybridization as "socio-cultural processes, in which discrete structures or practices, previously existing in separate form, are combined to generate new structures, objects, and practices" (xxv). Hence, Canclini positions all cultures as resulting from hybridization, undergoing permanent and porous processes of transculturation.

British sociologist Paul Gilroy (1956-) challenges, on the one hand, both essentialism and all cultural forms predicated on ethnic-absolutism and, on the other, anti-essentialism that sees blackness as a construction. Introducing new ideas into the conceptual model of diaspora, he privileges hybridity in detriment to the assumption that people are separated by a communal source origin. Instead, in his seminal 1995 book *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, through his analysis of African slave trade, he proposes the concept of the Black Atlantic as a transnational cultural space, where the relation between Black and European are permanently negotiated, hence identities are interstitial and related to colonial confrontations.

In the field of linguistics, hybridity addresses multivocal languages formations, pidgin, and creole languages, echoing the work by Russian linguistic and cultural theorist Mikhail Baktin, who suggested the disruptive and transfiguring power of those language formations, as well as multivocal narratives (Mambrol, 2016b). Bakthin's idea of polyphony can be considered a consequence of this definition of the "unfinalizable self," a concept that considers the subject in permanent change, and that can never be fully known (Mambrol, 2016a). Polyphony, or multiplicity of voices, according to Bakthin, is also implied in the relation of the self and the others as a process of permanent intertwinement and contamination (*idem*).
Indian scholar and critical theorist Homi Bhabha (1949-) was one of the main postcolonial thinkers of hybridity, as well as mimicry, difference, and ambivalence. Bhabha challenges, first, the tendency to treat postcolonial theory as a hegemonic concept. In the same line, Bhabha contests the belief of a hegemonic and essentialist view of a culture, proposing a fundamental realignment of cultural analysis beyond Western binaries and metaphysics, exposing the paradoxes and contradictions of Western Enlightenment. His intellectual investigation contributed to an imbrication and reorganization of those binaries towards, on the one hand, an understanding of how imperialist powers applied different discourses and practices

according to their economic and political interests (i.e., how democracy was applied in the West at the same time despotism was applied in the Global South); and, on the other hand, how culture is permanently interacting, transgressing, and transforming in far extended ways.

Moreover, the possibility of translation between cultures also reveals that no culture can be an isolated, static, and a non-contaminated entity. Therefore, the binary between a superior colonizing culture versus an inferior colonized culture would be impossible, and that dismantles the argument of colonialism as a civilizing mission. When the cultural justification for colonialism breaks down, it unveils colonization as it is: an act of exploitation and dispossession of other people and lands.

In his book *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha claims that the 'purity' of cultures is untenable, and that cultural statements and systems are elaborated in the in-between space that he calls the "Third Space of enunciation" (Bhabha, 1994: 37), making any affirmation of cultural identity a contradictory and ambivalent statement. Hence, for Bhabha the colonizer/colonized relations were interdependent, influencing mutually the construction of their subjectivities. Thus, the recognition that colonialism has this complex mark of ambivalence in relation to cultural identity may be relevant to overcome the exoticism of cultural diversity in favor of an empowering hybridity within which cultural difference may operate:

> It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory . . . may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity (Bhabha 1994: 38).

Hence, according to Bhabha, it is the 'in-between' space that carries the meaning of culture, and this is what makes the notion of hybridity so important also in Marlene's work, for she seeks that in-between alien territory where a radical openness allows for zones of contestation and hybrid experimentation.

The consideration of hybridity as part of a shared condition of the postcolonial has been widely criticized for the indiscriminate use of the term. Firstly, it has been seen as a tendency to de-historicize and de-locate cultures from their temporal, geographical and linguistic contexts, leading to a universalization of the concept that neglects the singularities of any cultural situation. In addition, when used in postcolonial discourse to simply mean cross-cultural 'exchange,' or the transformative cultural, linguistic, and political power, it has been

contested for neglecting the imbalanced and unequal power relations involved in the colonization process, or for perpetuating assimilationist rhetoric that intend to mask or "whitewash" cultural differences (Mambrol, 2016b). Moreover, when referring to expressions such as syncretism, cultural synergy and transculturation, hybridity may also stress the mutuality of colonial and postcolonial cultures, with the problem of neglecting its oppositionality and highlighting post-colonial dependence.

For Bakhtin, Robert Young notes, hybridity could be seen as politicized and contestatory, setting "different points of view against each other in a conflictual structure, which retains 'a certain elemental, organic energy and open-endedness"' (Young, 1995: 21–22). Bhabha has reformulated the hybrid into an active process of resistance, asserting a different model for disputing the colonial order by locating the counter-discursive practices implicit in hybridity within the colonial ambivalence itself.

From a psychoanalytical perspective of the colonial relations, Bhabha demonstrates how "the tension between the illusion of the difference and the reality of sameness leads to anxiety" (Huddart, 2006: 4) of the colonial power, being incapable of effectively assuring its superiority. Because it was pretentious, the colonial discourse argues that its aim is to educate and civilize. However, these pretensions are undermined by what Bhabha calls "the figures of farce, or 'low' mimetic literary effects" (*idem*, 39), such as the poetic, jokes and myths that allow resistance to colonialism in general.

In addition, mimicry, as the copying by the colonized of language, culture, manner, and ideas of the colonial can also be considered a disruptive tool for colonial disavowal. Since there is no repetition of the same, mimicry is a repetition with difference that counters the idea of the colonized servitude and undermines the pretentiousness of the colonial empire. Mimicry, Bhabha argues, is a form of mockery as a comic approach to colonial discourse. Moreover, being an ironic compromise in-between cultures, mimicry disrupts the colonial pretension of a fixed and stable idea of a culture that remains the same and never changes, exposing the ambivalence of the colonial discourse, as Bhabha demonstrates:

> (…) colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference (Bhabha, 1994: 86).

Therefore, with a colonial discourse that presupposes a superior colonizing culture versus an inferior colonized other, the unsurmountable differences proclaimed are what

allow for the slippages of the colonized and the incapacity of control of the colonizer. Thus, it is this ambivalence within the colonial discourse which, according to Bhabha, opens a space of resistance for the colonized (Huddart, 2006: 40). Mimicry not only produces a rupture in discourse, as it causes, uncannily, the colonial subject to be partially real, partially incomplete, having its effects in undermining the repercussions of the colonial power. This play of ambivalence and excess makes the colonized at the same time similar, but also terrifying, being at once resemblance and menace (Huddart, 2006: 41).

Influenced by Derrida's concept of writing and suggesting that reality is discursively constructed, Bhabha claims that what "emerges between mimesis and mimicry is a *writing*, a mode of representation, that marginalizes the monumentality of history," and "simply mocks its power to be a model, that power which supposedly makes it imitable" (Bhabha, 1994: 87-8). The "final irony of partial representation," Bhabha continues, lies in the "desire to emerge as 'authentic' through mimicry, (…) through a process of writing and repetition" (Bhabha, 1994: 88). Thus, Bhabha unravels how modernity's great narratives of evolutionism, progress, and civilizing mission were applied in the colonial territories via despotism and power enforcement. Therefore, modernity's discourse of rationalism was quickly transformed and eroded in the colonial territories. Modernity, thus, repressed its colonial origins since they reveal, uncannily, "a foreignness within its identity from the beginning" (Huddart, 2006: 63).

Hybridity in Interweaving Performance Cultures

Being a key term in Marlene's choreographic methodology, the hybrid results from processes of interweaved cultures, epistemologies, and practices. Hence, in her work, hybridity evokes processes such "cultural cannibalism" proposed by the Brazilian Oswaldo de Andrade in his *Manifesto Antropófago* (Andrade, 1928),[127] or terms such as "interweaving performance cultures," proposed by German theater scholar Erika Fischer-Lichte (Fischer-Lichte, 2014).

Fischer-Lichte proposes "interweaving performance cultures" to replace the concept of "intercultural performances" coined in the West in the late 1970s and early 1980s, since

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[127] We will unravel how "Cultural Cannibalism," related to Oswaldo de Andrade's Manifesto Antropófago (1928) plays a role in Marlene's work in Part III, in the chapter "Guintche – the Uncanny Figure that Gazes Back".

the latter presupposes an essentialist view of cultures, as fixed, homogeneous, and self-contained. In addition, Fischer-Lichte demonstrates how the term "intercultural performances" emerged in the context of postcolonialism, used particularly in the Western anglophone world, as we will see further ahead.

In fact, Fischer-Lichte argues, deep research in the history of theater shows evidence of exchange between theatrical practices from neighboring or distant cultures, and this interaction has been an instrument and vehicle of cultural contamination and change (Fischer-Lichte, 2014: 1). At the beginning of the twentieth century, modernization allowed for a wider circulation of theatrical groups, namely, from Japan and China to Europe and the United States, promoting exchange in theatrical practices in both ways. It influenced authors such as Max Reinhardt, Edward Gordon Craig, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Bertold Brecht, and Antonin Artaud, who produced innovative forms of theatre, but it also influenced Japanese theater artists. These interactions impacted the audiences in both contexts, who had to negotiate their politics of cultural identity (*idem*). In colonized territories, although the Western theatrical model was imposed, it was nevertheless creatively transformed by the local population, also influencing local performative practices (3).

Hence, tendentially dealing with relational exchanges between Western and non-Western performances cultures, the "intercultural" term often presupposes the outcome of that relation to be a hybrid performance constituted by components, be them performers, settings, props, texts, or choreographic language, among others. However, Fischer-Lichte argues, because these processes of theatrical exchange between cultures have been carrying on since early modernity, the need to label them anew in the 70s and 80s as "intercultural" derives from in the context of its emergence: postcolonialism (4). If in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and particularly during the colonial period, Western theatre practitioners and audiences were judging the reception of non-Western theatrical practices upon their own standards, after the 70s, postcolonial critique imposed new positionings, since it did not allow Western European hegemonic claims. However, Fischer-Lichte demonstrates that the term "intercultural theatre" was used to signal a fusion between Western and non-Western theatrical practices, and not, for example, in-between non-Western theatres. This means that for the term "intercultural" to be applied, Western theatre needed to be somehow involved in the pair between "our" (Western) and "other" (non-Western) culture. In addition, this label of "intercultural theatre" was generally applied when texts from European or Western

tradition were staged in non-Western theatres, and this implies these texts to be considered property of a certain national or continental culture. All this indicates that the emergence and application of the term "intercultural" was done, once again, in a way that secures Western economic and political hegemonic interests (4-7).

Moreover, Fischer-Lichte criticizes other assumptions underlying the use of the term "interculture theatre." Firstly, there seems to be a difference concerning a hierarchy of ownership. When a non-Western director wishes to appropriate a Western text, s/he needs to ask for permission, but the opposite seems not to be mandatory. Hence, Western property rights impose their power structures on non-Western directors. Secondly, Western texts seem to entail a dimension of superiority and universalism, and the non-Western performance a sense of particularism, perpetuating Western hegemonic structures (8). Thirdly, the text seems to have prominence over the performance itself, and for that matter, it claims its superiority over the non-Western performance, and demands to be respected (9). Therefore, Fischer-Lichte argues that the term "intercultural performance," developed mainly in the Anglophone context, is highly contradictory, for its apparent effort in negotiating equality between Western and non-Western theatre practices, while simultaneously, perpetuating Western superiority and conforming other cultures to Western hegemonic power structures (*idem*).

Regarding these arguments, Erika Fischer-Lichte proposes to replace the term "intercultural theatre or performance" by "interweaving performance cultures."[128] This term not only presupposes that culture is always in permanent change and transformation, but also tries to escape the Eurocentric tendency to compare non-Western cultures according to an hegemonic view of Western culture. In addition, "interweaving performance cultures," as a metaphor, implies different interwoven aspects and functions: "several threads are woven in a piece of cloth (…) without necessarily remaining recognizable individually," and "forming particular patterns without allowing the viewer to trace each strand back to its origin" (11). It also includes and presupposes errors and mistakes in the process; the interwoven process can remain open or be dissolved; and weaving also wished to evoke "culture inherent processual nature with its continuous production of differences", not as opposites, but as negotiations (*idem*).

[128] In 2008, Erika Fischer-Lichte grounded an *Institut for Advanced Studies* at the Freie Universität Berlin, with the goal of dealing with problems and possibilities that emerge from processes of interweaving performance cultures (Fischer-Lichte, 2014).

Finally, Fischer-Lichte calls for "the utopian dimension" of this process of interweaving performance cultures, in the sense that it can provide the ground and framework for experimenting the potentiality of cultural differences and their negotiations in this globalized world, opening alleys for collaborative practices and policies in the social realm (*idem*).

This openness at the core of performance practices epitomize what Erika Fischer-Lichte called in *The Transformative Power of Performance* (2008), the state of in-betweenness. This state of in-betweenness implies the co-presence and co-affection in-between performers and spectators. Similarly, this concept echoes Marlene's words regarding the necessary conditions, in her perspective, for a dance event to happen: an encounter of forces produced by both the performance and the audience in a third space between the stage and the spectators. In the same token, the third space concurs to a transitional site that constitutes the spatial/temporal/embodied/situated framework for the performance event. In fact, the outcome of a performance is never entirely predictable, but depends in what Fischer-Lichte called "autopoietic processes" (Fischer-Lichte, 2010) that imply a co-negotiation and co-regulation of the participants' relations in multiple ways. Moreover, in every performance, both participants (performers and spectators) undergo an experience of liminality (Fischer-Lichte, 2010), in the sense that the performance opens the temporal/spatial conditions of a passage, a threshold, a space of openness, that has the potentiality for affect and transformation.

In the case of Marlene's choreographies, these interwoven relations are negotiated in several spheres. Being Cape Verdean, the choreographer embodies the experience of the "interweaved cultures" that ground the country's own conditions of cultural formation, which also play a role in the country's idea of creoleness. In fact, considering that Freitas' work does not recurs to identity politics, it proposes hybridity as the outcome of an interweaving of a series of different cultural references, hence, as a fundamental artistic tool to dislocate identity presuppositions and categories. The interweaving process in her work takes several steps: from the montage of a visual, literary, and sonic atlas from different cultural backgrounds (high and popular forms of culture), which are then processed through choreographic tools of condensation, overdetermination and transfiguration. At the end, the spectators are no longer able to recognize the initial references in the overall dance piece, and the outcome are overdetermined, uncanny, and bewildering choreographic realms that act with and through emotional forces, co-relating empathically with and through each

singular spectator. In her work, the process of interweaving results in an overall hybridity that is always transitional and never stable. Hence, opening the liminal site of performance to co-transformation and co-affection, her choreographic work is always political.

Animism: Across the Subject-Object Divide

The idiosyncratic strangeness inherent in Marlene's work is caused, in our view, by the instability and incoherence of the composite figures that she creates and destabilize the viewer's expectations, and by the dissolution of some onto-epistemological boundaries of modernity, namely, those separating the subject and the object, the animated and the inanimate, nature and culture. In addition, the figures that her work proposes displace modern assumptions about the subject's autonomy and the privilege of reason, as well as it subverts the assumption of the cause-effect logic prevalent in modern Western science and epistemology.

From the composite figures that cross the boundaries between the subject and the inanimate object, we can distinguish several propositions: the *cartoon* (or animated drawing), the marionette or the mechanical being, the posthuman cyborg, the statues that acquire life, as well as objects that are animated, embodying different figures along the dance work. Influenced by early silent movies, namely, Charlie Chaplin's films, and by drawings and images that have the potentiality to be animated and to animate the spectator, these composite figures exist in a different scale of freedom than that of the human subject. These figures do not obey the physical laws of causality, of gravity, nor are they subsumed to the finitude of life and the irreversibility of death. Hence, these figures allow for infinite creative possibilities.

In her first solo, as we will see in detail in the third part, the figure of *Guintche* departs from a drawing that registered the memory of a concert; a drawing that, in Marlene's words, rebels, and acquires a life of its own (Freitas, 2013, n. p.). To consider that a drawing has the potentiality for rebellion conveys ideas not only around animism, but also of resistance, and struggle.[129] It can also evoke gender and feminist acts of resistance if we recall that the word *Guintche* in Cape Verdean also means "prostitute," and its figure may evoke the prostitutes

[129] A drawing that rebels, as Marlene mentioned, may also evoke the case of the *Rabelados* [Rebels] from Santiago Island, a group of slaves that in the colonial period escaped the colonial power and settled in Santiago mountains creating their own communities. These communities have their own organization and exist until the present.

around São Vicente's harbor. In addition, we argue that it can also be considered an aesthetic rebellion, as we will analyze in detail in Part III.

Moreover, the figure of *Guintche* recalls the marionette. A figure who, according to the choreographer, does not make its own decisions, does not move alone, and "it is free, because someone makes the choices on its behalf" (Freitas, 2013, n.p.). Thus, the marionette also appears as a vehicle for freedom and openness, subverting the rational postulates, not only of the autonomous self-reflexive subject, but also of the subject's privilege of representing the real. This question of freedom that exists when we do not have to make choices can be associated with an idea of life in *errance*, a wandering life, a slightly "*guintche*" way of life, that we will analyze in Part III.

In addition to the cartoon and the marionette, Marlene explores other figures, such as the statues that come to life or the living bodies that become petrified, namely, in her work *Ivory and flesh - the statues also suffer* (2014). These two examples of metamorphosis evoke Greek mythology legacy, particularly, works such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (c. 8 AD), a reference often cited by the artist. In Ovid's seminal work, gods transform humans in both statues, animals or plants as divine punishments for several reasons, from insolence to incommensurable ambition, vanity, lust, among others. Often triggered by games of seduction or abuse, from those who hunt and those who become prey, in this epic poem, human nature, often mirrored in the Olympus, is unveiled with a satiric vein. It is this political and critical dimension of metamorphosis, resulting from the possibility of manipulating states of life, and experimenting around the virtual subjectivity of reified objects and entities that contaminates many of Marlene's works, opening the possibility for the unimaginable on stage.

Another piece in which this process is apparent is the dance piece *Bacchae - prelude to a purge* (2018), where objects and props are animated by the performers and become choreographic figures. We highlight the orchestra stands that structure this choreography, objects that are manipulated in ways that evoke various figures, such as bicycle handlebars, typewriters, phalluses, golf clubs, shotguns, among other objects, changing roles throughout the dance piece. Therefore, due to the significant play and dislocation of the boundaries between animated and inanimate, human, and non-human entities, we argue that animism and vitalism can be considered some of Marlene's choreographic tools.

The word animism has its etymological root in "anima," the Latin word for breath, spirit, and life. However, it is not our purpose to recover the conceptual version of animism

coined by the first anthropologists of the late 19th century, in works such as “Primitive Culture” (1871) by Edward Tylor, that defines animism as a “general doctrine Spiritual Beings (…) that characterizes tribes very low in the scale of humanity,” who often presuppose “the idea of attributing life and will to nature,” or the belief that other natural non-human entities have a soul “capable of continued existence after the death or destruction of the body (Tylor, 1871: 425-6). At the time understood as an epistemological error towards the nature of reality, animism was considered as a first form of religion, and as such, situated in a pre-modern phase of human evolution which would culminate, according to Tylor, in the full development of Western modern scientific rationality. Hence, according to the modern anthropological concept of “animism,” if something not provided with living qualities, or something mechanic, would show traits of being more alive than it should be, that would immediately raise a feeling of uncanniness and fear. Moreover, it would call, as it has happened, for the creation of boundaries for knowledge and understanding, precisely, between the animate and inanimate, the primitive and the civilized, internal subjective perception and exterior objective qualities, an accepted perception of the real versus imagination or fiction. The readiness with which these distinctions were made, reveals how engrained is the colonial mechanism of perceiving and making sense of the world around us, turning evident the power structures underlying such divisions and hierarchies.

In fact, for moderns, animism was the confluence and mixture of all the differences that they had established, namely, the dissolution between subject and object, resulting in images of strangeness and fantasy, which questioned the control that the Cartesian subject, personified by the Western white subject, held on the representation of reality, causing anxiety and, ultimately, the loss and destruction of that same subject and of his/her superiority before the objectified nature. For this positivist gesture of modernity to take effect, it was then necessary to draw a boundary line between these modern beliefs and the space on the other side, the space of otherness that constituted its negative, that is, the wild nature with all its entities, including the so-called pre-modern people. As German curator Anselm Franke underlines, “[w]ildness challenges the unity of the symbol, the transcendent totalization binding the image to what it represents. Wildness (...) opens this unity and in its place creates slippage. Wildness is the death space of signification” (Franke, 2010: 18).

Besides this early modern anthropological conception of animism, there is a recent “new animism,” which takes the position of those cultures that were placed on the negative

side of modern rationale, and marked by colonial subjugation, dispossess and misrecognition. This new animism, namely voiced by indigenous movements, takes into consideration processes and practices different from those so-called modern, and proposes relational cosmologies that disrupt the privilege of Western modern anthropocentric and autonomous subject (13).

Therefore, the concept of animism proposed here does not aim at associating Marlene's work with tribal or wild art forms, fetishes and totems, pre-modern rituals or natures inhabited by spirits, even though this is the first association with this theme. Thus, we do not consider Marlene's choreographies as animistic *stricto sensu*. Animism serves here as a theoretical framework to inquire not only on visual and performative processes, such as animation, movement, and stasis, but above all on a relationality we were accustomed to attribute to fiction and to the imaginary, fields that Marlene's choreographic fabulations deeply embrace. In fact, her work evokes animated films and figures, the effect of life-like in inanimate objects, or its reverse, the de-animated human performers becoming petrified or turned into mechanical beings, thus, dislocating the modern boundaries practices between interior subjective being and objectified exteriority. Hence, conveying this concept to reflect on Marlene's choreographies means to use animism along Franke's thought, as an "optical device, a mirror" (Franke, 2010: 11), that may reflect how modernity implanted concepts that were naturalized as epistemological truths — the great dichotomies between nature and culture, autonomous subject and exterior object— also constituted a cosmological rationale strategically used for redefining geographical boundaries of modern and pre-modern world. To refuse the duality inherent in the early anthropological concept of animism demands not to objectify Marlene's work, but to consider this experiential challenge as relationality, in which the spectator is also involved in the process of animating and de-animating. Images and figures are not only animated, as the spectator also becomes animated from what s/he experiences.

In fact, the divisions modernity naturalized implied the imagination of a negative, that which was on the other side, a negative that was also naturalized. These partitions or Great Divides pervaded all levels of symbolic production, with far-reaching effects on global sociability, politics, and aesthetics. According to Franke, it was mainly through the idea of animism that modernity conceived its negative and imagined it around this term (*idem*). Hence, decolonizing animism implies to rethink how colonialism/modernity and capitalism

have interweaved in the production of diverse levels of unfree and non-animated entities, from enslaved populations dehumanized and turned into commodities, to the expropriation of land, territories, and natural resources under the privilege of the modern subject. Animism, then, is here not reduced to aesthetics considerations or perception theory on the power of animating images, entities, and their repercussions on subjectivity, but instead, conveyed as a critical apparatus for unravelling how colonial and capitalist material organization are convoluted in modern forms of sociality and power.

Thereafter, this device aims to show how Marlene's work ironically evokes these great partitions of Cartesian modernity in their permanent transgressions, implicating themselves, albeit not categorically, in a gesture of aesthetic, political, and epistemological decolonization of Western humanism and, consequently, of European contemporary dance.

Beyond animism relationality, Marlene's work also evokes other precedent spaces of negativity, namely, the practices of magic, the trance states, the diabolical, madness and delusional beings, who have been targeted by Christianity persecutions and the Inquisition since medieval times. These partitions were associated to other categorical delineations, such as the distinction between good and evil, or later, those implemented by the Western Enlightenment, between the rational and the irrational, reflected in the modern era by the invention of the clinic, the delimitation between the normal, the abnormal and the pathological, as Foucault explained, namely, in his *Folie et Déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge Classique* (1961), among others. Many of these spaces of negativity are evoked in Marlene's work, dislocating with humor and irony its categorical distinctions. We refer, namely, to the formless and unstable beings, hybrids between human and non-human animals, objects that become animated and acquire movement, in short, composite figures in permanent metamorphosis that defy the stability and autonomy of the modern Cartesian subject.

Thereafter, beyond being a mirror of modernity, refers Franke, to use the concept of animism today can serve, at the same time, "to disempower the relations the powerful imaginary of the term upheld" (31). Only through critical intellectual or artistic gestures that reveal the fragility of the imaginary of the Great Divides, or that reveal, in the path of Latour, that *we have never been modern*, can the established modern colonial boundaries be progressively denaturalized.

In this sense, in the third part of the dissertation, we will elaborate how animism in Marlene's work, namely, in *Guintche* (2010) or in *Bacchae – prelude to a purge* (2018)

disempowers the relations the term upheld, since the hybrid figures in-between the animated and de-animated often result in uncanniness and anxiety, returning the gaze back to the spectator. Animism in Marlene's choreographies, we argue, operates as a critical and decolonial tool, destabilizing Western European theatrical stages with humor, irony, and bewilderment.

Animality: Dislocating Human-Animal Boundaries

According to Freitas, summoning nonhuman animality or hybrid figures may open some lines of inquiry upon which to rethink the human (Freitas, 2013, n.p.). In her dance solo *Guintche* (2010), the hybrid figure convolutes the human with a bird-like creature, a figure with a bizarre gestuality and strange grimaces, returning its gaze back to the spectator and triggering not only bewilderment as well as anxiety. In her group piece *Paradise - private collection* (2012), Marlene works upon figures that convey a series of metamorphic creatures, such as serpents, birds, dogs, horses, and fauns, that also destabilize the autonomy of the human subject, in a mysterious and bizarre play of desire, seduction and submission. Moreover, one of her early works is called, specifically, *A seriedade do animal* [*The gravity of the animal*], addressing, ironically, not only the gravity of the animal, but also its relationality with(in) the human.

Therefore, we argue that in Marlene's work, performing the animal can create body-images of the human, producing critical speculations around issues not only of identity, but also about the subject's autonomy and its frontiers, complicating some premises of Western modern anthropocentric humanism. To further approach the role that animality plays in her choreographic realms, we will first briefly contextualize how Continental ontological tradition relegated human's animality to the background, in a progressive exercise of readjusting the boundaries between the so-called human and the animal. Then, we will reflect how performing that hybrid between the human and the animal contributes to the politicality of her work.

Ancient philosophy, namely Aristotle, has distinguished the human from the animal through language, thus, turning its linguistic feature more relevant than its animality. This definition made it easier for the Christian fathers to perpetuate the idea of the human made in the image of God, and his/her ability for exerting dominion over the animals. In the Genesis, God gave Adam the ability, hence, the power, of naming animals, which in turn has

rendered animals finite and expendable. Through naming the human becomes. Language is effectively the power of gods to appropriate nature.

Further on, in the nineteenth century, together with the rise of modern science and evolutionary biology, one of the earliest critiques of Western humanism's anthropocentric privilege was triggered by Nietzsche's philosophy. Throughout his writings, Nietzsche refers to the human being as an animal. According to him, culture is what distinguishes the human from other animals. Contrary to the Western traditions of humanism and Enlightenment, Nietzsche does not conceive culture as a rational and moral phenomenon, but as a phenomenon of life. In *Nietzsche's animal philosophy: culture, politics, and the animality of the human being* (2009), Vanessa Lemm argues that the concept of culture for Nietzsche follows neither the anthropocentric positioning — that considers culture as a process of self-creation through which the human emancipates itself from animality —, nor the biologistic approach, that sees culture as a mere fight for survival, a means of preserving biological life (Lemm, 2009: 1). Instead, for Nietzsche there is a continuum between the animal, the human and the overhuman, as the philosopher proposes in *Thus spoke Zarathustra*: "[t]he human being is a rope, tied between the animal and the overhuman—a rope over an abyss" (Nietzsche, 1995: 14). And he continues, "[w]hat is great in the human is that he is a bridge and not an end (…)" (15).

Furthermore, distinguishing civilization from culture, Nietzsche posits a critique to civilization that does not means a return to nature, but it is oriented towards the cultivation of animality (Lemm, 2009: 4). For Nietzsche, civilization is a rational and moral process towards an improvement of the human being but that "extirpates" and oppresses its life (*idem*). For Nietzsche, in opposition to civilization, "the challenge of culture is to bring forth forms of life and thought which are not forms of power over animal life, but which are full of life, overflowing with life" (*idem*).

Moreover, for Nietzsche, human life is inseparable from the whole organic and inorganic world, contradicting the Western traditions that position the human in the top of the evolution. He even refers that "all the ancient humanity and animality, indeed the whole prehistory and past of all sentient being, continue within [him] to fabulate, to love, to hate, to infer" (Nietzsche, 2001: 63). In addition, Lemm demonstrates, Nietzsche repeatedly speaks of the return of the human to its animal beginning, a return that implies to see life as

a dream, and to be alive as to be a dreamer (Lemm, 2009: 4). In the *Gay Science*, he relates philosophy to life as dancing and as dreaming:

> (…) among all these dreamers, even I, the 'knower', am dancing my dance; that the one who comes to know is a means of prolonging the earthly dance and thus is one of the masters of ceremony of existence, and that the sublime consistency and interrelatedness of all knowledge may be and will be the highest means to sustain the universality of dreaming, the mutual comprehension of all dreamers, and thereby also the duration of the dream" (Nietzsche, 2001: 63-4).

Therefore, to reconnect to the animal beginning of the human is interrelated to recovering the freedom, the ability to dream and the potentiality of creativity that was diminished through the process of civilization and socialization. Here Nietzsche relates to Freud's critique that rationalization lies at the core of the psychic life. Both argue for the potentiality of "dream-state to the dissolution of civilization and consciousness, (…) a dissolution crucial for the future enhancement of human life and culture" (Lemm, 2009: 4).

This Nietzschean claim for life as dancing and as dreaming, through a reconnection to the animality of the human to free the blockage of civilization and consciousness, brings us closer to Marlene Monteiro Freitas' choreographic work. Marlene not only incorporates Freud's dream-work operations as choreographic tools, as she performs the dissolution of the frontiers between the human, the animal and the hybrid, opening the potentiality of these dreaming human figures in her choreographic fabulations, and unbounded imaginary realms. In her work, to dance is to dream and invent new figures of life. Similarly, the overhuman in Nietzsche also implies a resistance of the animal within the human, striving towards freer forms of social and political life (5).

Nietzsche's thinking also influenced Michel Foucault's work, namely, in his genealogical investigation on madness, where the French philosopher elaborated on the relation between the pathologizing of insanity and the links modern science and medicine established with bestiality. We will briefly outline the main threads of thought relating animality in Bataille, Foucault, and later in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri's "Becoming Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming Imperceptible…", one of the chapters in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri's *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987). Moreover, we will reflect on Giorgio Agamben's book *The Open. Man and Animal* (Agamben, 2004) and his critique of the Western anthropological machine, and Derrida's posthumously published texts *L'Animal que donc je suis* (Derrida, 2006 [2002]).

In addition, from the context of the history and anthropology of science, we have previously shown how multi-species and feminist scholar Donna Haraway's seminal work, as well as Bruno Latour's critique of modernity play a poignant role in deconstructing the foundations of modern Western natural and human sciences, and consequently, how these perpetuated the division between human and nonhuman animality. Their work contributed not only for opening the field of knowledge, as to allow for a profusion of hybrids and cyborgs to reclaim their natural role beyond the so-called Western modern onto-epistemologies. Finally, we will also briefly analyse how these elaborations on human and animality have found their way in the field of contemporary dance, and how choreographers and dancers have been "[d]ancing the animal", in order "to open the human" (Brandstetter, 2010).

Therefore, Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God, together with the emergence of the *Übermensch* (overhuman), was a strong influence in the writings of Georges Bataille (1987-1962), namely, in his *Theory of Religion* (Bataille, 1989) and the discussion of eroticism and death in *The Accursed Share* (1991). In fact, in the first chapter of the *Theory of Religion* entitled "Animality", Bataille refers that animals exist in a world of "immanence and immediacy" (Bataille, 1989: 22-23), not having the ability in itself to transcend it, not recognizing itself as such, thus, not being in the play of transcendence that relates the subject and the object. Bataille is aware that this assertion may be constrained by philosophical discourse that reduces everything to subjective experience and consciousness. Hence, human relation to (its) animality may be equally constrained to this animal life that seems to be closed to our perception. Similarly, in his elaboration on eroticism in his *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality* (1986) Bataille criticizes science reduction of eroticism to sexuality, as if sexuality could be a measurable feature of human life. On the contrary, for Bataille, sex was related to animality in the sense that it could not be objectified or treated as a thing (Bataille, 1986: 158). Sexuality, according to the French thinker, was a domestication of eroticism in order to create a so-called human nature, as a measurable thing, hence, exempt of animality. In addition, since for the author animality lies at the limits of language and on the other side of conscious knowledge, Bataille claims that the communication of the immanence of animality may be attempted through poetical and artistic creation. This dissolution of boundaries in poetic and erotic activity is not a reduction of difference to sameness, but a dissolution of identity all together. Moreover, according to Bataille, the human recognizes itself through

rememoration, and by the awareness of its finitude. This is a result, claims Bataille, of sacrificing its animality in order to be autonomous and sovereign and making human life as much viable as possible. However, the poetic and erotic realm of animality, refers Bataille, haunts the human, opening in it a realm of depth that is familiar. In his essay "Animal Desiring: Nietzsche, Bataille, and a World without Image" (2001), Jason Wirth claims that for both Nietzsche and Bataille animality is not a marker of negativity. "Animality," argues Wirth, "is action in *distans*, the nonhuman (animal, Dionysian) force that in a single breath still holds its breath, manifests through the human" (Wirth, 2001: 108).

Michel Foucault (1926-84) presents his reflections on animality, namely, in *Madness and Civilization* (1988a [1961]), a genealogical investigation on the Western history of madness from the Middle Ages to the beginning of modernity. In the beginning of Renaissance, argues Foucault, the mad human was compared to animals whose disturbing qualities made them potential sources of religious revelation and esoteric value, since they were considered a path to access other worlds beyond normality. From around the 1650 to the beginning of the nineteenth century, in the time frame of the classical age, madness started to be considered a social danger, losing its spiritual or pedagogical value, and the mad subject's way of life (which was catalogued as sexual promiscuity, social deviancy, heresy and atheism) was simple associated with a bestiality that needed to be tamed and disciplined like animals. Animality, Foucault shows, was a constructed category that was adjusted along the periods, but it often was related to unreason, and the power of raging emotions.

In Freitas' choreographies, animality and the hybrid also relate to the dissolution of human rationality, proposing instead composite figures that dissolute the borders of the human, and operate through a play of forces and emotions, unravelling the public expectations of a linear and rational message to be transmitted on stage.

In addition, Gilles Deleuze (1925-95) and Felix Guatarri (1930-92) elaborated not on the animal *per se*, but in "becoming-animal", a theme discussed in length in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, and that also evokes Freitas' work, as we will demonstrate. For Deleuze and Guatarri, a concept is not a definition but an articulation of complexities, avoiding the closure or resolution of whatever they are addressing. Becoming-animal is, hence, one of their most recondite and encrypted elaborations that tend to deconstruct the modern assertions on the subject and subjectivity. At the level of language, the human has acquired a certain amount of meaning through the past centuries. However,

according to Deleuze and Guatarri, at the level of experience, in its singularity and immanence, it becomes increasingly difficult, if desirable, to apply categories and definitions to the human. The term "human," as well as "man" have become words of power, in which language shows its imperative, categorical, and conditioning force.

On the other hand, "becoming-animal," according to Deleuze and Guatarri, proposes a passage from the major (the constant) to the minor (the variable). This movement is also described as a deterritorialization in which the subject no longer occupies a place of identity and stability but, instead, is imperceptibly engaged into a movement, or a nomadic mode of existence with a rhizomatic rather than arborescent tree-like structure, and in flight rather than in stability with itself and with others. A movement from unity to complexity, from organization to anarchy, the multiplicity of possible becomings is, for Deleuze and Guatarri, a pure event of multiplicity that eludes not only the present but also the ground for identity and stability. Then, "becoming-animal" should not be understood as a process of mimesis, or of identification with the animal, since all these processes imply a relation of recognition and representation that rely on identity strategies. Quite the opposite, for Deleuze and Guatarri, animality can be seen as a line of flight for change and becoming, considering animals radical multiplicity along which the human may escape identity politics and the Oedipal triangulation of the subject.

In *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1986), Deleuze and Guatarri refer that to become animal is a path of moving intensities, of difference without structure or definition, "where all forms come undone" in a multiplicity, in continuously metamorphic processes:

> To become animal is to participate in movement, to stake out a path of escape in all its positivity, to cross a threshold, to reach a continuum of intensities that are valuable only in themselves, to find a world of pure intensities where all forms come undone, as do all the significations, signifiers, and signified, to the benefit of an unformed matter of deterritorialized flux, of non-signifying signs. Kafka's animals never refer to a mythology or to archetypes but correspond solely to new levels, zones of liberated intensities where contents free themselves from their forms as well as from their expressions, from the signifier that formalized them (Deleuze and Guatarri, 1986:13).

Therefore, we argue that Marlene's figures also convey an animality and a hybridity that appear unfinished and undone through processes of indeterminacy, instability, and metamorphosis. Resisting to representation and strategies of identity, Freitas' figures relate to this idea of "becoming-animal", opening the human to a multiplicity of becomings.

Another relevant reflection on the human-animal boundary in Western epistemology comes from Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben. In his seminal book *The Open. Man and Animal* (2004b), Agamben addresses *the open* as the in-between space between the human and the animal and engages in unravelling the discursive and disciplinary infrastructure he called the Western anthropological machine.

Disclosing a pertinent dialogue with Aristotle, Bataille, Kojève, Martin Heidegger, Walter Benjamin, and Michel Foucault, Agamben's work has been exposing the darker foundations of the Western project and opening new interpretative universes. *The Open. Man and Animal*, hence, offers theoretical insight on how to dislocate biopolitics and explore ontologies that allow for a more non-hierarchical coexistence of all forms of life. Engaged in the scrutiny of the relations between life, ontology, and power, Agamben proposes a deconstruction of the philosophical and political foundations on which all our Western practices, institutions, languages, and forms of meaning production are grounded. Following Foucault's methodology of genealogical inquiry, Agamben extends further the Foucauldian concept of Western modern biopolitics, as a set of disciplinary practices and epistemes assimilated in sovereign power, by exposing how the administration of life has accompanied Western politics since ancient Greece, namely, in his long serial investigation *Homo Sacer*, reintroducing claims for an ontological caesura that seemed to be always omnipresent. Therefore, if the late Foucault returned to the Greeks for an inspiration for the possibility of freedom, Agamben elaborates how Aristotle's *Politics* (c. 4th century BC) and *De Anima* (c. 350 BC) can be considered foundational texts of Western biopolitics, the beginning of what Agamben has called the onto-political grammar for the sovereign power production of the human, against a backdrop of a bare life that was considered inhuman, and thus, worthless, and dismissible. The anthropological machine is, then, "an ironic apparatus that verifies the absence of a nature proper to *Homo*, holding him suspended between the celestial and a terrestrial nature, between animal and human—and, thus, his being always less and more than himself" (Agamben, 2004b: 29).

Thus, Agamben traces back this original caesura that has been structuring the Western thought on the human in Aristotle's *De anima,* where the Greek philosopher, to define the concept of life, performed a division of different functions or articulations: "nutrition, sensation, thought" (Agamben, 2004b: 14). "The isolation of the nutritive life constitutes," namely, "a fundamental event for Western science" (*idem*), which allows some current

medical procedures such as anesthesia, and the persevering of vegetative life as part of *being*. Thus, the so-called Western thought, from its inception, has articulated "man" as an unstable border between the human and animal, organized according to the Aristotelian categories of a scale of being within the natural world.

In this sense, in Aristotle's *Politics*, the Greek philosopher attached the status of human life only to the citizen of the polis, thus, creating a dividing line that separated the citizens from forms of life outside the polis, a life that could be only either godly or animal life, thus inhuman. In this category would also be included the woman, the enslaved subjects, as well as the animals. Thus, Aristotle's move of defining a raw material of life, *bare life*, upon which sovereign power can reproduce itself by attaching or not the status of the political, thus, defining the human, implies that the category of humanity was dependent on a contingent political decision.

According to Agamben, then, the two variants of the anthropological machine—the ancient and modern—are at work in the so-called Western culture:

> Insofar as the production of man through the opposition of man/animal, human/inhuman, is at stake here, the machine necessarily functions by means of an exclusion (which is always already a capturing) and an inclusion (…). Indeed, precisely because the human is already presupposed every time, the machine actually produces a kind of state of exception, a zone of indeterminacy in which outside is nothing but the exclusion of an inside (Agamben, 2004: 37)

Furthermore, in modernity, not only philosophers, but also anthropologists, zoologists, social scientists, taxonomists, and many others, have elaborated on the distinction between the human and the animal. Descartes seemed to have little interest for the mind of animals, and classified them as *automata mechanica*, not without an influence in future elaborations. The Swedish botanist, zoologist, and physician Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), considered one of the founders of modern taxonomy, was celebrated for having implanted the system of binomial nomenclature of organisms, and for his great work of taxonomy of the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdom *Sistema Naturae* (1735).

Interestingly, in *Sistema Naturae*, Linnaeus first included the human in the *Anthropomorpha* category together with the *Simia*, *Lemur* and *Vespertilio* (the bat). As an apologetic gesture of science (and not in conformity with theological dogmas), in the first edition of the work, unlike what he named for the other organisms, Linnaeus did not attribute any genus to the designation of species *Homo* having only added, as Giorgio Agamben points out, the

following "philosophical adage: *nosce te ipsum* [know yourself]" (Agamben, 2004b: 25). Although Linnaeus, in the tenth edition of the work, updated the binomial that names the human for *Homo Sapiens* as we know it today, everything indicates that this update would not be merely descriptive, and retained a sense of the imperative implicit in the expression: know yourself (*idem*).

For Linnaeus, the human would then be the animal that would have to recognize itself as human in order to be human. *Homo Sapiens*, concludes Agamben, would not be for Linnaeus a clearly defined species, or a substance, but an optical device composed of a series of mirrors through which *Homo*, looking at himself, recognized his/her "anthropomorphic" animality, and it was only that capacity for recognition that distinguished him (26). This optical device that allows knowledge of both the human and the environment, through observation, naming and ordering, constituted one of the foundations of science, philosophy, and modern Western law and, therefore, of the construction of Western hegemonic epistemes as infrastructures of biopolitics, rooted in imperialism and coloniality, a legacy that is still perpetuated in contemporary neocolonial processes of subjectivity and epistemological imposition. Considering that no clear biological differences could be found between our species and other higher mammals, the ambiguity of that border becomes intolerable and had to be negotiated in all discursive disciplinary fields until the preset. Consequently, not only human and animal coexist within the human in a conflictive manner, but also invisible boundaries are traced and become tools of inflicted violence. Hence, in order to dignify itself, the human requires subjecting other forms to the utmost imaginable indignity, from animals to other humans, dehumanized in order to be subjected to foreign sovereign powers (particularly, in the early colonial capitalism, those humans that were enslaved and reified into trading commodities). Thus, both the ancient and modern version of the anthropological machine, according to Agamben, work symmetrically. For the moderns, the "outside [the animal] is produced through the exclusion of an inside [the human animality] and the inhuman produced by animalizing the human" (37). And on the other side of the Great Divides human/inhuman, culture/nature, civilized/primitive, hence, the inhuman, the non-man, the "man-ape, the *enfant sauvage* or the *Homo ferus*," but most of all the enslaved, the barbarian, the foreign, the Jew, or today, the migrant, the terrorist, as well as the racialized subject, or a member of the LGBTQ2+, among others, are obtained through the inclusion of an outside: the inhuman/animal that is included in the human, in order to dehumanize it. Agamben argues that

both versions of this machine work by establishing a zone of indifference and indeterminacy in the center of both poles, “like a ‘missing link’ which is always lacking because it is already virtually always present—the articulation between human and animal, man and non-man, speaking being and living being” (37-38). This space in-between the abyss is, like every space of exception, empty, and the life that is located there is not much more than bare life, neither fully human nor inhuman. Perhaps, this is what lies behind Agamben’s identification of the concentration camp as the central political institution of the West, because even if the concentration camps that were put into place in the twentieth century seem over, other forms of human life reduction to its bare state, with removal of legal, human rights, or incarcerated, persist in the present.[130] In any case, the terrifying fear of the Other, and the prospect of a radical exclusion, lies on the perpetual negation of the ambiguous nature of the human.

In this sense, we may recognize that in Western philosophy, as well as in Christian theology, the human has always been thought of as the fracture and “the conjunction of a body and soul, of a living thing and a *logos*, of a natural (or animal) element and a supernatural or social or divine element” (Agamben, 2014: 16). Realizing that the human has been at the same time “the place and result of ceaseless divisions and caesurae,” we should ask in what way and for what purpose “was man—within man—separated from non-man, and the animal from the human” (*idem*), in order to counter the perpetuation of the various modes of Western anthropological machine on a global scale. We consider that art may have impact in the deconstruction of these discursive machines, and that Marlene Monteiro Freitas’ choreographies unravel the stability of the human by proposing, instead, figures and body-images of its potential openness and hybridity.

Returning to the initial quest on *openness,* or the *open* as a space of *fracture* in the human, in Heidegger’s investigation on *Dasein* (being-in-the-world) the open lays the foundations for his thought on both “being”, as a fracture between the human and the animal, and on the work of art. Heidegger traces a small genealogy of the concept of *open*, a fundamental one as it has adopted *open* “as the name of being”: “the open in which every being is freed… is being itself” (Heidegger, 1992: 150). One may also relate this fracture that divides the

[130] The exertion of the state of exception previewed since the Roman law has served to extend the properties of ‘concentration camps’ into an indefinite series of spaces of exception that are continuously reenacted everywhere and badly masked by references to the rule of law, from Guantanamo camp to all the refugee camps for migrants within European borders, to the Mediterranean Sea where some of the international humanitarian laws seem to be suspended.

human from animal with what Heidegger has called the strife between world and earth. It is from that fissure (as an event) that, according to Heidegger, the work of art arises, returning to from where it came, belonging. Moreover, the German philosopher relates this event of appearing/creating the artwork with the Greek term for truth, *Aletheia*, which, in Heidegger's reading is also, like the *open*, the unconcealment of being (Heidegger, 2011: 116).

Despite his interest on the primordial, Heidegger's account for animals was not much more enhancing than that by Descartes. For Heidegger, the animals live in a particular environment that they recognize, but limit themselves to respond to stimuli, thus, animals are "poor in world," or they can be considered without world. For Heidegger, the structural difference between the human (animal) and nonhuman animality seems to be, then, the relation man and animal perform with and within their specific environment. Animal's relation towards its environment is one of "captivation," which according to Agamben's reading of Heidegger, "is a sort of fundamental *Stimmung*, in which animal does not open itself, as does *Dasein*, in a world, yet it is nevertheless ecstatically drawn outside of itself" (Agamben, 2004: 62) in a disruptive exposure.

In this sense, the ontological status of animal's relation with the world can be defined, in Agamben's reading, as being "*offen* (open) but not *offenbar* (disconcealed; openable)", as he explains:

> For the animal, beings are open but not accessible; that is to say, they are open in an inaccessibility and opacity—that is, in some way, a non relation. This *openness without disconcealment* distinguishes the animal's poverty in the world from the world-forming which characterises man (55).

On the one hand, as Agamben has clearly explained, if captivation may seem the most "spellbinding" and open relation towards the world, on the other hand, in this profound openness, "as it is not capable of disconcealing its own disinhibitior," the animal "its closed in all opacity" (59).

Regarding man's relation with the world, following Heidegger, "only the essential gaze of [man's] authentic thought can see the open which he names the unconcealedness of beings. The animal, on the contrary, never sees this open" (59). In Agamben's reading, Heidegger proposes a situation when, hypothetically, animal and man's relation towards the world may touch each other, or even slightly overlap. That would be man's *Stimmung* or mood of "boredom", which Agamben summarizes in the following:

> Dasein is simply an animal that has learned to become bored; it has awakened *from* its own captivation *to* its own captivation. This awakening of the living being to its own being-captivated, this anxious and resolute opening to a not-open, is the human (70).

To this boredom, Agamben relates an idea of a special kind of inactivity, that he names inoperativity [*inoperosità*], a term reminiscent of the concept *désœuvrement*, a term also developed by Maurice Blanchot and Jean-Luc Nancy, in their elaborations on Georges Bataille's reflection on community.

This idea of boredom shared by both the animal and the human may relate to another kind of openness Agamben suggests, closer to that concept of inoperativity or *désœuvrement*, one that does not depend on the animal's response to stimuli in the immediate environment, nor on the human's relation with the immensity of the world. The concept of inoperativity Agamben developed in *The Coming Community* (1993b [1990]) and in the series *Homo Sacer* (1995-2017) was a way of conceiving openness as a generic mode of potentiality that is not exhausted in the passage from the potential to the actual. If for Bataille *désœuvrement* implied a radical opposition to the utilitarian aims of modern society and modern philosophy through excess (Durantaye, 2003: 6), for Agamben, beyond excess, inoperativity means not inertia but is related to the Greek term *katargesis* — an "operation in which the *how* replaces the *what*, and in which a life without form and a form without life coincide in a form of life" (Durantaye, 2003: 6, my emphasis). Thus, for Agamben, not work but inoperativity can be the paradigm for a coming politics (*idem*), as a means without end, when ethic, as *ethos*, becomes a form of life, and it is in this openness where potentiality may find its place.

Agamben offers other interpretations of openness through the lens of Walter Benjamin's thought, namely, influenced by Benjamin's concept of a "dialectic at a standstill," the "interval" between two poles or two coordinates as an unresolved opposition, a suspension of a division, rendering these divisions or poles no longer relevant, and thus, inoperative (Durantaye, 2003: 8). Openness is, then, related to the open potentiality for the human to choose the freedom to refuse the biopolitical structures imposed on him/her. Hence, the ability to render inoperative the anthropological machine that governs the concept of the human will depend not on seeking new and more effective articulations between the human and the animal, but rather, as refers Agamben, "to show the central emptiness, the hiatus that—within man—separates man from animal, and to risk ourselves in this emptiness; the suspension of the suspension, Sabbath of both animal and man" (Agamben, 2004: 92). It is from

this hiatus, from this openness that one can find other potentialities for the *désœuvrement* of Western modern Grand Divides and their perpetuation until present times. How to risk into that openness is what some artists seek, namely, Marlene Monteiro Freitas by creating her *open* choreographic universes.

In addition to Agamben's study, Derrida's posthumous publication *L'animal que donc je suis* (2006) is a text resulting from the ten-hour address to the 1997 Cerisy conference entitled "The Autobiography of the Animal". The original title of the book *L'animal que donc je suis* plays with the double meaning of the French verbal form "suis," meaning both "I am" and "I follow," thus, "The animal that therefore I am" or "… that therefore I follow," enunciating perhaps that the concept of the animal does not allow for a definitive conception. Hence, the animal for Derrida is something that cannot be seized or contained.

In fact, Derrida tracks the animal question from a tradition that goes back to the Genesis account of Adam's role of naming the animals, conceded only to him by God, leaving Eve, the woman, out of this privilege. Hence, analyzing the term through Western modern philosophical tradition that leads from Descartes to Heidegger, Derrida questions the encapsulating of all animals' heterogeneity in an abstract concept — *the animal* — and exposes how the singularity of the animal has been neglected and how this implies a disavowal, which after modernity is, in turn, directly connected to the increase of violence upon animals, as well as upon *human others* animalized or rendered inhuman. Furthermore, the philosopher elaborates how the Greek word for animal life *zoe* has been, since ancient times, associated with violence and subjection. Tracking the theme from Descartes, Kant, Heidegger, Lacan to Levinas, Derrida attempts to uncover the false and abusive ground on which the human has tried to define himself, by distinguishing from the animal, a being that was, and still is, subjected in order to recall subjectivity a human privilege.

An affectionate look back over the multiple roles the animals played in Derrida's work and also on his own biography, this reflection is triggered by the feeling of shame and embarrassment—as well as by the questioning of why that same feeling came about—when Derrida finds himself naked before his cat's gaze. Human nudity exposing a core human animality before the observant gaze of a non-human animal, thus, raising questions not only of identity, but also of hospitality, if one considers that the animal can be both the other in oneself and the other outside oneself, as another singular living being. In fact, Derrida

elaborates a profound philosophical investigation and critique of the relegation of animal life and the distinction between the human as a thinking animal and all other living beings. The philosopher questions the definition of the human, according to Descartes, linked to its cognitive capacity, relegating as secondary other capacities such as the sensible perceptions.

Moreover, Derrida questions the subject's autonomy, according to Kant, claiming that the subject results from processes of hetero-affection, proposing relational ontologies with others beyond the human, and exemplifying how he was moved by his cat's gaze to write this lecture. In addition, Derrida refers how this war against the animal, as old as the Genesis, can also be linked to the war against the feminine, or the woman, a term that has also been essentialized with violent consequences in the fields of theology, in the grounding of Western modern onto-epistemologies, with its biopolitical consequences.

The boundaries between the human and the animal have also been pervading Western dance stages. This exploration is not new at all, as dance scholar Gabrielle Bransdtetter claims in her essay *Dancing the Animal to Open the Human. On a New Poetics of Locomotion* (2010). Besides contemporary choreography experimentation, it can be traced to the early rituals and dances, to classical theatre ballet, to the twentieth century modern dance, and goes on until the present. This exercise, and the readjustment of the boundaries between the human and the nonhuman animality, as well as their metamorphic potentiality, was present in myths and sagas from ancient times.

Further on, in the modern age, as we previously outlined, scientists and philosophers also worked upon the caesuras and boundaries between the human and the nonhuman animal, defining the human as the rational animal with the ability to speak, to stand upright and to use tools. From anthropology and Darwinian evolutionary theories to current genetic biology investigations, we are now more aware about the tenuous boundaries between the human and the nonhuman animal, considering, that circa 99 percent of the genomes of human and chimpanzees are identical (Brandstetter, 2010: 4). Hence, in the process of self-knowing and self-defining, the human has always evoked the animals as a research and comparative figure.

In dance, Brandstetter argues that the animal has also been a "research figure," whose different portrayals, embodiments, and movements have allowed for a variety of experiments: different modalities of human gestuality, and body-images that have an ethical and political role of testing and exposing the fragility of the animal-human frontiers (*idem*).

Contrary to literature, which has a considerable presence of animals in tales, attributing anthropomorphic and human behavioral qualities to animals and vice-versa, in dance, the human-animal relationship operates beyond the (reductive) awareness of mimesis as a gestural and figurative imitation. Hence, according to Brandstetter, in dance the reflection on the animal body and its locomotion is expressed through experimenting its "fleetingness, the vulnerability, the aliveness of the "Other" (5).

Although the caesura between the human and the animal has shaped discursive ontological and scientific strategies to distinguish the one from the other, shaping human attitudes towards animals, animality runs across and within the human.

Brandstetter recalls the oldest animal portrayals in the Paleolithic cave paintings, and how these representations included both figures of "hybrids—phantoms of the animal-man" (*idem*)— and figures of animals, revealing possible cultic and ritual means of negotiating power relations between the one and the other. By incorporating animal masks, the human embodied these hybrid figures to represent themselves, probably to incorporate some of the animal traits.

Although there is a lack of paleographic and anthropologic research on rituals of animal dances, the animal drawings may have been related to shamanistic and totemic cults. Dances and rituals preceded the great events of confrontation and survival between the human and the hunting prey, and they even occurred posthumously, as events of celebration or exorcism of the spirits of vengeance believed to come from the deceased animals. By wearing an animal mask or creating animal body-images and movements, Brandstetter notes, the human operates a double movement that, nevertheless, results in a paradox. While performing animal gestures, s/he tries to disguise their human nature for "cultural reasons". However, this becoming animal through performance, since it is never a full becoming, also underlies its continuing existence as a human (*idem*).

In the early twentieth century, Vaslav Nijinsky's much-celebrated *The Rite of Spring* (1913), with music by Igor Stravinsky, and performed by Sergei Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* company, can be considered one of these profane rituals that has entered the field of early modern dance. Influenced by the anthropological developments of that time, it reveals how the human embodiment of animality can be associated with power relations over "bare life," a disposable life, in this case portrayed in the figure of a young virgin sacrificed for the success of the annual crops (Brandstetter, 2010: 5).

Around 1900, there are other examples of dances, Brandstetter notes, which can be seen as colonial versions of these rituals of domination and celebration. While subjecting and dominating the colonized, the white European brings to his/her theaters and ball dances gestures and movements that fetishize the dances and behaviors of this subaltern "Other". Nearly a century ago, these ball dances of the so-called Roaring Twenties, inspired by the Afro-American ball-dance tradition at that time, focused on energetic and sensual movements of the pelvis, hips, shoulders, and arms, while also exploring a facial pantomime evocative of animal traits, or of an excessive and grotesque expressionism. These dances, with suggestive names like “Turkey Trot,” “Fish Tail,” “Grizzly Bear,” or the most known “Fox-trot” seem to use animal gestures not to evoke the referred animals, Brandstetter argues, but instead to convey and fetishize the colonized other, considered inferior in the scale of human race (6). Thus, the oppression of the Afro-descendent or the colonized other went together with the miming of the stereotyped gestuality attributed to their dances, exploring it through grotesque appropriations, as a way of purging that animal side within the human. The white Western was enjoying the liberation of this “Other” from the “inhibition of movements, while observing itself in the mirror” (*idem*).
In addition, in iconic dance pieces such as Tchaikovsky/Petipa’s *Swan Lake* (1877), although also evoking the animal in the Western context of theatrical dance, Brandstetter claims, the swan gestuality and spatiality was not simply imitated by the ballet dancers, but they performed “a second-degree of mimesis (…) a poetic condensation” (7). This mimesis is not straight imitation, Brandstetter notes, but as Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf argue (1992), it is a notion of mimesis that implies “mak[ing] oneself similar to, to make an appearance, express and invit[ing] imitation” (*idem*). This is a process that plays a role not only in art and aesthetics, Brandstetter argues, but in “all fields of human action that involve imagining, thinking and speaking” (*idem*).

There are several other works that have touched on the relationship between human, the animal and their hybrid. The magnificent performance of the hybrid faun by Vaslav Nijinsky in *L’Après-Midi d’un Faune* (1912), choreographed for the Ballets Russes, was seminal in inaugurating a new paradigm in 20th century dance, precisely evoking sexuality and eroticism through this mythologic hybrid figure, in-between the human and the animal.

Decades later, with the minimalist animality of *Beach Birds* (1991), the choreography by Merce Cunningham to *FOUR* by John Cage emerges as an evocation of a certain animal

body-image and gesture which remains purposefully ambiguous in their abstract figural work, and where the choreography operates mainly in drawing open figures and spatial constellations, triggering the spectator's kinesthetic and hermeneutical response.

Recently, the animal has entered the field of contemporary dance more intensely, questioning the biopolitical boundaries between the animal and the human with an ethical and political stance. We recall some of these pieces: French choreographer Xavier Le Roy's *Low pieces* (2009-2011), German choreographer Antonia Baehr's *Abecedarium Bestiarium. Portraits of affinities in animal metaphors* (2012), the Portuguese Victor Hugo Pontes's *Zoo* (2013), or even more recently, Antonia Baehr, Latifa Laâbissi & Nadia Lauro *Consul and Meshie* (2019), just to name a few.

In Xavier Le Roy's groundbreaking work *Low pieces*, the choreographer proposes two contrasting moments: in the first, the performers with everyday clothes and postures start to engage in a dialogue with the spectators, dislocating the theatrical protocol that separates stage and audience. In the second moment, after a blackout, the same performers appear naked on stage, with movements that we associate to animal or vegetal life, or to a inanimate mineral landscape. It is a work that questions the boundaries between the human and the non-human in an era of planetary crisis, through a simple deconstruction of social conventions of nudity, behavior, and gesture.

In *Abecedarium Bestiarium*, Antonia Baehr recovers tales and records of extinct animals, setting and resetting traces of the relations between the human and the animal, the male and female, the living and the dead, unsettling categories, and boundaries. In her recent collaborative work with Latifa Laâbissi & Nadia Lauro, Antonia and Latifa play the role of two chimpanzees *Consul and Meshie* living like human beings on a stage designed by Nadia Lauro that resembles the luxurious interior of a limousine. In *Consul and Meshie*, they embody hybrid simians' identities, creating a canvas that mirrors a past, present and future of human contradictions, critically addressing the violence of modern categories of nature-culture, male-female, human-other, dislocating them shamelessly and boldly.
Regarding Marlene Monteiro Freitas choreographies, in the third part of this dissertation we will also focus on how the dislocation of human-animal boundaries is evoked in her work.

Queer Fabulations

In her choreographic universes that mobilize non-conformist figures, Freitas' convey not only an ontological hybridity, but a gender fluidity that does not crystallize in identity formations but opens space for queering fabulations. If eroticism or even sexuality are strongly evoked in her dance pieces, her over-determined and the gender fluid figures explore more a libidinal economy of desire and strangeness than univocal positionings.

Although her work crosses the fields of feminist, intersectional and decolonial critiques, it is not bounded to any of these categorizations. Regarding the figures' gender performance on stage, Marlene says that gender binaries are irrelevant in her choreographic work, and that each figure performs gender in the mode that best suits each choreographic moment (Freitas, 2013, n.p.). Hence, in her dance works, gender seems not fixed but fluid, and we witness a deconstruction and queering not only of gender and sexuality binaries as well as species categorizations.

According to Butler in her essay *Critically Queer* (1997), the subject of queerness or of queer practices does not have a fixed and stable referent point but is a site of collective contestation. Hence, following Butler's suggestion that queer as a term cannot be fully owned, but only redeployed and reappropriated from prior usages and applied in urgent expanding social and political situations, we propose that Freitas work engages in processes of queering that concur to its politicality. Freitas work, hence, does not aim at evoking categories, body-images and performances of people that identify as LGBTQ2+, but to the more extensive relationality of "queering" as a process that challenges normativity in different forms, identities, modes of doing and seeing, beyond the Western context of white heteropatriarchy. In Cape Verde, her home country, cis heteronormativity, is very much the normalized gender formation, as well as sex-based binaries. Although other modes of living in the queering spectrum exist in Cape Verde, they are still very much marginalized, discriminated, and relegated to invisibility.

Queer theory emerged in the nineties as a critical theory field out of gay and lesbian studies, as well as women studies. The term was coined by Latino American scholar Gloria Anzaldúa. Her most known work is *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), an autobiographical reflection in which she examines the relation between American and Latino experiences in Chicago through issues such as race, identity, gender, and colonialism.[131]

[131] Anzaldúa was influenced by Michel Foucault's seminal post-structuralist view of sexuality as socially constructed, hence subjected to biopolitical structures of governmentality and repression, developed in his

Moreover, queer theory has been used by several authors (Sedwick, 1995, 1997, 2014; Warner, 1999; Butler, 1988, 1990, 1993, 2004; Nyong'o, 2019, just to mention a few) as a critical lens to challenge gender and sex-binaries, aiming at undoing hierarchies, marginalization, and discrimination.

In this line of thought, Freitas' choreographic work proposes rewritings and iterabilities, fertile and uncanny critical fabulations, which open queering potentialities by the indeterminacy of gender formations, by the impossibility of a figurative closure that is not captured by representation and identity politics.

"Critical fabulation" is used here in the wake of American scholar Saidiya Hartman's homonymous expression in her essay "Venus in Two Acts" (2008), also used as a theoretical methodology in her works *Scenes of Subjection. Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America* (1997) and *Loose Your Mother*. *A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (2007). If for Hartman "critical fabulation" is a theoretical instrument that allows to rescue the voids and silences of transatlantic slavery historical archives, operating as a semi-fictional methodology of rewriting other stories based on absences and micro-memories, in Marlene Monteiro Freitas it is a critical instrument that operates through fiction and the figural to go beyond normativity and predefined assumptions.

Furthermore, the multi-species feminist Donna Haraway coined the concept of "speculative fabulation" in her work *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (2017) as a strategy to rethink other modalities of relations between humans and non-humans within the scope of this spiral of ecological devastation.

Still on the tracks of the term "fabulation", another relevant concept is that of "afro-fabulation" proposed by Tavia Nyong'o in his work *Afro-Fabulations. The Queer Drama of Black Life* (2019), where Nyong'o proposes to analyze key moments of fabulation in the visual art and performance of black artists through an intersectional lens. Nyong'o challenges perspectives on blackness that ignore its creative potentiality that goes beyond expressions of loss, violence, and trauma, and focus on how these gestures' excessive and disorderly subversion of sexual and gender conformity provoke an external look. *Afro-fabulations* conveys the poetic and artistic power of queer-world making as always present in the discourses and doings of black life.

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four-volume study of sexuality in the West from antiquity to the modern ages (Foucault, 1976, 1984, 2018 [published posthumously]).

Marlene Monteiro Freitas' choreographies do not focus specifically on blackness and racial issues, however, in Nyong'o's line, function as hackers of codes of social and ontological order that, as we will analyze later, for their confrontational mobilization reveal how gender and sexual normativity also operates to perpetuate racial hierarchies (Nyong'o, 2019: 24).

According to Judith Butler in her seminal works *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies That Matter* (1993), what we take as the essence of a genre is nothing more than a sustained set of acts of its performativity, according to certain pre-established norms. These normative prescriptions, whether of gender or racialization, also determine which bodies are important and which intelligible life is considered to be worth living. This heteronormative and heterosexist hegemony, heir to the scientific-philosophical binarism of Western modernity, is destabilized by increasingly evident queering proposals that open space and temporality for critical fabulations.

In addition, concurring to Marlene's choreographic fabulations is the multiplicity of her sonic landscapes. In *More Brilliant than the Sun* (1998), Kodwo Eshun highlights the vigor of an Afro-diasporic sonic futurism, as if it were a cybersonic or sonic-technological network (Eshun, 1998: 6). This sonic multiplicity, in the case of Freitas, includes not only Cape Verdean Creole music, but also weaves a network of sound relationalities with classical, popular, and contemporary European and international music.

In line with Paul Gilroy's thinking on a transatlantic cultural poetics in *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (1993), the soundscapes in Freitas' choreographies have a rhizomorphic and fractal structure, subject to both deliberate interruptions and errors, as well as to a durability that tests the spectator's resilience, and confronts the theatrical protocols.

Finally, in a contemporary regime that Paul B. Preciado called pharmaco-pornographic, where bodies and sexualities are effects of biotechnological constructions, and of visual and performative techniques manifesting their irreducible multiplicity (Preciado, 2013), the choreographic fabulations and the expansiveness of gender in Freitas embodies a queering perspective that is both fugitive and celebratory, and which, through her dance, infiltrates and devitalizes the biopolitical fabrics of a binary and heterocapitalist Western coloniality.

Intensity

On dirait chaque fois qu'un corps sans organes, des corps sans organes (plateaux), son mis en jeu, pour la production d'intensités à partir d'un degré zéro, pour la matière de la variation, le médium du devenir ou de la transformation, le lissage de l'espace. Puissante vie non organique qui s'échappe des strates, traverse les agencements, et trace une ligne abstraite sans contour, ligne de l'art nomade et de la métallurgie itinérante.

Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guatarri,
Capitalisme et schizophrénie 2: Mille Plateaux

Sensation, Intensity, and Affect

In the present chapter we will briefly reflect on Deleuze's concepts of sensation, intensity and affects. Although Marlene does not expressly mention Deleuze as a key reference in her work, one of her three guiding choreographic features is "intensity," in a way that concurs to the way Deleuze proposes the concept. Moreover, she evokes the artworks by Francis Bacon as a reference for some of her performances, namely for her solo *Guintche* (2010), as we will unravel in Part III. Therefore, we will evoke, among others, Gilles Deleuze's work *Francis Bacon. Logic of sensation* (2003 [1981]), reflecting how dance could be an event with through the exchange of forces, producing intensities and sensations.

In the book *What is Philosophy?* (2009 [1991]), Deleuze and Guatarri consider the work of art as a bloc of sensations, composed by percepts, and affects, notions also relevant to understand Deleuze's elaborations on cinema.[132] In the following excerpt they clarify the relation of the artwork to sensations, percepts and affects:

> (…) the thing of the work of art—is a *bloc of sensations, that is to say, a compound of percepts and affects*.
> Percepts are no longer perceptions; they are independent of a state of those who experience them. Affects are no longer feelings or affections; they go beyond the strength of those who undergo them. Sensations, percepts, and affects are *beings* whose validity lies in themselves and exceeds any lived. They could be said to exist in the absence of man because man, as he is caught in stone, on the canvas, or by words, is himself a compound of percepts and affects. The work of art is a being of sensation and nothing else: it exists in itself (Deleuze and Guatarri, 2009: 164).

The work of art, hence, exists independently of the subject's perception or validation, it exists for what it does, and to better understand Deleuze's aesthetics reflections, it is relevant to develop Deleuze's theorization about the concept and sensation. In Deleuze's theory, sensations and concepts are forms of intensity, thus, they are flows, rather than univocal and stable configurations. In fact, for Deleuze, intensity can be considered one of the fundamental features of art. Intensity is a dynamic flow of variable forces and differential processes,

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[132] For detailed information on Deleuze's intellectual reflections around cinema, please consult Deleuze, Gilles (1986), *Cinema 1. The Movement-Image*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press and Deleuze, Gilles (1989), *Cinema 2. The Time-Image*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

intrinsically related to sensations, but also to conceptualization and thinking as unended processes of becoming. Intensity is hence a chiefly concept to understand Deleuze's intellectual endeavour.

In fact, for Deleuze, any philosophical thinking happens as nomadic flows of experimentation. In his theorizations on art, the creation of concepts departs from the doing of the artwork, experimenting thought in the live act of reflection, always allowing for unpredictable and non-hierarchical trajectories to unfold. Hence, in his writings on cinema, we cannot acknowledge a systematic history of cinema, but how cinema (as any artwork) can trigger conceptual creation, not from what it is, but from what it produces. Therefore, according to Deleuze's philosophy, there is no distinction between the being and the doing of an artwork. In the same way, to produce concepts in movement, it implies to consider the subject not in the place of a closed and autonomous entity, but as a process of permanent subjectivation, of becoming, connected to the event, to forces and flows. Thus, instead of an essentialist and metaphysical theory of entities (be them artworks, objects, or subjects), Deleuze proposes instead a relational and modal ontology predicted on processes, paths, ongoing transformation, and metamorphosis, hence, related to change and becomings.
Coming back to Deleuze and Guatarri's definition of the work of art as a "bloc of sensations" (Deleuze and Guatarri, 2009: 164), its aim is precisely to produce and preserve itself as a compound, a being of sensations. Moreover, artists also "paint, sculpt, compose and write with sensations" (166). Hence, these are movements and processes by which sensations are produced and diffused through forces, and lines of tension. Therefore, art produces dynamic modes of sensations which also relate to metamorphic processes kin to Marlene's choreographies, aiming at the production of the highest tension, and an openness that allows for the figural to emerge.

In his essay *Francis Bacon: The Logic of sensation* (2003 [1981]), Deleuze has deeply approached sensation as a complex process entailing difference of levels, of tensions, and of energies that involve simultaneously the spectator and the artwork. In his reflection on sensation, Deleuze evokes Cézanne's painting as an example of how to counter representational and figurative art beyond abstractionism, but instead, through the Figure. According to him, Cézanne's figures activate the beholder's nervous systems, while abstract painting tend to address instead the mental. He then elaborates more generally on sensation:

> Sensation has one face turned toward the subject (the nervous system, vital movement,

> ‘instinct’, ’temperament’—a whole vocabulary common to both Naturalism and Cézanne) and one face turned toward the object (the ‘fact,’ the place, the event). Or rather, it has no faces at all, it is both things indissolubly, it is Being-in-the-World, as the phenomenologists say: at one and the same time I become in the sensation and something happens through the sensation, one through the other, one in the other. And at the limit, it is the same body which, being both subject and object, gives and receives the sensation. As a spectator, I experience the sensation only by entering the painting, by reaching the unity of the sensing and the sensed. This was Cézanne's lesson against the Impressionists: sensation is not in the ‘free’ or disembodied play of light and color (impressions); on the contrary, it is in the body, even the body of an apple. Color is in the body, sensation is in the body, and not in the air. Sensation is what is painted. What is painted on the canvas is the body, not insofar as it is represented as an object, but insofar as it is experienced as sustaining this sensation. (Deleuze, 2003: 34-35)

This is, then, according to Deleuze, the general thread that relates Cézanne to Francis Bacon’s art practice: a painting that connects directly to the nervous system and not through the brain as a message. This is also the thread that we relate with Marlene’s choreographies: an artwork as a compound of sensations that happens with and through the event, resonating in the spectator. A process that unfolds through the (virtual, imagined) engagement of the spectator with the dance work, activating his/her nervous system (hence, it happens in the body), creating emotional waves and forces, rather than depending on representations or messages to be conveyed.

Deleuze also highlights the figure’s strength and ability to produce sensations, citing Bacon’s distinction between figure and figuration (the form that represents an object). In addition, Deleuze exposes what Francis Bacons says regarding sensation in the following excerpt:

> (…) sensation is that which passes from ‘one’ order to another, from one ‘level’ to another, from one ‘area’ to another. This is why sensation is the master of deformations, the agent of bodily deformations. In this regard, the same criticism can be made against both figurative painting and abstract painting: they pass through the brain, they do not act directly upon the nervous system, they do not attain the sensation, they do not liberate the Figure – all because they remain at one and the same level. They can implement transformations of form, but they cannot attain deformations of bodies (36).

The figure, going beyond the figurative and the narrative, allows for deformation of the real, the distortion of the visible, and Deleuze relates this capacity for deformation to the production of sensation, which includes not only the integration of multiple levels, the fusing of diverse orders, but mostly the ability to open paths and trajectories connecting different domains. This passage from one sphere to the other is precisely what grants the artwork its fluidity and force, producing sensations. Hence, Deleuze specifies the potentiality of

sensation by relating it to the passage, the transformation, the deformation, and the metamorphosis. The notion of sensation, thus, implies an accelerated or slowed down movement, a force that produces change in what is normally visible, a passage from one state to another, a departure from a stable and neutral regime, introducing otherness and an unexpected anomaly. Mutation and deformation are intensities, because they demand for permanent transformations in the sign systems and in the perception and linguistic processes, causing ruptures in the established orders. Accordingly, in Deleuzian terms, sensation is intensity.

The Deleuzian concept of intensity is extremely relevant since it crosses different areas of his thinking, namely, that of the concept and that of sensation. It first appears in Deleuze's doctoral dissertation entitled *Difference and Repetition* (2001), where Deleuze demonstrates the intertwinement of two apparently disconnected concepts: pure difference and complex repetition. If difference implies divergence and decentring, repetition is never the repetition of the same, thus, it implies displacing and disguising. Shifting from Hegelian and Marxist theoretical frameworks towards Nietzsche and Freud, Deleuze develops a critique of identity and of representation. Accordingly, Deleuze shows how everything is correlated with orders of differences, and how every intensity implies difference. He clarifies in the following excerpt:

> The expression 'difference of intensity' is a tautology. Intensity is the form of difference in so far as this is the reason of the sensible. Every intensity is differential, by itself a difference. Every intensity (…) is already a coupling (in which each element of the couple refers in turn to couples of elements of another order), thereby revealing the properly qualitative content of quantity. We call this state of infinitely doubled difference which resonates to infinity disparity. Disparity - in other words, difference or intensity (difference of intensity) is the sufficient reason of all phenomena, the condition of that which appears. (…) The reason of the sensible, the condition of that which appears, is not space and time but the Unequal in itself, disparateness as it is determined and comprised in difference of intensity, in intensity as difference (Deleuze, 2001: 222-3).

Intensity is, then, a key term in Deleuze's philosophical project and in his ontology of becoming, since it is connected to notions of dynamism, variability, metamorphosis, influencing both thinking as well as sensation and the practice of art. For Deleuze, intensity confirms his theory of difference and of becoming; it rejects determinism and dogmatic positionings; it is the intensive virtual of his ontology; it embodies the creative desire in his ethical and political reflections; and in his aesthetic theory it is affect and metamorphic potentiality.

In his ontology of becoming, Deleuze underlies the necessity of considering the intensive genesis of the extended phenomena, hence, that the intensities that constitute an extensive being should be sensed - the famous Deleuzian "sentiendum" (Deleuze, 2001: 140-41). But this sensing cannot be achieved through the ordinary work of the senses. Although existing in the extended, virtual intensities are not identical to it, and can actualize themselves. Moreover, one can grasp intensities beyond the faculty of reason, encompassing sensibility, memory and thought. In fact, for Deleuze, intensities are not ideas, but instead are able to catalyse the actualisation of the virtual, generating extension, linear, successive time, extended bodies, and their qualities.

Finally, in aesthetics, when Deleuze replaces sensation for form, he privileges intensity. In fact, sensation in and through art is intimately related to the intensity of the forces that it does not represent. Sensation is the affect, which is neither subjective nor objective, but both correlated. The subject engages in a process (of becoming) through sensation, while at the same time something happens in realm of the art event.

The above referred notions of sensation and of intensity also concur to the understanding of Marlene's artwork. In her choreographies, she explores a figural work of distortion and dislocation, countering the representational and the narrative. Certainly, both her dance works as events, as well as the spectators, become in and through sensation and intensity.

Freudian Dream-work Operations as Choreographic Tools

In one of the interviews we conducted with Marlene, the choreographer refers to her creative process not as a representation, but as a process of "rewriting" (Freitas, 2013, n.p). This choreographic "rewriting" is closely related to a process of the dream-work, according to Siegmund Freud in his seminal oeuvre *Traumdeutung* (1953 [1900]), *The Interpretation of Dreams*, which he named as *Entstellung* (distortion, dislocation) replacing the category of representation, *Darstellung*. Similarly, Marlene also explicitly refuses representation and narration as strategies for choreographic methodology, and the dream-work operations, according to Freud, play a key role on Freitas' choreographic methodology. Hence, prior to unravelling Freud's category of *Entstellung*, distortion and dislocation, we will briefly analyse the referred dream-work operations. According to Freud, the four operations in place during the dream-work (*Traumarbeit*) are: (1) condensation (*Verdichtung*), (2) displacement

(*Verschiebung*), (3) conditions of representation or of figurability (*Rücksicht of Darstellbarkeit*), (4) and secondary elaboration (*sekundäre Bearbeitung*).

According to Freud, it becomes evident that one of the dream-work procedures is the condensation (*Verdichtung*) of several dream-thoughts into the final dream-content (Freud, 1953: 279). This means that probably the dreams we remember are only a remnant of the whole dream-work, and that some connections may occur, such as "loop-lines or short-circuits, made possible by the existence of other and deeper-lying connection paths" (280). In fact, Freud refers that the operation of condensation makes use of more than one method: firstly, "each of the elements of the dream-content seem to have been 'overdetermined'," which means that "they are represented in the dream-thoughts many times over;" secondly, the dream-thoughts also seem to be manifested in different elements in the dream-content (283), as Freud clarifies:

> Thus a dream is not constructed by each individual dream-thought, or a group of dream-thoughts, finding (in abbreviated form) separate representation in the content of the dream—in the kind of way in which an electorate chooses parliamentary representatives; a dream is constructed, rather, by the whole mass of dream-thoughts being submitted to a sort of manipulative process in which those elements which have the most numerous and strongest supports acquire the right of entry into the dream content—in a manner analogous to election by *scrutin de liste*" (284).

Furthermore, Freud refers that a series of figures that do not become evident in the dream, are concealed, and condensed in one single figure that becomes visible as a bodily shape. This could be named, Freud refers, a "collective figure" (293). Moreover, the dream-condensation can also produce other collective figures, "namely by uniting the actual features of two or more people into a single dream-image," which Freud names "composite figures" (*idem*). Sometimes, composite figures can be condensed in another way, "(...) by projecting two images onto a single plate, so that certain features common to both are emphasized, while those which fail to fit in with one another cancel one another out and are indistinct in the picture" (*idem*). Hence, according to Freud, the construction of collective and composite figures is one of the most relevant methods by which condensation operates in dreams, as well as multiple determination seems to be a process for an element to find its way into the dream.

In her choreographic methodology, as we referred above,[133] overdetermined images and composite figures play a significant role and result from the condensation as choreographic tool. Moreover, as in dreams, an extreme saturation of references is one of her crucial procedures to achieve the highest tension on stage. From her works, the figure of *Guintche* could be an example of an overdetermined and composite figure resulting from the condensation of several other figures, as we will unravel in Part III. Moreover, in all her other works, we can trace hybrids which are, mostly, composite figures resulting from the same operations of condensation and dislocation.

Regarding the dream-work operation of displacement (*Verschiebung*), Freud notices the following:

> It could be seen that the elements which stand out as the principal components of the manifest content of the dream are far from playing the same part in the dream-thoughts. And, as a corollary, the converse of this assertion can be affirmed: what is clearly the essence of the dream-thoughts need not be represented in the dream at all. The dream is, as it were, differently centred from the dream thoughts—its content has different elements as its central point (305).

What Freud acknowledges is that elements that have a high psychical value lose their intensity through the dream-work and, on the other hand, by means of overdetermination, other elements with lower intensity find their way into the dream-content. Consequently, Freud proposes that there is a "transference and displacement of psychical entities in the process of dream-formation," a process he names "dream-displacement," that results in the fact that the dream-content does not resembles the dream-thoughts, often through the agency of the subject's "censorship of endophysic defence" (308). Freud clarifies the process as a complicated structure with manifold relations to one another, where the elements from the dream-thoughts are "broken into fragments and jammed together," manipulating their content, combining the whole material into one single event that disregards any logical connections or linear rational narrative, but only simultaneity in time (312).

As an example, considering Marlene's dance piece *Bacchae – prelude to a purg*e (2018), we realize that some figures from Euripides tragedy were dislocated in the choreography. The figure that appears in the dance piece as the blind and that we could relate to the blind oracle Tiresias is, in fact, the king of Thebes. According to Marlene, the king of Thebes

[133] We have analyzed in detail the concept of overdetermined images in Part II, chapter *Openings through images, montage, and formulas of pathos*.

is the real blind character in Euripides tragedy, since it is the person lacking vision to recognize Dionysus as a deity.

The third dream-work operation, *Rücksicht of Darstellbarkeit*, considerations of figurability, also called "*mise-en-scène*" shows how the dream-work operations are not linguistic, but visual. For Freud, figurability is constitutive of the dream-work, it is internal to the unconscious and not irreducible to words. In his line of thought, there is a radical relation between figurability and desire, which has transgression as one of its fundamental modes, transgression of the object, of form and of space.

The fourth dream-work operation—the secondary elaboration or revision—is related to Marlene's methodology of "rewriting" and can be related to a strategy of dissimulation and dislocation, contrary to the linear theatrical narrative. It is a "mechanism of symbolization by which the dream both articulates and conceals conflictual desires" (Weber, 1982: 42). According to Freud, this operation is not distinguishable from our waking thoughts or dreams, and it is precisely by being a familiar psychic function that it accomplishes its task in the dream-work: to produce "a semblance of rationality, a specious intelligibility designed to conceal the dissimulation of the dream, and thus to render it acceptable to consciousness" (*idem*). If the dreams seem to have a meaning, "it is far removed from their true significance" (*idem*). "Secondary elaboration", as Weber explains,

> is thus described as a process of interpretation, essentially unconscious, designed to throw the dreamer of the track by reorganizing and presenting its material in a manner that seems to conform to the logical and rational expectations of the waking mind. The result is that those dreams that seem most coherent and transparent are in reality the most deceptive" (*idem*).

Thus, this desire to make sense also influences the spectator, who often tries to ignore the absurdities or incoherencies in order to produce a rational idea of the whole. However, to make a coherent sense of Marlene's dance works would be a non-productive task. "It is then the desire to make sense," as Weber refers, "that provides the condition of possibility for the *trompe d'oeil* of secondary elaboration" (Weber, 1982: 43). Similarly, in Marlene's choreographies, we could go even further by stating that there is neither a possible presumption of a coherent meaning, nor the possibility of reading her work within a linear logical narrative. On the contrary, her artistic goal is not the transmission of a message, as referred above, but the production of emotional forces and tensions.

Freud has compared the way secondary elaboration tries to fill in "the gaps in the dream-structure" (Freud, 1953 [1900]: 490), with a certain kind of a rationalistic and systematic thinking proper to a category of persons that Freud has called the "philosophers," who also try to fill "the holes of the cosmic plan," seeming to be less in love of wisdom than fearing it" (*idem*). Thus, it seems that for Freud the dissimulation of secondary revision appears not to be restricted to the dream-work but to be a characteristic of systematic thinking in general. Thus, Freitas' choreographies, by disrupting the theatrical apparatus, also come to destabilize the audience expectations for a choreographic work as a coherent and logical whole. Here also lies the politicality of her work: opening the sensible for the unforeseen, disrupting the expectation of logical cause-effect relations, unravelling the spectator's autonomy and univocal dramaturgical understandings.

Furthermore, this desire to apprehend the world as a single unit relates to another psychological function—the narcissistic ego—that also desires to maintain an overall and unitary comprehension of the world from a single point of view, that of the subject. Thus, according to Weber, it seems that there is a correlation between the way systematic thought organizes the world and the subject's (in this case, the spectator's) psychic organization. So, the "intellectual construct we call a system," Weber notes, "reveals itself to be narcissistic, in its origin no less than in its structure: speculative, in the etymological sense, as a mirror-image of the ego" (Weber, 1982: 46). The impossibility of the knowledge of the world as a single coherent whole seems to denote the reaction of "an ego seeking to defend its conflict-ridden cohesion against equally endemic centripetal tendencies" (*idem*). And, as Weber concludes:

> The pursuit of meaning; the activity of construction, synthesis, unification; the incapacity to admit anything irreducibly alien, to leave any residue unexplained—all this indicated the struggle of the ego to establish and to maintain an identity that is all the more precarious and vulnerable to the extent that it depends on what it must exclude. In short, speculative, systematic thinking draws its force from the effort of the ego to appropriate an exteriority of which, as Freud will later put it, it is only the 'organized part' (*idem*).

If the ego is, then, both a site of cognition and illusion, any theory—from Freud's psychoanalysis to the present theoretical analysis of Freitas' work—needs to take this into account that the ego of both the author and the spectator is "a highly ambivalent, more or less precarious 'compromise formation,' the resultant of a conflict of forces that it seeks to organize

but can never fully control" (Weber, 1982: 52). Then, any theory that seeks to articulate this state of affairs would probably be similarly ambivalent.

Furthermore, in the dream, that "most 'visual' of all unconscious articulations" (53), the ego of the artist can play many roles, not only the one of narrator, but also as a "participant" or "actor," and "be represented in various figures" (*idem*). Therefore, not evident to itself, "the dream only comes to be in and through a process of narration that Freud labels not as *Darstellung* (presentation), but *Entstellung*: distortion, dislocation, disfigurement" (*idem*). The ego, the dream and its narration are, then, a correlation of distortions and disfigurements, and accordingly, the "distance that separates narration from narrated, like that which separates spectator from spectacle," is not an empty space, but that of "*Enstellung*, a permanent distortion and a dislocation," or as Weber refers to it, "a space on the move" (54).

This disfigured and distorted "space on the move" may also be related to different phases of the choreographic process: from the choreographer's own subjectivation process, to the disfiguration of dance-work and its figures, to the distortion inherent in each spectator's singular experience. In this sense, the scenes, and topographies of Marlene's choreographies, cannot entirely be seen from one single point of view. Not only the figures and the choreographer are part of the show, so too are the spectators with their own, singular (and unconscious) apparatuses of perception. Thus, we suggest that Marlene's dance works are constructed upon materials set into processes of *Enstellung*—distortion, dislocation, and disfigurement—whose performative character, through repetition and difference, turn each theatrical presentation into a singular happening, a dance *piece*, which in the line of Weber's reading of Freud, it is only a *piece* of a dance work, not a single coherent whole that can ever be apprehended in its totality, once and for all.[134]

In the case of psychoanalysis as a theory, it cannot rely on observational data to be directly translated into theory since, according to Freud, it operates through processes of "transference" (*Übertragung*), by transcribing "a translation that itself is rendered perceptible, observable, cognizable only through the *Bildersprache*" (61), figurative language, or

[134] Thus, first, to produce a theory or a thesis on Marlene's work, we need to take into account that any theoretical construct is, firstly, grounded on a permanently unstable standpoint of this composite structure that is the subject, both the artist and the interpreter. Secondly, as Freud discloses in his texts, each theory or science that departs from analytical observation "depends on the 'very same perceptual apparatus' and on the 'help of gaps in the psyche'" (Weber: 1982, 55). Such "gaps must be as much as part of the observer as of the observed" (*idem*). Thus, as Weber concludes, what is at stake here is not merely the fallibility of theoretical systematization in general and of individuals, but "the possibility of a new conception of 'science' [or theory] in which such fallibility—the effects of the unconscious—would play a constitutive part" (Weber, 1982: 56).

"pictorial script" (62). The "dream," according to Freud, "is a picture puzzle" (63), where the effects of this unknown, or the unconscious, play a constitutive part.

Marlene's choreographies, as disfigured "spaces on the move," could be compared to this idea of the dream as a picture puzzle or montage, with the particularity of being a performative event. In fact, as referred, Marlene departs from an Atlas of images, indebted to Warburgian *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*[135] project, that also include musical, cinematic, and theoretical references. Departing from this montage of materials, some of her choreographic tools are indebted to the referred dream-work operations proposed by Freud.

Regarding the dream reading, Weber observes that to read it properly "its manifest sequence must be disregarded, or rather, it must be intensely regarded but not from the standpoint of its apparent meaning" (*idem*). Like in the dreams, the sequence of scenes or figures in Marlene's choreographies should neither be regarded for what they represent not for what they mean, but instead, for the radical openness that results from their overdetermination and opacity. In fact, the choreographer is not interested in highlighting the contradiction between oppositional poles, but in exploring their circularity, freely articulating simultaneous contradiction and overdetermined images that concur to the choreography strangeness and bewilderment. Similarly, Weber poignantly observes,

> Freudian thought is caught in a double bind: its *Bildesprache* [figurative language] can be successful only by reproducing and continuing the distortions it seeks to describe, as in the case of the *Bildescrift* [visual script] of the dream. Its individual propositions and assertions can function only by the distortions and dislocations they trace, not by what they represent (*darstellen*). Or rather, the descriptive, cognitive value of its figures depends on the movement of their inscriptions, the style and sequence of their arrangement, and the relations they establish with each other, rather than on the referents they seem to denote. This in turn requires a readiness to read not in terms of *Setzung* (positions or propositions) but in those of *Auseinandersetzung*, a movement of conflictual decomposition and recomposition in which that which is posited (*gesetzt*) sets itself apart: that is, both demarcates itself from an other to which it is opposed (66).

Not only Marlene's choreographies include and suppose these gaps of the psyche, as a theoretical approach to her work should also acknowledge these unconscious areas as ongoing processes of subjectification. Thus, these gaps, "the relation between self and other, inner and outer, cannot be grasped as an interval between polar opposites but rather as an

[135] For our reflection on Warburg's overall project and its influence on Marlene's work, please consult Part I, chapter "Openings through image, montage and formulas of *pathos*".

irreducible dislocation of the subject in which otherness inhabits the self as its condition of possibility" (68).

The dream, then, (dis)organizes itself by the presentation of predominantly visual images, which are "governed by the syntax of a scenario," and whose relations, or "operative mechanisms of that syntax— the language of the unconscious—coincides with the four kinds of dream-work: condensation, displacement, representability, and secondary elaboration" (103). These operations are what make the dream a distinguished form of thinking. The dream thought, as well as Freitas' choreographic work, is not articulated as the waking thought "in conformity with the law of identity and non-contradiction," but its language, or what the spectators see from it, "is one in which identity and non-contradiction are strategic, calculated, and misleading after the effects of differential relationships, transformations and displacements" (*idem*). In addition, not only "the dream disfigures, distort and dislocate," Weber concludes, "but it also dissimulates this very process of distortion" (103).

According to Freud, many features of the dreams are overdetermined, as well as the figures in Marlene's choreographies. This means that one single interpretation would not account for the multiple fictional and unconscious threads behind the choreographic scenes. Similarly, the dream interpreter, Weber notes, "is no longer (...) a spectator or an observer, but also and at the same time a protagonist, and the results of his actions are determined by a relation of forces in which he is inscribed" (112).

In the same token, the spectator has not only to deal with the opposing forces that distort the choreography, but also with his own psychological, cognitive, and unconscious forces, aware that there is not a stable fixed certain point from where to establish a definitive interpretation. Freud also acknowledged that the dream topography does not allow for such a definitive hermeneutic. In fact, in a celebrated passage, the author refers to a place in the dream "that must be left in the dark, because in the process of interpreting one notices a tangle of dream-thoughts arising which resists unravelling" (Freud, 1953: 530). This place, Freud calls

> the navel of the dream, the place where it straddles the unknown and where the dream-thoughts are necessarily interminable and branch out on all sides into the netlike entanglement of our world of thought. Out of one of the denser places in this meshwork, the dream-wish rises like a mushroom out of its mycelium (*idem*).

Hence, Freud's "net," Weber refers, is not merely an intricate and complex network but, "and perhaps above all, a *trap*" (Weber, 1982: 113). Not a "stable or distinct *object* but

a *movement* in which one becomes entangled, *verstrickt*, and this tangle (...) of dream-thoughts does not stays in its place," but "begins to invade the thoughts that constitute the light of day, of our waking, conscious life" (114). This infinite ramification of dream-thoughts (or of fictional and imaginary thoughts in case of Marlene's work), into the waking thought blurs the distinction between these two fields of the familiar and the unknown.
But since this dream ramifies or extends into the waking thoughts, the question rests on where this "impenetrable but unmistakable knot" lies? Where the interpreter should stop, and how to distinguish the centre of the dream, the navel, if it seems to be so close and entangled to our world of waking thoughts? The centre of navel presents so many difficulties in understanding because it seems "curiously full, oversaturated," containing too much rather than too little" (117). In the same line, Marlene's choreographic methodology also works towards an oversaturation of condensed elements, searching for the high degree of tension on stage.

Thus, this site of the navel from where the dream-wish arises "like the mushroom out if its mycelium" seems to be, according to Weber, a "thallus, (…) a structure without vascular tissue, lacking differentiation into steam and leaves, and above all, from which roots are absent." Thus, "the root of the dream-wish," according to Weber, "its foundation, is defined by this absence of true roots" (119). Hence, encountering the navel of the dream-wish as an undefined structure takes us, following Weber's conclusion, not only to the limits of interpretation (of a dream, as well of an artwork) but also to the limits of meaning itself (120). It seems, that the dream's interpretation begins and ends in a dead (or open) end, not that distant from Marlene's dance work.

Following this conclusion of the impossibility of an interpretation, we wish to bring Hubert Damisch well-known text *Le gardien de l'interpretation* (2003), that elaborates on Freud's text *Der Moses des Michelangelo* (1914), originally published anonymously in the psychoanalytical magazine *Imago*, because this text occupies a strategic position in Freud's theoretical work on aesthetics. It not only questions the authoritarian system that underlies the conception of the artist as the full author of his/her work, but also the process of interpreting works of art not indebted to epochal characteristics and styles but to the lapses and minor details. This text is a product and a referent of what it signals, as Damisch refers: "*element mineur d'un jeu complexe, mais qui peut-être a lui-même valeur de symptom et qui exige d'être déchiffré, interpreté comme tel*" (Damisch, 2003: 288).

Through a close reading of Freud's text, Damisch points out other possibilities of reception and interpreting a work of art, following Freud's process in the reflection on Micheangelo's work: to apprehend the work not as a cohesive whole, but to pay attention to the small lapses or faults contained in its margins, and try to take advantage, through a mode of symptomatic reading, of all those gaps and irregularities.

Thus, Freud's analysis of Michaelangelo's sculpture *Moses* (1518) has nothing in common with the theories of art history since he does not expose his thoughts according to styles or epochs. According to Damisch, Freud assigns the art to a limit of interpretation similar to that of the dreams, a limit that can be related to the already discussed conditions of figurability. In fact, Damisch observes and sets some questions that lie at the core of this Freudian essay:

> [l]'art, comme le rêve, travaille à exprimer ce qu'on est réduit à designer comme sa 'pensée,' une pensée qu'il lui appartient de transcrire, de transformer en langage 'pictural': là comme ici le défaut de l'expression est lié à la matière utilisée, aux moyens même don't l'art—comme le rêve, dans le registre qui lui est propre—dispose, aux procedes figuratifs (Darstellungsmittel) qu'il met en oeuvre. Mais si l'on est fondé à parler du rêve en général, et des limites que sa constituition lui assigne, a partir desquelles il se laisse definir en tant que moment d'une écriture psychique originaire, qu'en est-il de l'art, qu'en est-il de l'écriture de l'art, dès lors que toute definition qu'on peut en proposer est au contraire relative, marquée au sceau d'une histoire? Dès lors, plus profondément, que si 'histoire d'art' il y a cette histoire s'ordonne en dernière analyse autour de la question de la figuration, sinon de la figurabilité même? (Damisch, 2003: 305).

Thus, according Damisch reading of Freud's text, what seems relevant for the understanding of an artwork lies precisely around the doubts and dark spots that surround the figure, or in other words, in its considerations of figurability (*Rücksicht of Darstellbarkeit*), in its *mise-en-scène*, similarly to one of the dream operations elaborated in Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*. The analysis of an artwork does not begin by attributing or producing a code in order to decipher a figure, as it could be the case in the context of a representational system of art history. On the other hand, the interpretation, even if fallible and open as Weber has remarkably noted, progresses step by step inventing its own grammar, and departs less from its "signs (*Zeichen*)" than from its "indices (*Anzeichen*)," as Damisch observes, where performer and interpreter are both actants in a game that is a movement of "transcription (*Übertragung*)" and "transformation (*Umformung*)" (307). Freud, in his letter to Eduard Weiss, signals the hours spent contemplating and sketching Michaelangelo's *Moses*, the interpreter in-between art history and psychoanalysis, as notes Louis Marin: "the very model of a gaze directed toward a work, at once attentive, analytical, objective, and traversed by desires and

phantoms, the gaze through which everything begins, (...) all work in art history and art theory” (Marin, 2001: 55). The production of this interpretational text is always “*diférée, un produit toujours à re-produire, à re-présenter*” (Damisch, 2003: 307).

In this sense, the work of art remains close to the dream: “(...) *on n'est jamais sûr de l'avoir complètement interpretée; et lors même que la solution paraît satisfaisante et sans lacunes* (...), *il est toujours possible que l'oeuvre, comme le rêve, ait un autre sens*” (*idem*).

To ask what an artwork represents is, then, to return to an economy of representation, a process that will not allow us to gain any access to Marlene Monteiro Freitas' work.

As a provisional conclusion, will then try to approach her work in the third part of this dissertation with a gaze as open as her choreographic methodology demands, with the full awareness that, one the one hand, an univocal interpretation is impossible once and for all; and, on the other hand, we will be attentive not only to her choreographies' central figures, but to the small details, the side-lines and the indices, trying to sense its forces, possible condensations, distortions and dislocations, as well as their conditions of figurability, conscious, however, that any approach would be informed by our own becoming situatedness, always unstable and “on the move,” hence, never fully self-reflexive, coherent and rational, once and for all.

Music, Dance, Carnival: some Cape Verdean Cultural Traces

In this chapter, we will reflect on the singularity of some Cape Verdean performative manifestations and how they show their traces in Marlene's artistic work, focusing on traditional forms of music and dance, such as *morna*, *coladeira*, *funaná*, *batuko, tabanca* and *colá San Jon* (the latter, that takes place, especially, in the islands of Santo Antão and São Vicente). In addition, besides traditional music, and dance, and considering São Vicente's historical and cultural singular dynamics, we will briefly contextualize the cultural relevance for Marlene's work of Mindelo Carnival, and the recent movement of the Mandinga's Carnival.

Cape Verdean cultural elite, from the *Nativists*, to the *Claridosos*, to the independentists of the *50s Generation*, as we have previously mentioned, has contributed to the formulation of elements towards a Cape Verdean subjectivity, with its differences according to its context and historical moments. Both the regionalist autonomy and the claimed

independence were not intended to be only administrative but also cultural, aiming to rescue, refers Madeira (2015: 84), some of the cultural manifestations prohibited by the colonial regime.[136] After independence, Madeira argues, begins a process of collecting these censored or repressed manifestations, such as syncretic rituals reminiscent of the pre-colonial African heritage, namely, tabanca, finaçon, batuque and funaná (Madeira, 2015: 84).

Of the countless Cape Verdean cultural manifestations, all of them intrinsically linked to the dynamic processes of miscegenation, creolization and transnational diaspora discussed earlier, we will focus on the performative practices with more emphasis for the present study: music, dance, and syncretic rituals as privileged vehicles of cultural expression.

Considering the transnational character of contemporaneity, in which multi-localized communities generate diverse responses in the performative domain (Ribeiro, 2012: 9), Cape Verde's migratory history allowed a transnational delineation fostered by the diaspora. This has been designing connection interfaces since Cape Verde, from the cities of Praia, Santiago Island, and Mindelo, São Vicente island, passing to other European metropolitan cities, such as Lisbon, Paris, Rotterdam, Milan, North American cities like Boston, New Bedford and Pawtucket, and also African cities like Dakar, Luanda, São Tomé and Maputo, among others. Globalization highlights these processes of immaterial and performative digression of music and dance, with their respective recontextualizations, and semantic reappropriations. Thus, the adjective of music in discursive terms, such as Brazilian music, Cape-Verdean music or world music, says Ribeiro, refers less to geographic and ethnic origins, but to sound, musical characteristics, and in some cases socio-cultural contexts of its performance (Ribeiro, 2012: 13).[137] In this line, Cape Verdean music has acquired a transnational dimension that should not be limited neither to objective geographic and linguistic criteria, nor to stylistic, instrumental, or human contexts. In fact, notes Ribeiro, Cape Verdeans are involved in several stylistic musical genres, such as, the samba, hip hop, jazz, among others (16).

[136] According to Madeira citing Dulce Almada Duarte, the Portuguese colonial power and the Church prohibited cultural manifestations of African heritage in the XIX century, namely *coladeira*, *batuque*, *tabanca* and animistic religious practices (Madeira, 2015: 88).

[137] This position contradicts the legacy of nineteenth century European nationalisms that categorized musical expressions linked to ideological and symbolic formations of geographical origin (regional or national), or associated with an ethnic group, or even linguistic formations. In fact, Ribeiro refers, contemporary ethnomusicology, within the framework of Musical Sciences and associated with a broader reflection on the location of culture (Bhabha, 1994), proposes that the dynamism and circulation of musical expressions (and resulting choreography) do not fit under a geographical, political, and human delimitation (Ribeiro, 2012: 13).

However, paradoxically, music has also the power of shaping ideas and images around a country, identity political tools nation states make use of to promote national imaginaries. Cape Verde is one of these countries where music, along the times, from colonial to the period of postcolonial independence, has become a central mediator between Cape-Verdeans and their history, identity, and symbolic discourses, in their country and in the diaspora.[138] Hence, when focusing on musical and dance popular genres from Cape Verde and beyond, we will consider Ribeiro's term of *performative practices*, since to refer solely to musical genre or musical expression is reductive of its extensive and holistic performative dimension (Turner, 1986; Conquergood, 2002; Schechner, 2002).

The task of defining a musical performative practice is complex, as refers the Cape-Verdean musician and researcher Manuel de Jesus Tavares, since a musical performance extends the concept itself (Tavares, 2005). According to a more holistic ethno-musicological perspective, these popular musical performative practices can be seen as modes of symbolically organizing affects and experiences shared by individuals and groups, that are repeated frequently and, as such, perpetuated in time and space with appropriations and reinventions.

Internationally, the musical aesthetic universe related with performing practices in Cape Verde is more associated with *morna* and *coladeira*, the former having been conveyed discursively as a relevant trace for Cape Verdean identity construction. However, other forms, politically censored since the colonial period for its connection to an African ancestry - the *funaná*, *batuque*, *finançon*, *tabanca* and *colá san jon* - were relegated to a certain international and discursive invisibility. Today, one may refer that the popular performative practices are, mostly, *morna*, *coladeira*, *funaná*, and *batuque*[139], adding to those the singular manifestations of *tabanca* and *colá san jon*.

The musical forms *Morna* and *coladeira* can be defined by hybrid musical compositions that combine a structure based on Western tonal music with inscriptions of performative and stylistic features that differentiate it from European music. On the other hand, refers Ribeiro, the other performative practices, in its performance features, lyrics and discourses

[138] For further analysis on the subject, please see Ribeiro (2012) on Cape Verdean *batuque*, Ana Flávia Miguel (2010) on *colá San Jon*, and Moacyr Rodrigues (2017) on *morna*, among others.

[139] Beyond the most celebrated Cesária Évora, to these performative musical genres we can associate several Cape Verdean musicians locally or in the diaspora: "Bana, Luís Morais, Cesária Évora, Ildo Lobo, Zeca di nha Reinalda, Pantera, Kodé di Dona, Nhu Raul di Brava, Norberto Tavares, Katxás, Txeka, Grupo Ferro Gaita, Mayra Andrade, Lura, Mário Lúcio, Princezito, Vadú, Tito Paris, Menu Pecha, Susana Lubrano, Gil Semedo, Beto Dias, Kino Cabral e Jorge Neto" (Madeira, 2015: 104).

produced, revealed connections to the African ancestral legacy in Cape Verde (Ribeiro, 2012: 17).

However, as we have seen above, if some authors draw a clear distinction between, on the one hand, *morna* as a Cape Verdean musical genre more related to the Barlavento [Windward] islands with its European legacy and, on the other hand, *batuque*, *funaná* and *finançon* as grounded in the Sotavento [Leeward] islands denoting its African heritage, the Cape-Verdean ethnomusicologist Moacyr Rodrigues criticizes these theories, alerting to the problem of making generalist readings that lack the knowledge of the musical historical reality of the archipelago.[140]

Morna

According to the ethno-musicologist Moacyr Rodrigues, *morna* is a popular musical genre of urban genesis, configuring a connection between music, dance, and poetry, and that had an enormous relevance not only in the formation of an identity space in Cape Verdean colonial society, but also for the construction of a national imaginary of the archipelago (Rodrigues, 2017: 19). In fact, Rodrigues adds, *morna* was the musical genre, among others, that crossed the archipelago and prevailed in space and time, both in terms of artistic practice and audience (20). It is a performative practice that includes voice and musical instruments, "configured in a song with a melodic and tonal harmonic structure, with a slow quaternary rhythm" (Rodrigues, 2017: 19, my transl.).

It will have appeared in Boavista island, but it is on Brava Island (closely linked to emigration to the U.S. that started in the eighteenth century but intensified in the nineteenth century) that the *morna* starts its path, according to Rodrigues, towards being the national musical genre. It was an urban popular song danced and sung, with instrumental parts: in general, the fiddle (violin), the viola and the guitar, and which in its origin is associated with women of popular origin, the *cantadeiras*. From 1916 on, the *cavaquinho* was introduced, in the 1930s, the brass instruments, and the singers were replaced in Mindelo by men. Later,

[140] In his doctoral dissertation *A Morna. O Papel da morna na construção da identidade nacional de Cabo Verde* (2017), Moacyr Rodrigues alerta para eventuais lacunas nas teses de Jorge Manuel Mansilha Castro, Ribeiro (2012), *Inquietação, memória e afirmação no batique: música e dança cabo-verdiana em Portugal* e Rui Cidra (2011), *Música, Poder, Diáspora. Uma Etnografia e História entre Cabo Verde, Santiago e Portugal*, com notas conclusivas que, porventura, carecem de verificação (Rodrigues, 2017: 22-29).

in the 40s and 50s, the piano and, in the 60s, electronic instruments were introduced with the ensemble Voz de Cabo Verde (Rodrigues, 2017: 278).

Morna is inseparable from Eugénio Tavares' journalistic work, together with his generation of intellectuals, in their critical opposition to the colonial power, laying some of the bases of Cape Verdean subjectivation, in the line of Benedict Anderson (1983) "imagined community". The lyrics evoke the drama and the revolt for the need to migrate due to hunger and misery resulting from colonial policies. In Brava, *morna* portrayed elements of popular culture and collective experience, with a more cultured literary Creole text. The warmth of Boavista and Brava style follow its course in Mindelo, São Vicente, in the context of the new industrial capitalist colonialism with the creation of Porto Grande. In this vibrant Mindelo environment, figures like Luís Rendall influenced the prolific composer B. Lèza, famous for the innovations introduced in *morna* that still influence the way it is composed, performed, and listened today (31).[141]

Jorge Fernandes Monteiro, known as Jota Monte, grandfather of the now choreographer Marlene Monteiro Freitas, was another celebrated poet of the same generation. Jota Monte was also a famous musician and composer of *mornas* that evoke, on the one hand, the suffering of those who leave for a better life, and on the other, the love for Cape Verde and the desire for freedom. According to Rodrigues, Jota Monte "adopted the same criteria as the excellent and elegant musician [B. Lèza], (...) decisive in the consolidation of the unique sound of the group of *Mornistas* [morna players] from Mindelo of that generation (Rodrigues, 2017: 241).

With Portuguese Estado Novo new discriminatory guidelines and its military dictatorship, the economic crisis of the 1930s, aggravated by the drought of the 1940s, and the consequent famines and deaths that decimated the archipelago, the popular poetry of the *morna* turns to a higher poetry around the *Claridade* movement, with themes that turn to the country's problems, and to the affirmation of a Luso-tropicalist *Caboverdianidade*. In Mindelo,

[141] Luís Rendall introduces, in the 1930s in Mindelo, a new way of strumming the guitar, the *spnicá* in creole, and B. Lèza "introduces modulations and transition chords", such as the "almost systematic use of the so-called Brazilian 'halftone'", and "an intimate relationship between the text and the melody." The semantics of the text are adjusted to the musical phrases, abandoning short poems and "introducing stanzas closer to the structures of Portuguese classical poetry" (Rodrigues, 2017: 279, my transl.).

the street is the privileged space for musical socialization, and since the 1940s, there are groups that assert themselves as expert *morna* players (281).

Subsequently, in the period leading up to the independence struggle mobilized by the PAIGC, Rodrigues explains, *morna* serves as a vehicle for building a national ideology and colonial criticism through the transmission of messages, more or less veiled, in favor of a "separatist politics," also constituting itself as a "protest music" (Rodrigues, 2017: 32-33). Indeed, using the vernacular Creole language, this musical practice was able to transmit messages to all social classes, escaping colonial censorship, contributing to create a consciousness that went from nativist, to regionalist, to an imagined national community.

Coladeira

According to João Paulo Madeira in *Nação e Identidade: A Singularidade de Cabo Verde* (2015), *coladeira* is a performative practice celebrated both in Cape Verde and internationally, which emerged in the 1950s in São Vicente, with a more moderate pace than the *funaná* and faster than *morna* (Madeira, 2015: 107).

As Madeira refers, citing Jorge Fernandes Monteiro, it is considered a traditional evolution of *morna*, maintaining the same theme and structure, but with a change of pace. The name *coladeira*, according to Moacyr Rodrigues, comes from the "Creole expression *colá benfêt*," that is, "to denounce and criticize the mistakes and ridicules observed among the population, sometimes in a critical and malicious way, but always with an implicit pedagogical goal" (*idem*).

Funaná

The performative practices of *funaná* and *batuque* emerged in the marginal and subaltern context in the interior of Santiago Island, amid an illiterate peasantry that practiced subsistence agriculture, without resources for stringed musical instruments, and where orality played a central role in expressive cultural formulations. Thus, throughout history, as Rui Cidra mentions in *Música, Poder e Diáspora. Uma etnografia e história entre Santiago, Cabo Verde e Portugal* (2011), the practice of *batuque* and *funaná* constituted strong expressive, emotional, and intellectual resources for organizing "social constructions of

history", "the experience of migration", and "interpreting culturally a marginal condition predicated on race constructions during periods of colonial governance and the formation of a politically sovereign nation" (Cidra, 2011: 14-15).

In fact, during the late colonial period, *batuque* and *funaná* were relegated to institutional invisibility, censored, and even persecuted by Catholic missions during the bio-political governmental period of the Estado Novo. Their performative modalities were not adapted to the rhetoric of a miscegenation with European traits, and to the civilizing degree that would justify the different status granted to Cape Verde in relation to the other colonies. Indeed, in Cape Verdean Creole society, the sociability practices of music, dance and the body constituted performative modes of conduct associated with identity, gender, racial and class models. Thus, in the context of a colonial hegemonic discourse and its racial postulates, with criteria of aesthetic value, cultural quality and civilizational legitimation, the performative practices centered on string and key instruments, such as *morna* and *coladeira*, typical of Cape Verdean literate elite, approached the values of a successful miscegenation with a European vein, and adapted to the colonial identity discourse.

Opposed to these were the practices from Santiago, *batuque* and *funaná*, associated with an African ancestry resulting from a political economy of slavery. These practices were performed, firstly, by the enslaved people who took refuge in Santiago interior mountains and, later, by the racialized peasantry and lower class, distinct from the performative practices by white settlers or the emerging Creole class. Without access to musical instruments of European origin, they used adapted instruments, such as the *tchabeta* in *batuque*, in the *funaná* the *concertina*[142] (in creole *gaita*) and *ferrinhos* (in creole *fero*, which consisted of a knife setting the rhythm on an iron bar).

This difficulty in finding instruments gave musicians a privileged role in society, just as the rare literacy gave protagonism to orality, improvised text, and popular themes.
The performative practice called batuque, which I will analyze in detail further ahead, was performed mainly by women and included singing, percussion, and dance. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, besides Santiago, it was practiced also in Brava, Fogo and Maio. Both *batuque* and *funaná* were censored for their Africanist connotations, for their

[142] According to Cidra, although the concertina used in funaná was a musical instrument of European origin that has been circulating globally since the middle of the 19th century, it has been adapted in Cape Verdean society to its own sounds through the transformation of its inner reeds, which give it different timbre and tuning qualities (Cidra: 2011: 162).

sexual license, and in the case of funaná, their players were persecuted, and dances were prohibited. These practices were subjected to invisibility due to a broader colonial bio-political control regime that, regarding *funaná*, was also aimed at "disciplining the constitution of the family and the practices of sexuality" (25).

The energetic funaná balls, with their fast pace, constituted moments of *sabura* (meaning in Creole "the good", "the pleasurable") and intense sociability that contradicted the hardships of life, from the agricultural work regime to the social asymmetries due to colonial power. These were also places for negotiating masculinity, also associated with the consumption of *grogu* (Creole word for grog, a strong alcoholic drink made from sugar cane). Consequently, itinerant *funaná* balls disorganized the colonial regimes governmentality of subaltern work, Cidra says, destabilizing the separation between "the spheres of production" and those of "pleasure and consumption, which should be marked by the ethos of Christianity" (Cidra, 2011: 180-81). On the other hand, from the perspective of the colonial religious class, these balls materialized "a universe of sin, violence and sexual license" (*idem*).

Subsequently, in the post-independence period, under a one-party regime, these practices were revalued towards a "politically iconic discourse of homogeneity of the nation", assuming a central place in cultural policies, and contributing to "formulations of the archipelago and its diaspora national identity," adapted and reappropriated by musicians from Santiago, with international visibility (Cidra, 2011: 10).[143]

Batuque[144]

As referred, the *batuque* differs from the aesthetic universe of musical and performing genres that have been more generally associated with Cape Verdean musical expression, such as *morna* and *coladeira*.

According to Jorge Castro Ribeiro in *Inquietação, memória e afirmação no batuque: música e dança cabo-verdiana em Portugal* (2012), literary and historical documentation to the practice of *batuque* locate its emerging context in the eighteenth century, in the rural

[143] After the 1980s, funaná acquired a new vitality, exemplified by the musical group Bulimundo, led by musician Katxas, named Carlos Alberto Martins. This group adapted the rhythms, melodic structure, and chords of *funaná* to the modern context of electronic instruments, contributing to the current visibility phenomenon of *funaná* (Madeira, 2015: 110).
[144] *Batuque* can be written in different forms in Creole, such as *batuko*, or *batuku*. Not being able to verify the most correct form, we have adopted throughout the Portuguese word, also used in Cape Verde: *batuque*.

areas of Santiago Island, where black free population practiced a subsistence agriculture, although there were also references to similar manifestations in the past in S. Nicolau, Maio and Fogo islands. Today, in Cape Verde, *batuque* is performed in Santiago, where one can still find properly organized *batuque* groups, (Ribeiro, 2012: 81-82), but also in the Cape Verdean diaspora communities.

As Ribeiro describes, *batuque*'s "repertoire consists of songs in Creole, accompanied by polyrhythmic percussion performed with the hands on an idiophone formed (…) by a rolled cloth called *tchabeta.*"[145] This musical performance is accompanied by one or more dancers' vigorous and virtuouso hips and pelvic dance. There were historical references to other musical instruments accompanying the singing and percussion in the *tchabeta*, such as the "cimboa", a string instrument composed by a gourd with one string (Ribeiro, 2012: 77). In present times, the *batuque* performances may also include instruments such as the *djembes* (African drums popularized in African and Western countries), the *violão* [traditional acoustic guitar], among others (78).

In the *batuque* performance, Ribeiro describes, there are three components: firstly, the sonic component — "sometimes called in creole by *zom*, which comprises the rhythmic accompaniment and the sung melodic dimension" (voice); secondly, the "choreographic component – the *dance of torno* or, in creole, *da ku torno*; thirdly, "a poetic or literary component, called *cantiga*" (*idem*).

A group of women called the *batucadeiras* [the *batuque* music players] sit in line, semi-circle, or circle with a *tchabeta* placed between their thighs, and as Ribeiro describes,

> [t]he *batuko* performance is announced by the rhythm beat by the palms or in the *tchabeta*, showing from the beginning the polyrhythmic result of the overlap of binary cells against ternary cells in repetitive cycles. Right after stabilizing the regularity of the rhythm pattern, the main singer starts the solo thus completing the *zom* of the *batuko*. This rhythmic mark that gives identity to the *batuko*, is performed through the percussion of the *tchabeta* (Ribeiro, 2012: 78, my transl.).

The *tchabeta* is constituted by a traditional cloth called in creole "*pano di tera*"[146] [cloth of the land], wrapped around itself forming a roll that is placed between the thighs

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[145] In the Cape Verdean migrant communities in Lisbon, Ribeiro observes, the women in *batuque* groups have also adopted small cushions as contemporary versions for the *tchabeta* (Ribeiro, 2012: 77).
[146] The "*pano di tera*", meaning the cloth of the land, is a symbolic element from the Cape Verdean popular culture. According to Ribeiro, it is a cotton fabric made in manual looms, mostly black or with geometric motifs embroidered in white. Traditionally a clothing and functional accessory, today it is used less often. It serves as

(*idem*). Although being used traditionally for other clothing and functional purposes, the *pano di terra* has a relevant function in the *batuque* not only for the hands' percussion that marks the rhythm, but also for the choreographic component. In the *dance of torno* (in creole *da ku torno*), the *pano di terra* is "tied tightly around the hips, providing an indispensable physical stimulus for the hips movement and the rest of the body. It is in this function, limited to the performance of the *batuque*, that the *pano di tera* becomes a *tchabeta*" (Ribeiro, 2012: 79, my transl.).

Still regarding *batuque*'s sonic poetics, the sung part is called *cantiga*. As Ribeiro describes,

> it is performed in alternation between the soloist and the choir while it is accompanied by percussion of a polyyrmic structure in the *tchabeta* by all women. The designation "*zom*" essentially refers to a melodic structure used to support the singing, and which can be used in a repetitive cycle (80, my transl.).

The *cantiga*, as explains Ribeiro, may have two parallel meanings: on the one hand, the sung text, or the lyrics, called in creole *letra*. The text can include both canonical texts and improvised ones that the singer relates to the audience or to appropriate social themes. In any case, there is an alternation of "call and response" between the soloist and a choir, in which the choir can maintain a fixed chorus and the soloist sings and improvises the verses (86). Following Ribeiro citing Nketia and Chernoff, "the *batuque* is part of the call and response chanting paradigm that is frequently used in other performative genres of [so-called] 'African music'" (98).

On the other hand, *cantiga* may also refer to the ensemble of *batuque*'s performance, including the *letra* [lyrics], *zom* [the melody] and the dance (81). Moreover, Ribeiro highlights the *batuque*'s role as a socially engaged performative practice, with themes that express feminine issues, messages of social interest, "moral and ethical rules, (…) descriptive narratives of everyday events, exaltation of values of respect for the common good" (80).
Regarding the choreographic part, the designation in creole *da ku torno* refers to the body part that is activated during the dance — the pelvic, belly and buttocks area —named in creole as *torno*. This dancing element occurs, generally, in the second part of the *cantiga* (the sung part) called *rabira*, a creole expression that means "to turn". The main singer gives

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a shawl when placed on the shoulders, around the hips helps to hold the skirt, and on the back serves to carry the children. (Ribeiro, 2012: 78-79).

the instruction "*rabira*" or "*tá rabira*" to the group and the musical rhythm becomes faster and more intense, to announce and trigger the soloist or group of dancers to start *da ku torno* (79). The *rabira* constitutes the highest moment of performative and emotional intensification. Usually, the dance ends and the dancer let the *pano di tera* fall, then, passing it to the next dancer, and the process continues.

The *batuque* may be considered more than a popular musical and choreographic performance. A unique popular expression for Santiago women, *batuque* is also performed in religious and ritualistic ceremonies, such as at wedding parties or in preparation for the *tabanca* (82).[147]

Until 2010, Portuguese literary and historical references to *batuque* as a performative practice in Cape Verde are absent in dictionaries and encyclopedias. (115).

According to Ribeiro, *batuque* in Cape Verdean context is already considered as an African-influenced musical genre, together with *finançon*, *funaná*, and *tabanca*. Hence, according to Hurley-Glowa's description in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, these musical genres

> (…) emphasize rhythm more than melody, feature call-and-response structures, include much repetition, have simple harmonic structures and are performed with an open, loud singing style without the use of vibrato. *Batuko* is performed by women's groups in Santiago. One woman (or occasionally a man) leads the ensemble in songs with call-and-response structures. The ensemble members sit in a circle and accompany themselves by beating duple and triple rhythms on rolled-up lengths of cloth held between the thighs just above the knees or with hand clapping. The combined effect of the patterns produces a composite polyrhythm that is characteristic of *batuko*. As the group sings, at least one individual dances in the centre of the circle. The dance called torno is based on rapid movements of the hips, which are accentuated by a low-slung sash. In the past, a one-string bowed fiddle of West African origin called the cimboa was used to accompany *batuko*, but it has virtually disappeared (Hurley-Glowa, 2001, 2)

[147] According to a presentation about *batuque* that took place at the *Centro Cultural de Cabo Verde* [Cape Verde Cultural Center (CCCV), Lisbon, in August 2020, "Maria Zefemia," Teresa Teixeira, Fátima Lopes, Adelina Varela (Zulmira) and Patrícia Monteiro, all members of the *Orquestra de Batukadeiras de Portugal*, from AMCDP - *Associação das Mulheres Cabo-verdianas na Diáspora em Portugal*, describe the character of encounter, sharing, and improvisation inherent to both the *batuque* lyrics and dance. The *batuque* begins when a group of women get together in groups, usually in a semi-circle, with the *batuque* proper clothes and the *tchabeta* held between the thighs. Then the women start playing the *tchabeta*, marking the rhythm. A theme or a novelty appears instantly and one of the women, called the prophet or *cantadeira*, begins to sing, followed by the rest who make up the choir and respond to the prohet's singing. In the course of the music, a moment of intense rhythm arises, in which one of the women improvises, rises and dances the dance of the *torno* in a movement of great intensity. In https://www.facebook.com/CCCV.PT/videos/330732538052342 (accessed March18, 2021).

In fact, Ribeiro argues that the absence to Cape Verdean *batuque* in Portuguese dictionaries and encyclopedias until the past decade can be justified by a "politics of invisibility" already in play during the colonial period in regard to the influence of African legacy in Cape Verdean social and cultural manifestations (Ribeiro, 2012: 117-18).
However, in Portugal, during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, there were already references to *batuque* as a musical performative practice with clear influences from African circle dances, but that included also musical and dance practices classified as Afro-Brazilian, such as the *lundum* and *fofa*. Both dances, according to José Ramos Tinhorão,

> (…) coincided in the use, in its choreography, of the snap of the fingers imitating fandango castanets, and of the movement of the dancers in the simulation of the *umbigadas* of the black *batuques*, the success was anticipated, which, in the nineteenth century, would obtain a new counterpointed dance of songs that, in many points, merged *fofa* and *lundum*: the dance baptized in Rio de Janeiro with the name of *fado* (Tinhorão, 1988: 330)

Therefore, the characteristics that motivated moral censorship and batuque's prohibition were evident: their musical, vocal and movement dimensions were not suited to the behavioral and socialization conventions approved by the Creole elite and the colonial power. In addition, its texts sung in Creole, evoking contestation and lamentation were quite different from the learned Portuguese texts of the literate elite, positioning *batuque* as a resistance manifestation from the subaltern gender and class position of underprivileged women. Thus, *batuque* becomes a form of civic and politicized participation from Santiago rural interior (Cidra, 2011: 148-49).

The *finançon*, close to *batuque*, more than a musical genre is defined as a genre of oral poetry, composed mainly by improvised sayings and proverbs with a moralizing character and the transmission of stories, under the traditional rhythm of *batuque*.
According to Madeira, the *batuque* and the *finaçon* have the celebrated interpreter and composer Orlando Pantera as main representative, who diffused these performative expressions but also introduced original modifications (Madeira, 2015: 109).

Tabanca and Colá San Jon

The pilgrimage festivities [named in Portuguese "festas de romaria"], originally from Rome, spread to the European Christian world, and were later taken to the colonized

territories in Africa, America, and Asia. Beyond religious events, they were also cosmogonic and mythological celebrations that operate a negotiation between the sacred and the profane. In these moments, natural, productive, and leisure temporalities converged, such as the solstices and agriculture events of sowing and harvests, that were then associated with the liturgical calendar and its Saints, celebrated through festivities that became intense moments of sociability. Therefore, the pilgrimages to worship places and the respective religious rituals coexisted in parallel with more pagan fests, where music, dance, singing, gastronomy, and traditions marked the event.

In Cape Verde, as in many other contexts, according to Moacyr Rodrigues in his study *Cabo Verde. Festas de Romaria. Festas Juninas* (1997), the Church engaged in the governmentality of daily life, having, for several centuries, a pedagogical and behavioral modeling function in the society. However, Rodrigues notes, all control regimes generate their opposite responses, their "compensatory forces," counter modeling behaviors. If in the Portuguese colonial context, alongside the colonial state forces the Church had its function of biopolitical governmentality, traditional religious fests served as a space for the collective release of tension (Rodrigues, 1997: 14- 15), usually through performative practices. Thus, in Cape Verde, traditional fests take on a religious-pagan nature and obey a liturgical calendar, generally between May and July, and some in November. According to Rodrigues, these festivities acquired more prominence on the *Barlavento* [Windward] islands, except for *tabanca* in Santiago.

Regarding these traditional Cape Verdean fests, we propose the analysis of two performative practices conveyed in Marlene Monteiro Freitas'work. The *tabanca*, whose musical genre appears in the dance piece *Bacchae - prelude to a purge* (2018); and the performative practice of *colá San Jon*, that takes place in several islands, such as Brava, S. Vicente, Santo Antão, and whose dance seems evoked, namely, in the Freitas' work *Jaguar* (2015).
Tabanca can be defined as a mutual assistance confraternity dedicated to religious devotion practices and that helps members in the case of illness and death. The name *tabanca* (a word which in Guinea means "village") suggests that it would be a congregation of enslaved people, or descendants from the time of the slavery regime. It is a syncretic manifestation, where

Catholic saints coexist with beliefs of African legacy, creating its own collective imagination (Semedo and Torano, 1997: 97-98).[148]

The Tabanca festivities take place between May 3rd and June 29th, culminating in the Saint's fests. Thus, it begins on the day of Santa Cruz (May 3), following in Santo António [*St. Anthony*]'s day (June 13), São João [*St. John*]'s day (24 June) and São Pedro [*St. Peter*]'s day (29 June). To the sound of drums and whelks as wind instruments, *tabanca* also includes processions within the scope of a performative narrative that can last for a few days, where stereotypical figures of colonial power are incorporated, such as the king and queen, the priest, the governor, the ministers, the doctor, the slave, among others, with a mass, the simulation of a Saint theft and rescue, and the thief punishment. The event culminates in a great *batuque* fest, with its own gastronomy.[149]

Generically, the colonial power considered *tabanca* a manifestation of the poor and uneducated class, originating from freed or escaped slaves, pejoratively classified for causing public disorder and for their black-African influences in Cape Verdean culture. According to them, this performative manifestation did not fit the local elite's claim that their civilizational degree was closer to the colonial one. However, from 1930 onward, the *Claridade* movement welcomed *tabanca* as a Cape Verdean cultural manifestation, comparing it to similar movements in Brazil (Semedo and Torano, 1997: 70).

At the Museum of Tabanca, in Assomada, Santiago Island, we were informed through a guided visit that the Tabanca festivities' days, associated with the liturgical Saint's days, were granted as days off to enslaved people, most likely to contain resistance and revolt movements. In addition to its religious elements, such as the mass and prayers in the tabanca chapel, the tabanca syncretic celebrities are mainly celebrated by a carnivalesque and masquerade procession, where the archetypal characters of colonial and religious power, such as

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[148] Historical references to the beginnings of *tabanca* are scarce, however, Semedo and Torano record their existence in the 1723 Carta Régia [*Royal Letter*] (Semedo and Torano, 1997: 60). It is also known that it was banned in 1895, to be tolerated again in the first decades of the twentieth century, but with restrictions (66). For detailed information on the legal documents and registers on *tabanca* performative practices consult Semedo and Torano (1997: 59-69).

[149] Tabanca activities start three days before the Saint fest with the pestle, to extract the corn bran, prepare the flour and sherry for the common meal, a task carried out in the evening after working hours and until the celebration's eve, always to the sound of *batuque*. On the Saint's Day, after the mass, the stealing of the Saint is staged with a procession. During the next seven days, prayers continue in the *tabanca* chapel (called the *capela da corte* [court chapel]), and the party culminates on the seventh day with the theatrical procession of the saint's rescue, which includes the allegorical figures and objects, culminating in a joint meal and a *batuque* fest (Semedo and Torano, 1997: 69).

the king and the queen, the clergy, the military, the soldiers, among others, are incorporated and ironically ridiculed. In addition, there is the theft and the rescue of the Saint, a figure of Catholic Church iconology. The Saint's thief, in the overall masquerade, is subjected to staged punishments that evoke those applied to enslaved people. The tabanca museum exhibits a kind of a cage made with sugar canes and spines, where the *tabanca* "Saint's thief" would be placed for punishment. The *tabanca* is, thus, not only a celebration that exorcises colonial power - with all its exuberance, accompanied by drums and singing parade that concur to its atmosphere of licensing and folly - but of derision and mockery, ridiculing that same power. It is, to a certain extent, a performative practice whose irony operates at the level of a decolonial criticism, affirming the subjectivities of the colonized.

Festas Juninas [St. John's festivities]

In S. Vicente and in Santo Antão, according to Moacyr Rodrigues, the *Festas Juninas* [St. John's festivities], namely *colá San Jon*, were famous for their bacchanal revelry (in which young boys and girls left home to celebrate and returned days later), with peer dances and popular singing full of malice performed by women (Rodrigues, 1997: 30).

During the colonial regime in which slavery still prevailed, these feast days were, like in the case of *tabanca*, granted to enslaved people as free days so that they could join in the festivities. As Rodrigues says, the tradition of euphoria and sexual licensing of the *Festas Juninas* was also associated with the freedom that enslaved people, especially women, had in order to express their desires among peers, freed from the surveillance and restrictions imposed by the colonial masters who held them in power.

The *colá San Jon* has both singing and dancing. The word "*colá*" refers to the aloud, satirical, and provocative singing, improvised among women; the *San Jon*'s dance refers to the danced expression, being in both cases an ecstatic tension release. Excited to the frantic sound of drums, women sing songs that incite men's virility while dancing in pairs, first women with women, until the masculine element feels called upon. The following *colá San Jon* description by Moacyr Rodrigues is enlightening and, with due differences, it also reminds us of the electrifying character of many of Marlene's works, due to its bacchic and rhythmic intensity:

> A atmosfera que gera o colá é embriagadora por natureza. O bater e o ritmo do tambor cria à nossa volta um ambiente de entusiasmo eletrizante que não nos deixa indiferentes. A todo o momento os tambores insistentemente convidam-nos a participar na roda-viva da dança. O corpo não consegue ter-se e entra no balanço do colá (39).[150]

The parties are accompanied by alcoholic beverages such as grog and bandóie, liqueurs and figures such as the drummers in their white sailor uniforms, the standard bearer who holds the flag, dressed in a navy admiral uniform, with its sword and whistle, and another man equally in uniform handling the sculpture of a ship, whose whistling[151] accompanies the drums. Among them are the women, who approach and start the *colá*:

> partem uma para outra, ao ritmo do toque dos tambores e dão a umbigada (ou seja, encostam o ventre uma na outra) e depois afastam-se para uma nova corrida, sempre ao ritmo cadenciado do toque. Por vezes também se formam grupos de quatro colocando em cruz, ou seja, quando duas se afastam, outras duas colam, aproximadamente no mesmo lugar que será mais ou menos o centro da cruz (40).[152]

Although the *colá San Jon* was, along with *tabanca*, one of the prohibited performative practices by the colonial administrative power and the Church, it is believed that it entered Cape Verde, from the 18th century, through settlers coming from Portugal. According to Rodrigues, the *colá San Jon* reveals particular influence of a Portuguese *fandango* with strong African influence, resulting from a Creole amalgam that would have existed in Lisbon at that time. If the dance had been imported from Africa, supposes Rodrigues, there would still be traces in the Sotavento islands, which is not the case (Rodrigues, 1997: 31-33).

Both the *tabanca* and the *colá San Jon* reveal the richness and hybrid profusion of these Creole performative practices in Cape Verde that, after independence, have been rescued from the forced colonial invisibility, recovering notoriety both in the archipelago and in the transnational diaspora.

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[150] "The atmosphere that generates the *colá* is, by nature, intoxicating. The beating and rhythm of the drum creates an environment of electrifying enthusiasm around us that does not leave anyone indifferent. At all times, the drums insistently invite us to participate in the dancing circle. The body is unable to control itself and enters the balance of the *colá* "(39, my transl.).

[151] In Marlene's various choreographies, in addition to percussion, the whistle is also prominent in setting the rhythm, giving indications, and challenging the choreographic figures.

[152] "They depart towards each other, to the beat of the drums and give the *umbigada* [belly button] (that is, they touch the belly against each other) and then they move away for a new race, always at the rhythmic pace of the drums. Sometimes groups of four are also formed by placing them in a cross, that is, when two move away, other two gather, approximately in the same place that will be more or less the center of the cross "(40, my transl.).

Mindelo Carnival

Mindelo, in São Vicente, as already referred, was the city where Marlene Monteiro Freitas lived with her family since her childhood until her early adulthood, before moving to Lisbon to study her dance university studies. The choreographer points out some relevant features from this experience that play a role in her creative process: the condition of insularity, a life on an island marked by the proximity among population, where each social event takes on a special role. She also evokes, among many other cultural idiosyncrasies that we will analyze later, the archipelagic condition of a country that organizes the singularities of each island in a relational fabric of differences and entanglements (Freitas, 2013, n.p.).

São Vicente was the last island to be populated in 1838, during the Portuguese court exile in Brazil, and largely due to the creation of the so-called *Porto Grande* [The Big Harbor] by the English, a port with a strategic location in the transatlantic crossings between Europe, Africa, and America. According to Moacyr Rodrigues in *O Carnaval do Mindelo. Formas de Reinvenção da festa e da Sociedade. Representações mentais e materiais da cultura mindelense* (2011), at the time, the island was populated with fewer enslaved people, and mostly creoles, whose miscegenated culture shows less influence from direct African heritage (Rodrigues: 2011, 36).

In addition to Porto Grande, other technological events increased the city's dynamism, such as the steam engine and the submarine cable telegraph. Mindelo will have received contributions from the *Barlavento* [windward] islands such as Boa Vista, Santo Antão and S. Nicolau (with its high school) and Mediterranean influence from the islands of Madeira and the Azores, having had consular representation from many of the countries with which Portugal maintained diplomatic relations (37).

A new socio-economic structure is implanted in Mindelo, a town that was distinguished by its colonial urban design and its own identity. At the end of the nineteenth century, the *Porto Grande* assumed prominence in the Atlantic, encouraging the creation of an immense proletariat that worked in coal deposits and in naval workshops, influenced by the English industrial development and their commercial activities. Prosperous and cosmopolitan, exposed to ethnic and cultural diversity, with the high school created in 1917, from 1930s, Mindelo becomes the place of some relevant Cape Verdean cultural movements, such as the literary movement *Claridade*, and the musical phenomenon of *morna*. Hence,

Mindelo, will become known for a relevant cultural triangulation, with its music, carnival and cinema, which had an impact in Marlene's work.
Music, namely *morna*, according to Moacyr Rodrigues, is a structuring element in the construction of Cape Verde's national identity. In 1930's Mindelo, musicians developed an innovative and intimate relationship between the text and the melody that would influence all archipelago. In fact, music is present in all Cape Verdean life, punctuating the mindelense sociability (even in death, since funeral processions are also accompanied by funeral marches played by live musicians). This musical ubiquity in all spheres of life echoes in Marlene's work, and it is one of the references often cited by her (Freitas, 2013, 2017). An an example, her dance piece *Bacchae - prelude to a purge* (2019) begins when the trumpeters appear in the theater's hall playing a funeral march (composed by Marlene's grandfather, the famous conductor known as Jota Monte), and make their entrance slowly into the theatre's main room, followed by the public.

In addition to music and carnival, cinema stands out as the third vertex of Mindelo's cultural triangulation, represented in the *Éden* Cinema.[153] Cinema provides a symbolic entry point into fictional and imaginative fabulation, while the cinematic characters influence Mindelo's islanders imagination, frequently embodied and reappropriated in the next year's Carnival.

The Mindelo Carnival, the most celebrated of the entire archipelago, is an annual cyclical fest that has its remote origins in the Portuguese *entrudo* [Shrovetide]. Although its contemporary version comes closer to the Brazilian carnival for touristic aims, Mindelo carnival retains some unique and singular features. Firstly, according to Maria do Carmo Santos in *Classe, memória e identidade em Cabo Verde: uma etnografia do carnaval de São Vicente* (2018), for its ubiquity and "social transversality (age, class, gender, neighborhood)" (Santos, 2018: 12), since it emerges where is less expected, being a "wandering, omnipresent and polymorphic" carnival (13). This ubiquity shows in the entire community interpersonal involvement in costumes' making, and in the collective elaboration of all the allegorical cars and props. This collective effort involves all population from all classes and ages, from the most disadvantaged fringes in peripheral neighborhoods to the city center bourgeois middle class dwellers. Secondly, the main groups rehearsals start many weeks before carnival,

[153] In a conversation, Freitas referred the relevance of the *Éden* cinema for Mindelo's cultural scene, and she recalled it as an influence even while discussing her dance piece Paradise – private collection (Freitas, 2017, n.p.).

integrating a large part of the population. Hence, in the evening, the sound of the drums echo throughout the city, creating at least one month in advance, a festive atmosphere of rhythms and dance in the city.

Carnival festivities last for several days, from Saturday to Lent Tuesday. On Carnival Tuesday, the main organized groups, that include percussion musicians, dancers and allegorical cars gather in the morning in the city center, preparing for the competition parade that starts early afternoon.

The Carnival songs, according to Moacyr Rodrigues, involve everyone and evoke themes, such as, "joy of returning, love for the land, love for Cape Verdean women", of "enjoyment" and "pleasure" (Rodrigues, 2011: 55-56). The frenzy takes over the city, and almost all social strata and age groups engage in the ritual of the mask and disguise, "do estar presente sem constar, em que se perde a noção do eu-isolado para só contar o eu-coletivo irresponsável, integrativo, porque o estado gerado é o do caos promíscuo"[154] (Rodrigues, 2011: 65).

It is a festivity that breaks with everyday life, temporarily allowing both experiences of collective revelry and, in so-called Mindelo spontaneous carnival, social and political criticism. Carnival masks and performative practices also allow a temporary release of the body from its daily practices, through the incorporation of other characters and figures, together with the permissiveness the hidden identity allows. Thus, the body, through extreme creativity and play, can assume various senses and provocations that displace its supposed neutrality. On the other hand, carnival practices allow, temporarily, the "suspension of hierarchical position, privileges, norms and prohibitions," symbolizing, perhaps, "the desire to eliminate social constraints in the fight for equality" (Rodrigues, 2011: 92). *Brincar ao carnaval* [Playing carnival] (the expression used in Cape Verdean which means celebrating carnival), allows what in the daily life could be punishable, or considered sinful and socially disapproved.

Mindelo carnival has several groups: the official competition groups that parade on Tuesday, the children's carnival, schools, and other associations that do not participate in the competition and are usually held on the weekend before the Carnival. Among the most

[154] "Of being present without being evident, losing the notion of the isolated self to only count the irresponsible, integrative collective self, because the generated state is that of promiscuous chaos" (Rodrigues, 2011:65, my transl.).

celebrated of the non-competing groups is the *Samba Tropical* group, which always parades with great prominence and exuberance on Monday night, Carnival's eve.
There is also the *mascrinhas*[155] spontaneous carnival, performed individually or in groups, coming from the most underprivileged social strata and peripheral poor neighborhoods, which used to appear, unexpectedly, in the intervals between competing groups in the main parade. In addition to these, one of the current great attractions is the Mandingas' parade that takes place on Sunday afternoons, some months before carnival, until the Sunday after the carnival, celebrating the so-called carnival burial.

According to Maria do Carmo Santos, the *mascrinhas* or revelers that paraded outside the official program, generally appearing in the interval of the official blocks, were very famous in the 80s and 90s. It was a spontaneous carnival, which mobilized the most peripheral populations, who creatively engaged in criticizing not only social and political local and national issues, but also exposed their problems and concerns (Santos: 2018, 96). Santos adds that their masks, resulted from old objects recycling, create unusual and irreverent figures, and dramatize portraits of their daily life with a high sense of disruption and imagination. Hence, a popular creativity erupted at carnival, and became part of Mindelo's collective memory. The spontaneity that names it was due less to improvisation, since the costumes were carefully prepared in advance, but more to the individual freedom of manifesting and engaging in social criticism (*idem*).

It was precisely this spontaneous carnival that Marlene referenced for its moments of astonishment, sharp criticism, and creative exuberance. It was in the spontaneity of these groups that Mindelo's carnival demonstrated its maximum creative potential, by subverting the established order, conveying the burlesque, the absurd and the satire. This spontaneous carnival practice revealed how openness and freedom allow experimentation of otherness that are true political gestures, the "being another while being yourself", which is one of Marlene's drives for choreographic creation.

However, the excessive and inappropriate manifestations of these *mascrinhas* were criticized, leading to its significant control and reduction. In 2016, the *Kakoy Prize - Carnaval Artesanal* was created for the best *mascrinha*. Although taking place at less prime time on the carnival Tuesday morning, it recognizes its value, being for many, the soul of Mindelense carnival (98).

[155] *Mascrinhas* is a Cape Verdean word deriving from mask, meaning a person disguised with a mask.

Another recent movement of *mascrinhas* that has gained prominence in recent years in Mindelo Carnival is the Mandinga carnivalesque parade. The Mandingas paint their skin black, wear rope skirts and props made with different materials, such as wood, bone, or using existing objects that they appropriate, such as dolls, sirens, among others, resembling African warriors. On Sunday afternoons before carnival, the Mandingas descend from the poorest peripheral neighborhoods, such as Ribera Bote or Fonte Filipe, to the city center, joined by hundreds of people along the route, armed with sticks and shouting *Ariá! Ariá!* in a parade at the sound of drumming, percussion, wind instruments, their own songs and choreography.

According to Moacyr Rodrigues, this phenomenon may have been triggered in 1940, when a group of Bijagós Africans leaving for the Portuguese World Exhibition, in Lisbon, made a stop in São Vicente, having an impact on the Mindelense population that quickly adapted and incarnated one of these figures at the next carnival (Rodrigues, 2011: 99). However, there are other versions that associate the origin of Mandingas to Santo Antão, or the reminiscence of slave labor in Porto Grande, or even as an allusion to the forced emigration of Cape Verdeans to São Tomé, Angola or Mozambique, being the Mandingas, in this version, a memory of these experiences on African soil (Santos, 2018: 99-100).[156]

However, according to Santos, we share the conviction that primordialism views and the search for the origin of phenomena tend to be unidirectional, conditioning the multiplicity and polyphony of both the speeches of the agents involved, as well as the situated and procedural character of cultural and historical interpretations. phenomena (Santos, 2018: 99). Notwithstanding possible relations with Africa or other motivations, there can be traced a proximity between this Mandinga carnival practice and other practices with "unequivocal aesthetic similarities (...), for example in Brazil (the *Sujos* and the *Cão*) or in Trinidad (the *Jab-Jab*), which the islanders in São Vicente seem to be unaware of" (Santos, 2018: 100-101, my transl.).

The debate around the Mandinga extends beyond their origins (Rodrigues, 2011; Santos, 2018; Pinheiro, 2018; among others) and has raised controversy about this manifestation's intentionality. For some it is just carnival revelry, while others present arguments of a colonial nature, and others relate it to a homage to African origins (Santos, 2018: 105 - 107). Among foreigners, the most evident reading is the one of a tribute to Cape Verdeans' African

[156] For a more extensive debate around the search for a phenomenon's origin, and how primordialism views condition polyphony, consult Santos (2018: 99 - 107).

heritage, or from a pan-African perspective, some read in the Mandinga (who come from more marginal and subaltern classes) a manifestation of their emancipation, or even of the "empowerment of the oppressed African people" (Santos, 2018: 105).

There is, however, another contemporary reading of the Mandingas that sees them as a manifestation of ridicule and mockery from the African people, Mandinga being the name of one of the ethnic groups from the West African coast who, among many others, would have been enslaved during colonialism. As the Mandinga carnival parade adopts figures, costumes and costumes evoking tribal, wild and primitive stereotypes associated with Africanity — which differ greatly from the behavioral modalities appropriate to the superior civilizational degree Cape Verdeans have always claimed for themselves, closer to the Luso-European values of the metropolis — this manifestation is targeted by criticisms similar to those aimed at the American performative practices from the turn of the twentieth century, the minstrel and black face shows (which were, effectively, performances focused at mocking stereotyped Afro-American slave body imagery and behavior).

However, Santos reiterates, the search for univocal truths and linear narratives conditions polyphony, and the voice of the group itself must be considered. According to some members of Mandinga from Ribera Bote, painting the body in black is neither an evocation nor a mockery of the African heritage. And explicitly affirming their Cape-Verdeanity, some members refer: "we dress in Mandingas simply to have fun and put Cape Verdean culture up there", and they continue, "there is nothing written that contradicts that Mandingas are from Africa or that Mandinga are from here! I arrived and found it here (…)" (quoted in Santos, 2018: 106).

After Santos' excellent analysis of the various interpretations that have emerged so far, we agree that more relevant than scrutinizing the origins and intentions of São Vicente Mandingas will be to be able to accept that this may simply be a playful carnival manifestation without political purpose. Nevertheless, the speculation and criticism it has raised, both in the national and international context, are evocative of how performative practices that convey stereotypes evocative of racial formations are problematic, especially in the context of a country founded on a political economy of slavery, and through a process of creolization. Regardless of São Vicente Mandingas' intentionality, we consider this performative practice deserves careful analysis and reflection.

Part III

Marlene Monteiro Freitas' Choreographic Fabulations

Guintche [157]

[157] Please consult *Guintche* Image Atlas in the annexes, pp. 371 - 390.

Guintche, or the Uncanny Figure that Gazes Back

Contradictory thoughts do not try to eliminate one another, but continue side by side, and often combine to form condensation-products, as though no contradiction existed.
The Interpretation of dreams, Sigmund Freud

É a curiosidade perante aquilo que não compreendo que me faz avançar numa criação.[158]
Marlene Monteiro Freitas

Guintche (2010) is a concert, a drawing, a wax figure, a circus show, a dance.

To approach Marlene Monteiro Freitas' choreographic worlds is to relate to theatrical scenes that are always open and never self-enclosed, that (dis)organize themselves through uncanny and contradictory dynamics, where the relations between the visible and the invisible, cause and effect, perceiving and thinking — and from there, writing — can no longer be taken for granted as unified discourses, but as unstable fictional ensembles. In fact, the work of this Cape Verdean dancer and choreographer can hardly be translated into words. Hers is an artistic search for intensity, strength, and timeless *pathos*, and less the transmission of a message or intellectual concept. But this *pathos*, as a condensed force or emotion ingrained through time in images and gestures, is disrupted through strategies of metamorphosis, hybridity, animism, and contradictory simultaneity in the form of a kaleidoscopic montage of images, figures, music, and bodily movement.

To experience Marlene's work is, then, to enter an open and unconfined space of indeterminacy and incoherence, where familiarity and strangeness co-exist. As with Carnival, "the festival of joyful otherness" (Coderch, Stoichita, 1999: 15), one witnesses not the destruction of opposites but their structuring. Hence, Marlene seems more attracted to the tension and circularity between these polarities, than to emphasizing their oppositions.

In Freitas' works a deeply embodied Cape Verdean insular heritage of musical and dance practices, and the ritual of São Vicente's Carnival with its aesthetic licentiousness,

[158] "It is the curiosity before what I do not understand that moves me forward into an artistic creation" (Freitas, 2013a, n.p., my translation).

irony and becoming other, combine with an array of eclectic Western references from several spheres, from visual art, cinema, music to literary works, and others deriving from Freitas' archive of everyday life.

Although *Guintche* can take several forms, notes Marlene, between all these there is no resemblance, only the same intensity, the same nature (Freitas, 2013, n.p.). In fact, *Guintche* departs from Freitas' experience of attending a jazz concert by Archie Shepp, which had a specific impact, producing affects and memories that Marlene registered in a drawing (fig. 19). This drawing was hence animated, and rebelled, becoming a dance with a life of its own.

Moreover, *Guintche* is also a Cape Verdean Creole word with several meanings. It is the name of a bird that builds its nest with whatever finds at hand (fig. 20-21); it can be the name for a prostitute, or someone who has a partner today and tomorrow another; someone who lives his/her life in the present without caring about the future, or who moves from one event to another without logical or coherent choices. What *Guintche* has in common with the concert, the drawing and the dance work is this sense that all are performances in and of the present, all these modalities exist in the ephemerality of the now allowing for the play of transformation and intensity: the event of the concert, the gesture of drawing, or the event of dancing, as Marlene elucidates:

> A ideia da peça surge da experiência de um concerto de jazz: o músico colocou-se de uma determinada maneira, as luzes estavam de uma determinada maneira e eu pensei: ah... tenta memorizar este momento. Depois, passado uns dias, comecei a desenhar essa figura com o que estava à volta, um banco, um microfone, e comecei a fazer uma série de desenhos a partir dessa figura e surgiu a ideia de fazer uma dança. Entre o concerto e *Guintche*, a dança, não existem tantas semelhanças, mas trata-se mais da performance que há no desenhar—o ato do desenho, que é estar no presente e no traço—, a performance que é estar no momento, e o concerto que é a intensidade daquilo que se vê e ouve. Isso é o que é o comum do *Guintche*, que é uma figura do presente, isso é que é o comum ao concerto, à performance e ao desenho. (Freitas, 2013a, n.p.).[159]

[159] [The idea for the dance piece comes from the experience of a jazz concert. The musician put himself in a certain way, the lights were in a certain way, and I thought: oh... try to memorize this moment. Then, after a few days, I started to draw this figure with its surroundings, a bench, the microphone, and I started to make a series of drawings based on this figure and the idea of doing a dance came up. Between the concert and *Guintche*, the dance, there are not so many similarities, but it is more about the performance of drawing—the act of drawing, which is to be in the present moment and in the trace—, the performance that is to be in the moment, and the concert that is the intensity of what is seen and heard. This is what is common to *Guintche*, who is a figure of the present, this is what is shared by the concert, the performance, and the drawing.] (Freitas, 2013a, n.p., my trans.).

Guintche, Marlene's solo dance,[160] is in fact the embodiment of incoherent oppositions and immeasurable excesses. Propelled by an exultant kinetic energy, Marlene embodies the potentiality of simultaneous contradictions, the fury and strangeness that challenges not only the duration of her performance, but also a rational comprehension of the overall *Guintche*'s performance.

In the 2014 *Guintche*'s presentation at the *Institut Français du Portugal*, when the audience enters the black box, the event has already started. A dimly lit figure, dressed in a black and gold boxing hooded cape with her face seemingly hidden, welcomes the audience until the theatre room is complete. It is Marlene Monteiro Freitas, in the garb of a boxing fighter. This subtly subversive gesture that destabilizes the boundaries between the audience and the performance anticipates the strangeness of what the audience will witness.

When the public found its place, Marlene goes to the stage, undresses the boxing cape, positions herself at the stage center and, all at the same time, the light focus turns on and Marlene begins her "*rebolar*" to the sound of with a strong musical percussion (fig.1-3). "Rebolar" is a Cape Verdean creole word meaning "rolling" and refers to a fast-rolling hips movement frequent in several Cape Verdean dances. According to the choreographer, since she was a child, "rebolar" is that most immediate movement that arises when she starts dancing, or as we could say, her zero degree of dance.

Guintche's scenario is very simple: a blue surface covers the stage, and at the end of it curves and rises, composing the backdrop of the scene. In this way, *Guintche*'s figure seems completely immersed in a blue atmosphere as if it were a cartoon that stands out from a background. The clearly illuminated and defined blue surface seems to define the theatrical dance stage within the stage itself. However, as we will notice throughout the dance piece, all the little details that happen "outside of the scene"—Marlene's exits and entrances in and out this blue surface—continue to be part of the show. These are moments of *errancy*,[161] that firstly appear to the spectator as pauses, then as strange interruptions, or trial-and-error attempts in the flow of the dance work, accentuating the incoherence inherent to a *Guintche*'s

[160] This dance piece has been touring for more than a decade, and during that time, it evolved and went through some modifications. The present reflection refers to the presentation that took place on March 27, 2014, at the *Institut Français du Portugal*, followed by a conversation entitled *A imagem, o corpo, a emoção* [*The image, the body, the emotion*, my transl.], with Georges Didi-Huberman, João Francisco Figueira and Marlene Monteiro Freitas.
[161] Errancy can be translated as wandering, travelling, roving, but we prefer to keep the word errancy for its etymological connection with the word error, as a mistake, a transgression.

mode of being, as we will further unravel. In addition, besides the choreographer at the stage center, there is only another element that punctuates the left side of the scenario: an intriguing punch bag suspended from the ceiling that is never touched during the piece, and that we will investigate further ahead.

As for *Guintche*'s costume, at the beginning of the piece, Marlene wears a purple feather skirt that we can associate with bird feathers, a red blouse that covers half of her torso, and whose frills and transparencies contribute to the eroticism of an excessively made-up figure, evocative also of an oversexualized woman's figure. Marlene's feet are bare, in her hands she wears skin-colored latex gloves, and in her excessively designed face, a protuberance in her mouth is caused by what initially appears to be a boxing mouthguard.

The deformation of her face and mouth brings Marlene's image closer to primate's facial features (fig. 2-3). However, in the play we see that this protuberance is caused by a wax prosthesis in the shape of a large red mouth that Marlene later uncovers and uses over her own mouth. With this prosthesis *Guintche*'s figure evokes, on the one hand, a clumsy clownish image, and on the other hand, the over-representation of red mouths in black racialized figures from past century's illustrations (fig. 45-6), in the media, or in the American minstrelsy blackface visualities of the early nineteenth century (fig. 47), as we will analyze later.

Furthermore, regarding the sonic landscape, drumming circus music set the tone, and the piece unfolds in two parts. In the first moment, *Guintche*'s figure dwells in an indomitable split movement within itself. When the light turns on and the music starts, Marlene starts a frenzied kinetic dance with her body divided into two different kinds of movement. The lower limbs rooted to the floor follow the repetitive mechanics of her rolling hips movement, with a rhythm reminiscent of Cape Verdean dances, while her upper limbs and facial expressions engage progressively in a permanent and unstable metamorphosis, revealing diverse and uncanny expressions, that evoke a fusion of human and nonhuman animals' gestuality of face, hands, and limbs (fig. 2, 3, 8-10). To this contributes not only Marlene's prosthetic and protuberant mouth, which, as referred, resembles the features of a simian, but also her *staccato* head gestures and her quick mechanical blinking eyes, resembling a bird.

In the second part, at a slower pace, the figure starts wandering through the space in what seem to be circus entertainment scenes that never reach a state of completion, reiterating that certain *Guintche* mode of being — of incoherence, indeterminacy, and

undecidability (fig. 16). With clumsiness, this figure evokes both the abstract mechanical puppet and the virtuosic, but somehow tragic, gymnast (fig. 17-18). Hence, in this second part, Marlene embodies transitional and contrasting figures that recall, again, simultaneous contradictions, oscillating between an aspiring exhibitionist and the desolation of failure in a happening that never comes full circle.

In fact, “this wax figure” that is *Guintche*, Marlene refers, “melts, solidifies, it brakes, changes form … Yet it keeps the same nature, i.e., it remains the same wax” (Freitas, 2010). Moreover, the sequence of its transformations produces distinct images: circus, cannibalism (fig. 12-14), ectoplasm (fig. 44), rituals, gymnastic, puppets (fig. 15). However, Freitas explains, *Guintche* always retains its materiality, which lies in its “imponderability and counter-intuitive structure” (*idem*).

The interweaving between the human and nonhuman animal contributes to this unexpectedness. We argue that this performance may evoke not only Darwin's evolutionary theories and Aby Warburg's *pathos* formulas, but also past century developments of the primatology sciences that widely explored the boundaries between humans and primates.[162] Moreover, beyond those images that evoke apes and bird-like gestures, *Guintche*’s figure also summons clownish and puppet postures, bringing together face-images that recall once fear then parody, irony and despair (fig. 5), provocation and indifference, cannibalism and eroticism, the masquerade and the grotesque. With a purposeful focus on her eyes as the proper locus of the subject’s identification, and the mouth as one of the most symbolic body openings (fig. 56-9), Marlene’s face deforms in a multiplicity of unstable face-images, evoking empathic affectabilities through permanent transfiguration, which never crystallize, but progresses in a disruptive anthropophagy (fig. 4-15).[163] Hence, these polymorphic distortions disorganize the stability of the subject, that already is, by all means, a more-than-human self.

Further ahead in the performance, when Marlene pretends to eat her red big-mouth wax prosthesis (fig. 6-7), or when she removes one of the latex gloves with her teeth, inflates it and recreates the image of a white hand stuck in her mouth (fig. 11-14), she produces

[162] As we have detailed mentioned above, in her *Primate Visions*, Haraway demonstrates how simians occupy the frontiers between the human and the nonhuman, dislocating Western onto-epistemological hegemonic constructs around nature and culture. Primates, hence, became privileged subjects for the fields of both natural and human sciences, and substitutes of the human in primatology’s elaboration of theories and narratives from the scientific field, then applied to general cultural and social production, crafting a view of nature from the bodies and lives of these animals.

[163] We are relating Marlene’s act of heating and chewing her one mouth, an act of self-anthropophagy with the Brazilian *Cannibalism Manifesto*, that we will elaborate further ahead.

images that can be associated with cannibalism (fig. 41-43). In fact, cannibalism was considered by Western modern colonizers one of the most infamous and prohibited performative acts attributed to colonized indigenous people, considered for this reason the epitome of the savage and the primitive, causing fear, horror, and moral censorship.

Furthermore, cannibalism may also evoke Brazilian modernist poet Oswald de Andrade's theory of "cultural cannibalism"/ "anthropophagy" published in his 1928 "Manifesto Antropófago" [*Cannibalism Manifesto*], in *Revista de Antropofagia*, São Paulo.[164] This manifesto retained widely interest as a cultural manifesto for Brazil, in its process of creating a modern and cosmopolitan but idiosyncratic national culture. It also influenced Cape Verdean's literary movement *Claridade* in São Vicente, binding the search for a creole identity with a modernist aesthetic project.

In his critical theory of cultural cannibalism, Oswald de Andrade challenges the Western imperialist dichotomies of modern/primitive and original/derivative grounded on hegemonic assumptions of civilization and barbarism, that informed the construction of Brazilian culture since colonial times. Related to what later Bhabha would trace as the uncanny ambivalence of mimicry, Oswald subversively criticizes the colonizer's view of America as a savage territory that will only be, at best, a copy of Europe's civilized original. The ironic use of the cannibalism metaphor to define a process of cultural construction of a post-colonial nation, in a way, sends its criticality back to imperialist Europe, whose assumptions of cultural homogeneity were also contaminated with and through colonialism. Therefore, while the idea certainly applies to Brazil and Cape Verde, to a certain extent, applies to all cultural constructs, since cultural borders are far more porous and virtually impossible to maintain. Freitas' work, hence, has these unexpected critical irruptions which bewilder the spectator by ironically sending back those images that the Portuguese imperialism has portrayed on the colonised other.

[164] The initial passage from the "Cannibalism Manifesto" reads: "Só a Antropofagia nos une. Socialmente. Economicamente. Filosoficamente. Única lei do mundo. Expressão mascarada de todos os individualismos, de todos os coletivismos. De todas as religiões. De todos os tratados de paz." [*Only Cannibalism unites us. Socially. Economically. Philosophically. The unique law of the world. The masked expression of all individualism and collective movement. Of all religions. Of all peace treaties.*, my transl.] *in* Andrade, Oswald de (1928), "O manifesto antropófago", in Teles, Gilberto Mendonça (1976), *Vanguarda européia e modernismo brasileiro: apresentação e crítica dos principais manifestos vanguardistas*. 3a ed. Petrópolis: Vozes; Brasília: INL, in https://www.ufrgs.br/cdrom/oandrade/oandrade.pdf (accessed April 12, 2021).

From Images that Affect to Dance as Intensity

In the beginning of this century, in his seminal *Bild-Anthropologie* (2001), Hans Belting demonstrates how images are anthropological concepts, since humans live among images, create images, embody, and perform images, both individually and collectively. Within this anthropological perspective, although we are image producers—be they mental images through imagination and memory, or the performed body-images in everyday life—we do not master them, "but remain rather at their mercy" (Belting, 2011[2001]: 9-10). In fact, referring to images, Belting continues:

> (…) they colonize our bodies (our brains), so that even if it seems that we are in charge of generating them, and even though society attempts unceasingly to control them, it is in fact the images that are in control. Images both affect and reflect the changing course of history. They leave, for example, no doubt about how changeable human nature is. Societies discard images that they have invented themselves as soon as they no longer do their intended service. Instead of reinventing themselves, people reinvent the images they live with. Uncertainty about themselves creates the desire to change the images of their self-representation. The alleged permanence of human nature is in fact soundly contradicted by the history of images (10).

Hence, following Belting, the body is the archetype of images, it encompasses both the perceiving and the performing body on which images depend no less than on their respective media (Belting, 2005: 302).

The figure of *Guintche* bears within itself the condensation of image, body, and media, unfolding the double nature of image between the visible and the invisible, the physical and the mental image *mise-en-abîme*. *Guintche*'s figural image, and in particular its face, projects images in permanent metamorphosis that become visible to the spectator, who then recreates its own images upon that visible ostentation body. On the other hand, these body images that traverse *Guintche*'s are evocative of other invisible and mental images of the choreographer's memory and imagination, overdetermined images that condense the array of transfigured face-images portraying the instability of *Guintche*. Therefore, the "what" of *Guintche*'s imagery cannot be understood without the "how" of its creation, the body performance and its *mise-en-scène*, or as we referred in relation to Freud dream-work operations, without perceiving its conditions of figurability which depend on condensation and dislocation as choreographic tools.

If images, by definition, have no bodies, Belting refers, "*they need a medium in which they become embodied*" (Belting, 2011: 13). There is, however, in Marlene's work, no presumption whatsoever of performing body-images that compete with real life as in the contemporary context of augmented reality. In the theatrical apparatus, Marlene's figural work is a fictional construct built upon body-images in permanent processes of fugitivity, which never crystallize. These images do not live from the body's absence, since the performer is present, but its visuality conveys other imaginable and inexistent bodies, in the sense of what Belting calls a "visible absence" (Belting, 2005: 312). In fact, *Guintche* unfolds into a multiplicity of images that replace the absent faces and masks convoluted into that composite figure, creating a different kind of vertiginous presence, however imaginary, *the presence of an absence*, which Belting names as "iconic presence" (*idem*), and clarifies in the following excerpt:

> Images are present because of and through their media, yet they stage an absence of which they are an image. The here and now of an image, its presence, to a certain degree relies on a visual medium in which it resides (even the images of our dreams use our body as medium). External images, as it were, need a substitute body, which we call a medium. But the ambivalence of absence and presence also invades the constellation of image and medium. Media are present in the ways of bodies, while images are not. We therefore could rephrase the presence of an absence, which still is the most elementary definition of images, in the following way: images are present in their media, but they perform an absence, which they make visible. Animation means that we open the opacity of a medium for the transmission of images (Belting, 2005: 312-13).

In this sense, Marlene's work also opens the opacity of the body, in particular the *face*, which becomes a *surface* for the creation and transmission of a multiplicity of *personas*, dislocating the subject through a sequence of metamorphosis. These unfold from the figural work itself, as we have elaborated before, that has indeterminacy, transmutability, and impermanence at its core, hence, rendering impossible *Guintche*'s univocal hermeneutics. In addition to imagination—which in its genealogy has been compared to the illusive and the irrational—in the psychic realm of the unconscious, of dreams and symptoms (as Freud demonstrates), images become vehicles for the survival of expressions and emotions, revealing a visual and emphatic knowledge that reason alone is unable to grasp.

Furthermore, Belting argues, images unfold in their full potential when seen in cross-cultural perspective, making contradictions come to light, particularly, in regard to the so-called Western hegemonic thought that resists opening to other thought patterns and practices. In fact, in the beginning of the twentieth century, consequently to modern colonialism,

art works from non-Western territories, such as masks and other objects, were appropriated by modern artists (namely, in the context of the so-called Primitivism movement) for their own purposes, hence, reduced to formalist and aesthetic objects. These were deprived from their actual function as cultural active and dynamic mediums used to produce living and performative images and subsequently, singular situated affectabilities. Later, the Surrealists appropriated similar objects endowing them with psychoanalytical meaning, thus, once again for their own purposes (Belting, 2011: 32).

As we referred in Part II, Aby Warburg's work is an example of how such cross-cultural encounters, as in the case of his 1895 trip to New Mexico and his contact with the Native American Pueblo, remained influential throughout his lifetime. Through that experience, Belting claims, he detected influences of medieval Spanish techniques in the indigenous pottery. Moreover, he recognized the snake in their snake ritual practice, since it was a well-known familiar symbol used by different cultures. He was not yet familiar, however, with the snake dance that constituted a kind of performative image (Belting: 2011: 32-33). Therefore, departing from his investigation on the symbol, Warburg could acknowledge how images become vehicles for the survival, *Nachleben*, of symbols and affects, carrying through them *pathos* formulas, *Pathosformeln*, across different cultures, geographies, and temporalities.

In his investigation on early Western Renaissance, Warburg identifies archetypal patterns underlying the image practice of that time that seemed to reveal a cross-cultural context, and not merely the revival of antiquity.[165] In this sense, *Guintche* is also a dance that performs images within cross-cultural references, conveying figures and images of both Cape Verdean and Western imaginary. It evokes the unusual eccentricity and inventiveness of São Vicente's improvised Carnival; it also recalls less conventional figures, such as the excessive visuals of the prostitutes from Mindelo's Porto Grande, or images of insane

[165] According to Belting, in the colonial context, Spanish and Portuguese colonizers had similar intercultural experiences when they encountered Native American or African imagery practices and religious pictures that more than alien to them, were countering their conception of a religious image. If the Portuguese called the African statues "idols" or "fetishes", the Spanish questioned if Mexican religious images were religious at all, or not simply objects with magical purpose. These were idols only to the Spaniards' gaze, because they threatened Christian images and the Christian religious universal claims. Hence, what followed in Mexico was the destruction of idols and their replacement by Christian images, in a way to colonized not only the land and its people, but also the collective imaginary of the colonized. These events reveal how encounters between cultures raise identity issues, questions such as what constitutes an image, raising fear and defensive feelings. The negation and exclusion of the images of "Other" was, then, the most tempting and recurring task aiming at a visual colonization (Belting, 2011: 34-35).

people. In fact, in Mindelo's everyday life, Marlene refers, abnormality coexists with normality, and insane persons are visible and accepted as such within society. In addition, *Guintche* also echoes the survival of other imageries and formulas of *pathos*, through a long genealogy of image productions around the face, the portrait, and the register of emotional facial expressions, as we will further demonstrate.

In this regard, Hans Belting's *Face and Mask: A Double History* (2017) elaborates on the long and complex anthropological history of face representation. Faces, Belting refers, are probably the first living images, or the zero degree of animated representation in the cultural history of human self-awareness and communication. From its origins in archaic and cultic masks, to death masks that through its memory challenge the absence of life, to ancient theatrical masks that express life roles, to the search for resemblance in portraits and to the contemporary proliferation of media images, the face always constituted a sur*face*, a place of mystery, a locus for both veiling and unveiling. As an "infinite repository of masks" (Belting, 2017: 23), the face cannot fully guarantee the proper locus for the subject's identification.[166] Resting between the visible and the invisible, the exposure and the closure, the face, Belting underlies, is never a fully presence *per se*. This resonates with *Guintche*, in the sense that the multiplicity of its transitional *faces-as-masks* dislocates the stability of the subject, unveiling its permanent status of becoming, its heterogeneous condition of being not only *singular plural* (Nancy, 2000a), but also the impossibility of fully knowing oneself. In this sense, the sequences of mask images that cross Marlene's face echo the aporia of the Western modern self-determined and self-reflexive subject, as well as the aporetic illusion of a hegemonic and objective knowledge of the world.

This restlessness of *Guintche* also recalls Nietzschean thought, in works such as the *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) or *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887), where the philosopher reflects on the "tragedy of culture," the primacy of the Dionysian and the fractures of history, calling for paradoxical relationships, multiple metamorphoses of play and suffering. His

[166] Moreover, according to Belting, the colonial encounter with masks as uncanny objects troubling the boundaries between representation and illusion, considered falsifications of the self that displaced the subject-object divide, concurred to the subsequent separation between masks from faces in Western culture. This may have influenced 14th-century Flemish painters, such as Jan Van Eyck, and their commitment to portrait as likeness, as an individual document, or a life mask towards the search for a "true image" (Belting, 2017: 95). The portrait became a vehicle not only of the real, but also for the representation of a symbolic presence "as if still alive" (*idem*). The portrait became an intersection between the time of its performance, and the time of the beholder, also alluding to the social and cultural context of the one represented.

theories found echoes, namely, in the way Warburg studied the survival of paganism, the aesthetics of intensity, the fruitful untimeliness and the incessant conflicts evident in art, which make art a privileged field to reflect on human's turbulence and cultural conflict. Similarly, *Guintche* sets the stage for such turbulence that glimpses the ruins of the Western modern subject predicated on an objective, rational and schematic relationship with the world and with itself. In its place, it calls for strangeness and the abyss that results from such vertiginous instability, disclosed in the moving images it produces. Hence, through its politics of the visible, *Guintche* translates knowledge through force and excess, rather than content circumscribed by a categorical thinking.

As Nietzsche elaborates in his *Gay Science* (1882), the origin of poetry was bounded with music and rhythm, since rhythm from ancient times had an overpowering effect to come closer to the gods. Long before the philosophers, Nietzsche argues, "music was credited with the power of discharging the emotions, of purifying the soul, of easing the *ferocia animi* (Nietzsche, 1974 [1887]: 183). *Guintche* can evoke this magical power of a dance bound to the rhythm of music. However, in the same way that for Nietzsche it is not possible to speak of a universal and stable truth once and for all, *Guintche* acquires its strength by "keeping restlessness alive, that is, the openness to strangeness, to the foreign, to extraterritoriality" (Didi -Huberman, 2010: 78, my transl.). Such restlessness which runs through all Marlene's work manifests itself in its aesthetics of forces and emotions unleashed by what could be called "turmoil constellations" (Didi-Huberman, 2010: 78, my transl.).

Moreover, Marlene's figural work, namely in *Guintche*, underlies the anxiety that results from the agonistic clash between the sphere of the body—which intertwines viscera, *eros*, imagination, the fever of life and death's petrification—with the astral and Apollonian sphere of thinking. A conflicting *ethos* and *pathos* produce in *Guintche* a performative political body, which refuses the figurative, and appears more like an erupting animalistic force, a whirlwind of uncertainties and uncanniness in the profusion of the ironic gazes it sends back to the spectator. Like a rhizome that expands in multiple directions, the figure of *Guintche* unfolds in fragments, in the dismemberment of a body already split into parts, in the transfiguration of the mask-images of an ungraspable self.

Certain early modern artists who also elaborated on the turbulence of Western culture, were a clear visual influence on Freitas' creation of *Guintche*. We are referring, namely, to

the Spanish painter Francisco Goya's drawings and engravings *Los Caprichos* [*The Caprices*] (1797-98) to Franz Xaver Messerschmidt's sculptures *The Character Heads* (1770-1783), to modern taxonomies of human physiognomy (with its concomitant cartographies of gender, race, the pathological and the criminal). In addition, from the twentieth century references, we highlight Francis Bacon's paintings, Cindy Sherman's transfiguring self-portraits, the trance performances captured in Jean Rouch's documentary *Les maîtres fous* (1955), or the figures in Mindelo's Carnival, just to name a few.

Regarding Francisco Goya (1746-1828), we highlight his post-1790 artworks that acquired prominence for reflecting on contemporary historical upheavals,[167] and his haunting satirical etchings. These works, anticipating modernity's restlessness, seem to have been influential for Freitas' overall critique of the human self. Goya's series of eighty engravings and aquatints *Los Caprichos*[168] (fig. 34-7) appear after a serious illness in 1792 that left Goya permanently deaf, and in this isolation, the artist became increasingly focused on his fantasies, imagination, and critical observations of society. Affirming the artist's subjectivity and his/her social and political role in society, *Los Caprichos* targeted social and political behaviour at that time, satirizing institutions such as marriage, the clergy, education, but also superstition, morality, prostitution, witchcraft, extending to a general critique of human nature.[169]

With a dream like appearance, complemented with ironic and often hermetic commentaries, *Los Caprichos* ridicule social figures depicted with grotesque features of bestiality: monk-like monsters with their gluttony and lust, satirizing the excessive wealth and overindulgence of the monastic orders of his days; donkey-physicians and their patients, evoking the ignorance of doctors and science; or even a donkey-teaching master and his pupil, ironizing how education is perpetrating the same errors from generation to generation. In addition, Goya conveys allegories of witches and witchcraft, criticising both commonly held superstitions and the Inquisition, which was a dispositive for the governamentality of the

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[167] In *Los Desastres de la Guerra* [*The Disasters of War*] (1810-14), Goya depicts the violence and horrors of the Napoleonic invasion.

[168] Departing from a multitude of extravagances in society, as Goya referred in the 1799 collection sales announcement, *Los Caprichos* addressed "the innumerable foiles and follies to be found in any civilized society, the common prejudices and deceitful practices which custom, ignorance and self-interest have made usual" (Goya, 1799). *In* "Los Caprichos", 2006, *Glasgow University Library. Special Collections Department.* In https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/library/files/special/exhibns/month/aug2006.html (accessed March 25, 2021).

[169] In "Biography of Goya", in https://www.franciscodegoya.net/biography.html (accessed March 27, 2021).

social body and mind. This series express the artist's disquietness before a world in crisis,[170] revealing the fissures of a socio-political stagnancy, with power predicted on the immobility of the privileged classes, and on the consciousness oppression of a tyrannical Catholicism.[171]

Aesthetically, contrasting light and darkness, superstition, and enlightenment, with a haunting aesthetics of nightmarish quality, *Los Caprichos*, *Los Disparates* (also known as *Proverbios* [*Proverbs*] or *Sueños* [*Dreams*]) and his later works *Pinturas Negras* [*Dark Paintings*] (1819-23) anticipate modern sensibility, dominated by the artist creativity and subjectivity, where Goya expresses his darkest and most disturbing visions, revealing his ultimate irony and distrust of the human being.

These series, as a visual anthropology of that time, demonstrate that to elaborate a portrait of any human one needs to make room for all sort of animals and animalities, inhumanities and strangeness, which also constitute human obsessions, illusions, desires, and imaginations. According to Didi-Huberman, that can be read in one of his celebrated engravings, the 43 *Capricho* (1798): *El sueño de la razon produce monstros* [*The dream of reason produces monsters*, my transl.] (fig. 34). In the engraving, we can observe a man sleeping reclined over a table, while around him bats and black birds fly, and an attentive cat stares at him. In this drawing, Goya places into dialectic the daytime consciousness and the unconscious of the animalistic night.

Moreover, Didi-Huberman refers, below one of the *Capricho*'s preparative drawings we can read the following commentary: "*La fantasía abandonada de la razón, produce monstruos imposibles: unida con ella, es madre de las artes y origen de sus marabillas*"[172] (Didi-Huberman, 2010: 88). Here, Goya elaborates how fantasy and imagination cannot be abolished or censured because they are integral to the human. Alone, the imagination may produce monsters and can become closer to states of delirium and insanity. However, paired with reason, imagination makes art a privileged field for the artist's critical and political engagement with its own time.

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[170] Beyond his physical decline, the general political turmoil in Spain at that time, where the absence of political contestation led to restoration of absolute monarchy, might have influenced his last works *Pinturas Negras* [*Dark Paintings*] (1819-23), and the satirical and hermetic series of etchings and aquatints.

[171] "Caprichos" in https://www.realacademiabellasartessanfernando.com/es/goya/goya-en-la-calcografia-nacional/caprichos/ (accessed March 27, 2021).

[172] "The fantasy abandoned by reason produces impossible monsters: united with it, it is the mother of the arts and the origin of its wonders" (Didi-Huberman, 2010: 88, my translation).

In a similar way, *Guintche*'s figure also performs an intricate criticality, countering Western modern hegemonic discourses predicated on rationality and objectivity. It dances the hybrid, the unstable, the impossible and the incoherent, opening the human towards a queer and multi-species being. Moreover, it dislocates several dichotomies considered certain by modernity's discursive program: the separation between subject and object, the rational and irrational, civilized and primitive, unravelling also modern racial premises and gender binaries. Producing in the spectator (in its majority Western, white and middle-class) a strange convolution of bewilderment and fascination, *Guintche* disrupts and confuses its expectations by uncannily animating, hence, bringing to life, what modern imagined as their negative, as the nonmodern, as that which was objectified, or considered not fully human.[173]

Hence, dancing the uncanny, the imaginary and the grotesque, *Guintche* also engages critically with its time. The overdetermined images that disorganize *Guintche*'s face condense disparate states manifested in its metamorphic expressiveness, in which the eyes and the mouth stand out as the privileged locus for transformation. Moreover, it evokes some canonical physiognomic expressions, such as fear, horror, pleasure, or sadness, as well as grotesque expressions associated with bestiality and savagery evoking the lunatic, the madman, the animalistic, the simian, the bird, the prostitute, the puppet, the clown, the cannibal, among others. Although it would be possible to engage into hermeneutical reflections and try to formulate touching points between Goya's last works and *Guintche*'s visual turbulence, we argue that the choreographer's artistic purpose does not lie neither in a narrative transmission nor in representation, but in dance as a vehicle for the transmission of forces ingrained in body-images and gestuality.

Contemporary to Goya, and influential for *Guintche* (Freitas, 2013, n.p.) is Franz Xaver Messerschmidt's series of sculptures "The Character Heads" (1770-83) (fig. 30-3). Embedded in the eighteenth and nineteenth century context of fascination with facial expressions, as well as the emerging taxonomic sciences of physiognomy and pathognomy (fig. 22-9, 38-40), Messerschmidt's intriguing heads depict a range of human expressions, with amusing titles such as *The Vexed Man*, *A Hypocrite and a Slanderer*, *Just Rescued from Drowning*, among others, that were not his invention but assigned posthumously after the

[173] One cannot but relate this criticality to the Cape Verdean experience as a former Portuguese colony, submitted to its consequential racial formulations, inequalities, violence and dispossess, with inalienable repercussions in the ambivalence of Cape Verdean formulation of creoleness, or *Cabovernidade*, as national identity. For a detailed discussion on creole, creolization and creoleness, please consult pp. 134-149.

sculptures' exhibition in Vienna in 1793.[174] With exaggerated grimaces, one feels confronted by the often forwardly oriented sculptures portraying someone with realistically strange expressions. We wonder if we can look at these faces expecting the imprint of recognizable psychological states or emotions.

Although studies of facial physiognomy have tried to demonstrate the pervasive connection between face expression and the self,[175] the face also has the power to deflect meaning, confusing the beholder's perception. Hence, attributing the puzzling, often disquieting facial expressions to Messerchmidt's strange or lunatic personality is an interpretation grounded in the belief that these works were self-portraits, and that the artist's intention was to illustrate his inner emotions.[176] We position ourselves closer to Michael Yunan's argument that interprets these sculptures not as direct referents to the supposed artist's demented psyche. Although remaining mysterious, we concur to the idea that Messerschmidt project of grimacing and smirking may have served as a tool for the artist's empowerment, a liberation from the eighteenth century artistic constrains, progressively unattached to older systems of patronage (Yonan, 2009: 447). Not only his *Character Heads* granted him more visibility than any conventional baroque works for the European nobility but, more importantly, it can be seen through the lens of the early modern aesthetic tension between what is seen and what is interpreted. These series suggest a deliberate attempt, Yonan argues, to "destabilize the edification we expect to gain in the dynamics of one-to-one encounter"

[174] For a reflection on the influence Messerchmidt's work has played in early modernity consult the information on the exhibition *Messerchmidt and Modernity*, that took place at The J. Paul Getty Museum, in 2012. In https://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/messerschmidt/character.html (accessed April 6, 2021).

[175] The so-called science of physiognomy considered the face to be a faithful representation of the human being. Therefore, for similar facial characteristics, it would be possible to infer similar characters. In the Enlightenment, the interested shifted to the anatomic analysis of the skull and the brain, inaugurating in the eighteenth and nineteenth century an anthropological study on the brain.

The beginning of physiognomics in the 16th century was defended by Giambattista della Porta (1535-1615), who, familiar with a Neapolitan theatrical art, understood how "the face magically transforms into a mask" (Belting, 2019: 120, my translation). Della Porta compared elements of the human character, such as feline or leonine, to corresponding physiognomic features of animals, and later compared astrological and celestial elements to human physiognomy, as if the face would have correspondences with the human fate. Further on, Belting explained, the anatomy of the face was subject to a general taxonomy, but facial mimicry that, according to Darwin's evolutionary theories, preceded language, was ignored. Mimicry, according to Darwin, was a language before language. With the popularization of physiognomic science, it started to be used for social control purposes. For the correlation between the face physiognomy and human characters, a later tendency for a neurological approach to human behaviour, and its provisional culmination in Darwin's theory of evolution, consult Belting, 2019: 118-129.

[176] For further information, consult Yonan, Michael (2009), "The Man behind the Mask? Looking at Franz Xaver Messerschmidt", *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Spring, 2009, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Spring, 2009), pp. 431-451.

(*idem*) with an artwork, where a possible and univocal understanding is undermined and remains a utopia.

Similarly, in *Guintche* we can also envision a series of masks, but they are not signifiers of univocal referents, they do not convey a specific and unified self. *Guintche*'s spectator cannot reach an ultimately resolution about what it experiences, because there is no one behind the masks. In both Messerschmidt's *Character Heads* and *Guintche*, their enticing and disquiet masks are all we will ever see. In addition, through *Guintche*'s facial transfiguration that also convey animal expressions, Marlene also disorganizes, on the one hand, the vexed and complex boundary between the human and the nonhuman animal as well as the troubled separation between the mind and the body in modern Western philosophical categories.

In fact, if in *Essays On The Anatomy And Philosophy Of Expression* (1824), the physiologist Charles Bell (1774-1842) argued for a spiritual dimension of human expressions, a half century later, in Charles Darwin (1809-82)'s third major work on evolutionary theory *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872), Darwin explores the similarity between certain animal and human facial expressions, such as the lifting of the eyebrow as a sign of surprise, or the face blushing as a trace of embarrassment (fig. 38). While Bell claims that human facial muscles were divinely designed to express the singularity of human feelings, Darwin proposes a universal nature of expressions, independently from age and race, stating that both human and animal express the same range of emotions and states of mind through the same facial movements. Moreover, while Bell defends that human face expressions relate to passions in the same way human language has correspondence to thought, Darwin insists on a common ancestry between human and animals, and links language to face and bodily expressions, hence, unsettling the modern philosophical belief in the separation between body and mind. Hence, Darwin shifts his analysis to scientific discourse, pointing to an interconnection between neurology, psychomotor function, and social interaction, thus underlying the intimate correlation between spoken language, body language and social behavioural patterns.[177] Furthermore, Darwin proposes that mimicry and some vocal traces common in both the human and the animal are expressions of stereotyped emotions, which are firstly transmitted through hereditary descent, and secondly, adapted in

[177] In "The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals" in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Expression_of_the_Emotions_in_Man_and_Animals (accessed April 7, 2021).

social interaction in order to ensure the species survival (Belting, 2019: 128). Instead of arguing that humans had animal traits, and risking unsettling the Victorian public at that time, Darwin proposes instead that animals can show some human traits, avoiding a deep discussion on the evolutionary implications of his rationale.

According to Hans Belting, Darwin inaugurates a shifting paradigm. Since human emotions were common to all species, the individual face ceases to be an icon. Therefore, the investigation of the face turns to a laboratorial practice made to witness that human expressions and mimicry reproduce a heritage common to nonhuman animals, signalling an evolution from a common root, and evidencing that expressions take shape already in early childhood without being acknowledged. Hence, modernity loses the belief in the relation between the face and the individual human self (Belting, 2019: 129).

In addition, the conflictual nature of *Guintche* also conveys the long and vexed relation Western artists have dealt upon in their representation of agonistic scenes and figures, where the representation of *pathos*, of suffering and struggling evoke the analogy between the human and the animal, as an archive of expressions, gestures, and forces of so-called primitive instincts.

According to Didi-Huberman, in his visual anthropology of gestuality, particularly in the concept of *pathosformeln*, Warburg tries to articulate, on the one hand, the animality of a moving body, its natural rhythm and drives, and, on the other hand, an attention to its psychic and symbolic character, hence, the cultural context. Moreover, Didi-Huberman argues that Darwin's study on the human and animal expressions was decisive to provide the theoretical biological framework for the vitalist hypotheses launched by Warburg in his reflection on the figural logic of the pathetic gestures in Western Renaissance (Didi-Huberman, 2002: 231-2). In fact, Warburg's notion of *pathosformeln* is indebted to the possibility of survival of the primitive, which is also related to Darwin's proposed relationality between the human and animality, "in a perspective of conflict in act between nature and culture, (...) between instinctive drives and symbolic formulas" (234). Moreover, Darwin renounces to general rules and, instead, highlights that both human and animal expressions are of a fleeting nature, and that imagination and sympathy also played a transformational role in face expression (Didi-Huberman, 2002: 235).

Furthermore, Darwin describes three fundamental principles of expression. The first is the "impression," that Darwin qualifies as a direct action from the nervous system to bodily

gestures, independent from will or habit. These “are the physiologic premises of an unconscious memory commanding human expressive acts” (Didi-Huberman, 2002: 236, my transl.). The second principle is the one of “displacement,” because it implies an association through unconscious memory and habit “that rules the gestuality of affective movements” (*idem*). Thirdly, Darwin names the last principle as “antithesis,” suggesting that when an opposite state is created, there is usually a correspondent response of involuntarily opposite gesture, however, manifested with increased intensity. In any case, Darwin demonstrates that there is a “biological necessity of expression” (237), and that this need is hereditary. For Didi-Huberman, this laid out the biological ground for Warburg’s notion of *Nachleben*, the survival of primitive gestures. In fact, “the unconscious memory, perpetuating and actualising the primitivity of expressive movements, can also detach them—through the processes of *association* and *antithesis*—of their immediate necessity” (238). For Warburg, it transforms these gestures in formulas able to be manipulated in all cultural domains (*idem*). Therefore, *impression* and *imitation* would be for Warburg key terms in thinking his *pathosformeln*. Similarly, we argue that *Guintche* face and mask-images also live upon unconscious memories, imaginary imprints and a mimicry of excess that evokes the grotesque and the masquerade, unsettling both its figure and the spectator’s reading.

There is in *Guintche* also something that resonates with Deleuze and Guatarri’s theorizations in *Mille Plateaux* (1980), when referring to the “undoing of the face,” a kind of “disfacialization” in that “each trace of released faciality” engages in a rhizomatic resonance with a pictorial trace, forming “not a collection of partial objects, but a living bloc” (Deleuze and Guatarri, 1980: 232-233). This echoes also Deleuze’s reflections on the immanent connections and conflictual specificity of pictorial works, as “a bloc of sensations, a compound of percepts and affects” discussed, namely, in relation to Francis Bacon’s painting, an influence for Marlene’s choreographies.

For Deleuze, as we demonstrated in Part II, art has the ability of holding sensations, affects and percepts. All these resulting percepts and affects escape the logic of a stable and humanized subject, countering universalism and abstraction, to inversely welcome a multiplicity of transformations unleashed by sensation.

In his *Logic of Sensation* (2003 [1981]), Deleuze underlies Bacon’s refusal of the figurative, of the narrative and the illustrative, and how liberating the figure allows the artwork to remain in the plane of immanence. Moreover, we can relate *Guintche*’s scenario with its

large blue field of color where the figure detaches itself to Bacon's similar distinctive pictorial elements, the figure, and its background.[178]

In addition, Bacon also relates his pictorial deformations as resulting from the presence of forces, rendering visible the invisible. In Bacon's portraits, the artist deforms the face to make the head appear, the animal head in the human (fig. 54-5). Deleuze argues that these deformations have no relation at all to animal traits or features, but in "place of formal correspondences, what Bacon's painting constitutes is a *zone of indiscernibility or undecidability* between man and animal" (Deleuze, 2003: 21). This zone of indiscernibility and of undecidability resonates also with Marlene's *Guintche*, that instead of mere formalism engages in transfiguring the figure into its extensions, complicating the human-animal dialectics, similarly to what Deleuze refers in the following excerpt:

> Man becomes animal, but not without the animal becoming spirit at the same time, the spirit of man, the physical spirit of man presented in the mirror as Eumenides or Fate [77]. It is never a combination of forms, but rather the common fact: the common fact of man and animal. Bacon pushes this to the point where even his most isolated Figure is already a coupled Figure; man is coupled with his animal in a latent bullfight (Deleuze, 2003: 21-22).

Hence, both Bacon's painted figures as well as Marlene's choreographed figures are sensible forms related to what Deleuze describes as sensation, acting "immediately upon the nervous system, which is of the flesh, whereas abstract form is addressed to the head, and acts through intermediary of the brain" (34).

Moreover, sensation, for Deleuze, relates to the subject's "nervous system, vital movement, 'instinct', 'temperament' (…) and to the object (the 'fact', the place, the event)," but "it has no faces at all, it is both things indissolubly, it is Being-in-the-World" (*idem*). This Deleuzian sensation also relates to a "rhythmic unity of the senses" that can only be grasped going beyond the organism, into what Artaud called "the body without organs" (44). Opposing the organism that sees the body as a compound of organized organs, Artaud, and later Deleuze, proposed an intense and intensive body. In this sense, Deleuze adds, the body without organs has only "thresholds or levels," and sensation "is not qualitative and qualified,

[178] As Gilles Deleuze clearly argues: "There is another element in Bacon's painting: the large fields of color on which the Figure detaches itself — fields without depth, or with only the kind of shallow depth that characterizes post-cubism. (…) Sometimes they are like a ship's rigging, suspended in the sky of the field of color, upon which the Figure executes its taunting acrobatics." (Deleuze, 2003 [1981]: xi).

but has only an intensive reality (…). Sensation is vibration" (45). Hence, Marlene Monteiro Freitas meets Bacon meeting Artaud:

> (...) the Figure is the body without organs (…); the body without organs is flesh and nerve; a wave flows through it and traces levels upon it; a sensation is produced when the wave encounters the forces acting on the body, an "affective athleticism," a scream-breath. When sensation is linked to the body in this way, it ceases to be representative and becomes real (45).

Finally, in the same way that Bacon's paintings seem to be overtly too present, as if they have a certain hysterical presence, Deleuze refers, we could also argue that *Guintche* certainly has an over-presence. A presence that through its excess ends up being an absolute fugitive and ungraspable presence.

From Drawing to Dance: Animism and the Return of the Repressed

In 2016, in the context of *Guintche*'s presentation at *Iberismos*, Marlene mentions how the figure of *Guintche* is born from a drawing that registers the experience of a jazz concert. This figure takes on a life of its own based on the potentiality of drawing: if we erase and change the mouth, if we redraw the eyes, a whole new figure emerges, and *Guintche* lives from this permanent transformation, which never crystallizes into one single image, as Marlene clearly refers:

> Esta peça surge a partir de uma figura que desenhei a partir da memória de um concerto. Chamei-a Guintche e, entretanto, cresceu, ganhou vida própria, autonomia e rebelou-se. O desenho gera figuras com vida própria, seres cujo destino é defraudar expectativas. Guintche é a vida intensa que se formou e apartou do fundo informe original. Deixou de ser a prótese de um pensamento para se tornar numa dança (Freitas, 2016).[179]

Furthermore, a drawing that gains a life of its own and becomes a performing figure implies strategies of animism, which we have discussed in Part II, and to which we will now return. Animism, or the practice of relating to entities in the environment resisting their objectification, was classified by nineteenth-century modern social scientists as a so-called

[179] "This [dance] piece comes from a figure that I drew from the memory of a concert. I called it *Guintche* and, meanwhile, it grew, gained a life of its own, autonomy, and rebelled. The drawing generates figures with a life of their own, beings whose destiny is to defraud expectations. *Guintche* is the intense life that was formed and separated from the original formless background. It ceased to be the prosthesis of a thought to become a dance" (Freitas, 2016, my translation).

primitive people's primordial mistake. Hence, appropriating today animistic modes of relationality in artistic practices disorganizes modernity clear distinctions between the human subject and the exterior object, between the animated and inanimate, countering Western modern categories still ingrained in our present awareness.

We argue that animism functions as a tool in Marlene's choreographic work, namely, in *Guintche*, in the sense that she attributes animated qualities to a drawing, activating its contours and endowing it with performative qualities.

The early theories of animism were predicated on the assumption that the so-called pre-moderns or primitive people were unable of distinguishing reality from fiction, subject from object, culture from nature. Only through separating subjectivity from the objectified realm could the self-determined modern subject be constituted, thus, liberated from the dangers of fantasy, superstition, and irrationality. This scheme was inscribed into a geographical mapping that distinguished modern and civilized humans versus pre-moderns, considered less-than-humans. Upon this cartography, colonialism projected its operative categorical distinctions, inflicting violence, and dispossessing people from their lands, subjecthood and life. Therefore, while the so-called Western European modern world was enthroning enlightened reason, objectivity, and humanism, it was creating a death space at the colonial frontier, separating the other side as a space of absolute negativity, of darkness, imagination, and wildness.

However, according to anthropologist Michael Taussig, this wildness was not only "challenging the unity of the symbol, the transcendent totalization binding image to that which it represents," as it was, through this opening, creating a space of "slippage" that became "a death space of signification" (Taussig, 1987: 219). Curiously, explains Taussig, this death space has also had its existence within Western culture, in its unconscious and its fantasies populating the social imaginary with "metamorphosing images of evil and the underworld," present in from "Homer, Virgil, the Bible, Dante, Hieronymus Bosch, the Inquisition, Rimbaud, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*" (*idem*), among many other. At the colonial frontier, this space of death fuses "into a common pool of key signifiers binding the transforming culture of the conqueror with that of the conquered" (*idem*). A space of hybridity where colonial and colonizer imagery clashes, disrupting signifiers and signified, words and things, producing a restless anxiety and a discontinuity in what Bruno Latour called a "middle Kingdom" (Latour, 1991), unable to cancel the performativity of memory. This space of

darkness was also extirpated within the West through the Christian Church Inquisition with the witch hunting, the objectification of madness and of sexuality, and by installing distinguished boundaries between good and evil, reason and unreason, soul and body, normality and the pathological, human and inhuman, thus, creating an imagery of negativity within the West itself (Franke, 2012: 18-22). Curiously, Marlene plays with these opposites in her composite figures and in the choreographies simultaneous contradictions, unravelling both sides of the modern divide.

In addition, this evolutionary theory of animism was also adopted by psychologists to explain human development phases, locating an animist stage in childhood where the human was incapable of distinguishing the real from fantasy, projecting its subjectivity to the exterior world (Franke, 2012: 12).

Beyond these, we have also mentioned a new animism, which takes seriously vitalist relational and queer ontologies, as well as multi-species cosmologies that counter human anthropocentric and heteronormative relation in the world. Adding to that, we can also engage with animism within modernity's image culture as an aesthetic economy, in line with Franke's thinking, as "a way of imagining, which gives expression to collective desires and articulates commonsensical schemes, determining the possibilities of recognizing other subjectivities" and, in that sense, as a "symptomatic reaction to the effects of modernity, a compensatory displacement and transgression of the boundaries and fragmentation modernity inflicts" (Franke, 2012: 13).

We have previously elaborated on several artistic and epistemological engagements of this sort, if we recall Warburg's conception of images as animated *dynamograms*, or Artaud's "theater of the double," which counters rationality and evokes its negative through theatrical violence, not to mention Nietzschean humanist critique and his call for pagan Dionysian forces to animate a modernity in decay.

Guintche, we argue, also engages with animism as a symptom of modernity's categorical artificial divisions and colonial imagery anxiety. This dance piece is an event of transgression through *openness*, imagination, and uncanniness, that invites a disruptive *impurity* that dislocates modernity defined boundaries. It departs from a series of animations: animation through the memory of Archie Shepp's jazz concert, a memory-image that becomes a

drawing, a drawing that escapes its figurative contour and rebels.[180] *Guintche*, as an animated cartoon, can be everything and nothing at the same time: it is once a boxer, then a half animal/half human, a simian, a bird, a hybrid, a puppet, a gymnastic, a circus performer, a clown, a Cape Verdean creole prostitute, a madman, a Tabanca player or Carnivalesque figure, among many others, remaining a self-dissolutional figure on the move.

In Sergei Eisenstein analysis of Walt Disney's films, the Russian film director argues that in Disney's work in general, "animals substitute for humans" as a tendency of "displacement," "combination," and "idiosyncratic protest against metaphysical inertness established once and for all" (Eisenstein, 2012: 118). He further argues that what he calls this "flight" into animal skins occurs in many epochs as a counter movement to "the very inhumanness of the systems of social government," to the early twentieth century American mechanization of everyday life, and to the "mathematical abstraction and metaphysics in philosophy" (*idem*). For Eisenstein, it is a "soulless geometrism and metaphysics" that engenders, as a resistance, a "universal rebirth of animism" (*idem*).

One of the most direct animism manifestations lie in the animated cartoon, literally, a "drawing brought to life" (119). Thus, according to Eisenstein, through his animated cartoons, Disney connects "with one of the deepest features of the early human psyche," that is, endowing a nonliving thing with *anima* (the Latin world for soul or life). Thus, Eisenstein claims that beyond synesthesia and perfect rhythm, what Disney's plastic forms seem to have is the quality of "unstable stability" (Bulgakowa, 2012: 116). This attractive stable instability is, however, paradoxical, because "Disney's forms seem to exist in a continuous state of self-dissolution" (*idem*), as if its line contour, in permanent motion, would escape, stretch, extend, and dance. Hence, what is particularly relevant for our present analysis is that like Disney animated cartoons, *Guintche*'s figure also has self-dissolution and instability as its inner property.

The animistic practices that dislocate the boundaries between the object and the subject, strengthened Eisenstein belief in a primordial relation between humans and nature, rooted in rituals, with a sense of "original unity of opposites," (*idem*) experienced in ecstatic moments that often imply passages in-between states, from human to beast and vice-versa. Moreover, in Disney's work the body is presented not only as a direct source for art but as

[180] This rebellion of the figure cited by Marlene regarding *Guintche* reminds of the "Rebelados," which is a Cape Verdean Creole name for a community of running-away slaves that found refuge in the hilly interior of Santiago Island during the colonial period, grounding there their own community, which exists until today.

its material, conveyed as a "fluid body" beyond skeleton, where "form is analyzed for its plasmatic and polymorphous qualities" (117). For Eisenstein, utopia resides where the pre-logical encounters the rational, where the human and nature rest in alliance, without neither subordinating nature to humans nor humans to modern industrialization (*idem*). In this way, in Disney's work, Eisenstein saw the "utopian promise of a liberation from ossified form, the way it offers the possibility of a state of eternal becoming" (*idem*).

Guintche, in a similar way, also crosses several abysses, by dancing the animal, the hybrid, the creole, the puppet, the prostitute, the insane, the incoherent and the non-productive, the irrational and the premodern cannibal, among others, it destabilizes not only an ossified formalism, but more importantly, an ossified and univocal subjectivity. With its permanent metamorphosis, *Guintche*'s uncanniness induces anxiety and restlessness for threatening the apparatuses of reproduction of a safe image of the same, hence, disturbing the order of rationality, the unity of the subject, and the soundness of its body.

As we described above, in the first part of the dance piece, Marlene's body is split in two halves, her lower limbs in the continuous movement of "rebolar," her upper limbs and face with an unstable and metamorphic expressionism. Here, the panic over the loss of the subject's self-certainty, the indeterminacy between the conscious and the unconscious, normality and abnormality extends to the loss of its bodily integrity and the fear of its dismemberment, of the dilution between the human, the nonhuman animal, and the mechanical puppet. Hence, *Guintche*'s body images propose a mimetic exchange embodying a forbidden hybridity.

Both the drawing upon which *Guintche* acquired a life of its own and *Guintche*'s figures have a fetishistic power that produces anxiety, leaving the spectator bewildered and impotent, unable to produce a coherent and rational comprehension of its own experience. Is Marlene not performing the ambivalent figures the moderns have imagined in their objectification of the colonized, stereotyped as immature, irrational, delusional, inconsequential, clownish, primitive, and oversexualized? Is the choreographer not returning those uncanny images back to the public, adorned with pleasurable rhythms and eccentric dance movements, in her half naked body? We are aware that there exist no univocal responses, but it seems to us that Marlene is playing with the double consciousness of the colonial racial and gender fetishization that still haunts European culture and its theatres, triggering both responses of disavowal and seduction.

According to Anselm Franke, this hauntedness of colonial fetishization played a significant role in the way art, media and institutions built the modern social imaginary, but which were carefully self-contained, as he clearly explains,

> (…) in circumscribed confines, giving way to the desires to overcome alienation, the desires for the re-animation of a de-animated, de-mobilized world thus re-populating the deadened, disenchanted, objectified world with its monstrous images of hybrids and phantasies of returns and speed-deliriums. And in so doing, ever actualizing the imaginary of animism as the *Heart of Darkness*, ripe with anxieties and fears of regression, which demand ever more re-assuring objectifications and enclosures (…) (Franke, 2012: 34).

To counter modernity's objectification and contemporary alienation, art and dance propose responses to the transgressive and compensatory desire of re-animation, mobilization, and transformation. Hence, the dance event proposes illusions of life, where often the negative, the imaginary and the subjective return through phantasmagoric and symptomatic body-images and states of mediality between the real, as experienced by the subject, and the fictional, on stage.

In this sense, with its extreme physical dance movements, its half-naked body that evokes an over-eroticized and racialized body, *Guintche* offers an ecstatic undoing of the boundaries of the subject that provokes both enthusiasm and bewilderment in the (European) spectator, symptomatic of how an alienated self may find excitement and compensation in the contemplation of an imaginary Other that condenses, in its excess and licentiousness, an unconscious desire for life and transgression.

Hence, paradoxically, with its uncanniness and indeterminacy, *Guintche*'s returns the gaze back to the spectator, causing anxiety and fear of regression, unveiling how otherness, even if a fictional one, destabilizes the self and its illusion of self-identity and self-determination.

From Parody to the Grotesque, or Turning the (colonial) Gaze Back

The whole performance is, in fact, deeply marked by an atmosphere of strangeness. Nothing is clear, the figure is incomprehensible for its transmutability and incompleteness. *Guintche* is both frantic, excessive, and erotic, as well as grotesque in its hybrid gestures of bestiality. However, in its figures of desolation and melancholy, in the interrupted actions, the failures, and the imperfections, as if the figure was lost, *Guintche* also conveys empathy.

Countering the symptomatic "disenchantment" of an over-objectified world, the fragmentation and estrangement of the self and its social and imagery alienation, *Guintche* brings back home the unconscious *Heart of Darkness* (Conrad, 1899)[181] that moderns have conceptualized in their imagination of the African colonized other (fig. 49-50). Although confined within the safe theatrical boundaries, its performative body produces livable figural images that appear as a battlefield, evoking dialectical reversals, and its hybridity and transgressive desire convey a mixture of dystopian and utopian potential that, nevertheless, produces disquiet and anxiety in the spectator.

In fact, as Achille Mbembe refers in his *Critique of Black Reason* (2017), Europe has always tended to reflect on identity less as a mutual belonging to a global common world, than in terms of a relation among the same, where each being emerges in confrontation with himself or with its own mirror (Mbembe, 2017: 1). To this logic of Western "self-fictionalization and self-contemplation" (*idem*), continues Mbembe, blackness and race were crucial notions, becoming the foundations upon which Western modernity produced its onto-epistemologies and biopolitics of governance, creating what Mbembe describes as modernity's "delirium" (2). In the following, Mbembe acutely elaborates on the reasons for this delirium:

> [t]he Black Man is the one (or the thing) that one sees when one sees nothing, when one understands nothing, and, above all, when one wishes to understand nothing. Everywhere he appears, the Black Man unleashes impassioned dynamics and provokes an irrational exuberance that always tests the limits of the very system of reason. But delirium is also caused by the fact that no one — not those who invented him, not those who named him thus—would want to be a Black Man or treated as one. (…) By reducing the body and the living being to matters of appearance, skin, and color, by granting skin and color the status of fiction based on biology, the Euro-American world in particular has made Blackness and Race two sides of a single coin, two sides of a codified madness (*idem*).

We believe that in *Guintche* Marlene plays not only with the Western modern categorization of the racialized Other as madness, irrationality (fig. 61-2), and objectification, but more specifically, with the modern categorization of creoleness as hybridity, impurity, immatureness, and incompleteness. *Guintche* parodies and creates grotesque images of excess

[181] *Heart of Darkness* (1899) is a novel by Polish-English novelist Joseph Conrad that recounts the fictional voyage by white Western colonizers up the Congo River into the Congo Free State. Conrad offers an image of Africa as a place of darkness, wildness, and savagery, in parallel to London as the city of civilized people. It addresses issues of imperialism and racism, and Conrad drew inspiration from his travel journals of his journeys to Africa. In https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heart_of_Darkness (accessed May 2021).

upon those conceptions, sending them back to the Western public as pictures that confront their own delirium.

The two sides of the codified madness that Mbembe refers become evident: firstly, in the caricature and masquerade exhibition of stereotypes that the European imagery of the Other has constructed, namely, the fetishization of the oversexualized and racialized feminine body, and the Black/Creole subject as infantilized, impure, incoherent, inconsequential, with its primitive animality, or its uncanny hybridity that concurs to *Guintche*'s figure. Secondly, sending back these figures of madness to a public (which in most of the Western European theaters is white and middle-class), operates as forces that clash with the insanity on the other side of the mirror. In fact, the madness of Western European delirium — its hegemonic discourse on the human — is still Western European legacy, remaining ingrained in today's racism and biased power structures that perpetrate inequalities and dispossess. Hence, *Guintche*'s incredible inventiveness and bewilderment exposes the potentiality of an open figure that proposes the dissolution of categories as counter resistance to a certain hegemonic (Eurocentric) world, marked by exclusions of otherness.

In addition, performed as a circus show with several entertainment acts, *Guintche* also recalls early modern shows that objectify the Other, namely, the turn of the century Grand World fairs, which were followed by national exhibitions celebrating colonial empires,[182] often with their live human zoos, exhibiting indigenous and racialized subjects de-subjectivized. This objectivation of life also took place in the emergence of the ethnographic museums, through the exhibition of objects and masks brought from colonized territories, which were deprived from their religious, artistic, or cultural agency.

Moreover, *Guintche*'s caricatured figure, with its prosthetic big red mouth and its grimaces, also evokes other examples of parody stereotyping the racialized subject: the early nineteenth century figures of American blackface and minstrel shows (fig. 45-7). These theatrical shows consisted in comic and variety acts with dance and music performance, depicting people from African descent. Performed mostly by white people blackfaced with make-up, the shows represented stereotyped versions of black people as dim-witted, lazy,

[182] It is important to highlight in this respect the realization in 1934 of the "Exposição Colonial Portuguesa" ["Portuguese Colonial Exhibition", my transl.], in Porto, which included a human zoo where indigenous habitats from Portuguese colonies were recreated, recruiting people from these territories, objectifying them as racialized subjects of anthropological and ethnographic interest. In this human zoon, the Cape Verdean population from was also represented. This event was followed, in 1940 in Lisbon, by the "Exposição do Mundo Português" ["Exhibition of the Portuguese World", my transl.].

clownish, ignorant, and inconsequential, through repertoires of gestures, stories, and dance, mostly appropriated from the white imaginary from the plantation culture, refashioned to suit the tastes and prejudices of white audiences.

Marlene is Cape Verdean and we do not argue, by any means, that *Guintche* is a racial masquerade that caricatures the performance and subjectivity of African heritage. The act of blackfacing as the impersonation of blackness is not present in any of her works, but a big prosthetic mouth is frequently highlighted in her choreographies, evoking modern images and illustrations of stereotyped African descent traits that also play a significant role in blackface minstrelsy. Moreover, *Guintche* also evokes the kind of incoherent, irrational, and inconsequent happy-go-lucky character that was often portrayed in minstrelsy.

According to Sylvia Wynter in her essay *Sambos and Minstrels* (1979), in a context of cultural stagnation and early technological industrialization, black culture was appropriated by white bourgeoisie of that time, while keeping its exclusion intact (Wynter, 1979: 149). Not only minstrel shows, but also jazz music, its blues, and its black spirituality became a source of raw material to be explored in the mass entertainment industry. Binding the structures of production to white Western hegemony, this exuberant black culture was taken up by white bourgeois world to provide themselves what was ironically called "harmless entertainment" (Wynter, 1979: 149). Blackface minstrelsy was, hence, the first American mass culture, used to buffer the ongoing vicissitudes of industrialization and the entrenchment of capitalism. Thus, white working-class audiences, predominately male, laugh vicariously through the blackface ridicule of their black counterparts, fashioning the (inter)racial feelings they worked out for themselves both in the theatrical context and beyond, hence, creating the imaginary of a supposed white supremacy.

According to Catherine M. Cole and Tracy C. Davis in their essay "Routes of Blackface" (2013), in recent years scholars such as Robin Bernstein, Saidiya V. Hartman, David Krasner, W.T. Lhamon, Eric Lott, and Tavia Nyong'o have moved beyond traditional minstrelsy historiography to inquire how blackface operated, their problematic embodiments as sites for social and political intervention and reception, denoting "how social formations are thoroughly and viscerally racialized" (Cole and David, 2013: 7). In fact, blackface minstrelsy has always had slippery readings, its signification being difficult to control, for when "one race impersonates another and bills it as entertainment, reception becomes a barometer of ethnic hegemony, interracial politics and power" (Cole and David, 2013: 7).

Moreover, in her "Reading Blackface in West Africa: Wonders Taken for Signs" (1996), Catherine Colen argues, in line with anthropologist Michael Taussig, that reflecting on blackface is to engage in a "mimetic vertigo, a dizzying whirlwind of identity and alterity in which actors along different racial and cultural divides adopted the superficial identity effects of various Others" (Colen, 1996: 192).

In fact, if performing art practices such as dance and music can travel, their meaning is always culturally situated. For Americans, Colen refers, "blackface is a highly charged signifier, intimately tied to an unresolved history of racial exploitation, segregation, and derisive stereotyping of people of African descent" (195). The shows were structured according to dichotomies of high and low culture, white and black, civilized and savage. Hence, in that context, blackness and African American culture became signifiers for ignorance, disorder, and the grotesque.

Furthermore, according to Sylvia Wynter, minstrelsy engendered two interconnected stereotypes of blackness to respond to what Wynter called "the dual psyche of the white — as settler and as the bearer of the egalitarian creed" (Wynter, 1979: 150). These figures are, on the one hand, Sambo, who was the submissive, obedient, and faithful slave who did his work, while Nat Turner represented the "rebellious" stereotype that legitimated the use of the master's force to guarantee the work done (151). Hence, both Sambo and Nat, conjoined in the figure of the plantation slave, became signifiers for blackness as Lack, not only of intellectual faculties, but also of agency, of unreason, or as Wynter refers, "lack of the human" (*idem*).

In *Guintche*, we neither have a performer engaging in race change nor in adopting a superficial identity but, on the other hand, Marlene produces images of hybrid traits and features that interweave race, gender, species, and cultural divides, provoking a dizzying ungraspable vertigo. However, it is not a question of skin colour dichotomy, of whiteness versus blackness. We argue that *Guintche*, similarly, satirizes upon the stereotypes the Western white modern/colonial subject produced of its own negative. *Guintche*'s composite figure and its exuberant, powerful, and uncanny performance condenses several paradoxes, which also trigger in the spectator a set of paradoxical reactions. On the one hand, its uncanny hybridity, strange facial expressions and gestures produce in the spectator an anxiety and incomprehension towards what is being performed: a self that is broken in two, half-human/half-animal, a hybrid, not complete, not self-determinate, that continually transmutes

and never comes full circle. On the other hand, *Guintche* also seduces the spectator through its frenzy and eroticized dance, its exposure of the feminine body, evoking through its gesture and costumes savage and animalistic features, hence, unleashing in the spectator both unconscious and repressed desires.

Beyond the blackface minstrel shows, the complexity of *Guintche* also seems to recall the legacy of eccentric dances. The roaring twenties, with its experimentation, licentiousness, and sense of freedom, triggered by Western economic growth, technological development, and a prospering consumer culture, saw the popularization of eccentric dance shows and balls, of which Josephine Baker's shows were a paradigmatic example, also influenced by what was called the Afro-American 'Harlem Renaissance' and the 'Jazz era.'

Guintche's figure of excess, with its eyes crossed, buttocks quivering and rolling hips movement, although generating more visual and categorical conundrum, can also evoke some traits of Josephine Baker's frenzy dance movements, namely, her clownish and animalistic grimaces (fig. 48). Like the euphoria that Baker's dances triggered in the Western spectator, also Marlene in *Guintche* seems to dance as anyone else has danced before, bringing to the stage the most unexpected figures and movements, puzzling the spectator. The theater seems haunted by seduction and its disavowal, by specters of the unconscious ambivalence of colonial desire and colonial guilt, by strangeness and incomprehension towards that disturbing figure of otherness, which induces the fear of the dissolution of the self and of consciousness.

According to Anne Anlin Cheng in her book *Second Skin. Josephine Baker and the Modern Surface* (2011), Cheng traces in the reception of Josephine Baker's work the materialization of "the racist and sexist history of objectification and of desire that makes up the phenomenon of European Primitivism or, conversely, the idealization of black female agency" (Chang, 2011: 2). However, Cheng proposes Baker not as a passive signifier in European history of ethnographic representations, but as a fracture in the representational history of the racialized femininity. Her pulsating body appears on stage, Cheng notes, as "part child, part simian, part puppet on neurotic strings" (…), and covered in reduced costumes made of pink feathers around her hips, neck, and ankles, she engages in "pure kinetic eruption" (4).

A direct parallel to this description of Baker's performance in *Savage dance* (Paris, 1925) with Marlene's dancing in *Guintche* is reductive, but one can trace some resonances.

The profound consternation and bewilderment of Baker's reception, according to Cheng, lies in the fact that Baker theatrically enacts "two of the most rehearsed sites of European conquest—the plantation and the jungle" (Cheng, 2011: 5). The consternation upon Baker's over-exposed and overdetermined figure reveals that the onto-epistemological categories of race, gender, and the human that modernity invented, failed to secure its certitude. In the same token, Cheng alludes, Baker's reception denotes how modernist Primitivism was unable to safely inscribe its own passions and fears.

Similarly, we might add, Marlene's performances also destabilize Western European theatres by subtly projecting figures and movements of (racialized and colonized) otherness, inviting the spectator to confront the expressiveness of some Western modern inflicted repressions (on itself and on the other). Hence, what continues to hold the spectators' gaze and captivate their minds before Marlene's performances, namely, in *Guintche*, are the disquieting moments of contamination between reification and recognition, when subjecthood and objecthood merge, when the spectator confronts his or her own vertiginous intimacy with what s/he is experiencing.

Therefore, in *Guintche*'s entanglement that interweaves performativity, race, gender, eroticism, imperialism, and contemporary criticality, how do we understand Marlene's figures that subtly solicit (modern/colonial) stereotypes of otherness? Does her subversion reside in exploring the (human) figure as a hybrid, as a queer multispecies being, as a cultural cannibal in permanent processes of transformation and impermanence?

Instead of conferring stable racial and gender meaning, the performance proposes contradictory significations that foreground the epistemological crisis of meaning in the cross-cultural exchange between European whiteness and its "other". Hence, there are no stable and clear-cut dichotomies between viewer and viewed, but an entanglement of bewilderment and desire. The spectator finds him/herself in the ambivalent setting of both fascination and repression, suggesting that the seduction of the fetishism for otherness and exoticism is able to launch one into an imaginary scenario where one gets to fictionally have and be that otherness.

Thereafter, through *Guintche*'s counter-intuitive nature, Marlene parodies with images of racialized hybridity, bringing into relief rather than appeasing the problematic coloniality still present today, predicated on the distinction between blackness and whiteness, civilized and savage, femininity, and masculinity, human and nonhuman.

Another inspiration to Marlene's work is the documentary by Chris Marker and Alain Renais *Les Statues Meurrent Aussi* (1953) that not only traces the uprooting of African art by the colonial power but also its annihilation as a reified object of ethnographic study. In the documentary, we can read the narrator referring how the figure of the black slave under colonial subjection progressively acquired other roles, such as "the black puppet" for entertainment, and later in post-colonial context, "the black sportsman" or the "black boxer" (fig. 60).

Curiously, it is noteworthy that in the bareness of *Guintche*'s scenario, Marlene shares the space with one single object: a boxer's punching bag hanging from the ceiling. In addition, let us also recall that *Guintche* begins with Marlene dressed in a boxing cape. Hence, we argue that these elements, even if not purposefully, evoke figures of struggle, fight, and resistance. Therefore, proposing a complicated negotiation between what is performed and what is seen, *Guintche* sets the stage for contaminated desires and uncanny feelings, sending the (colonial and fetishist) gaze back to the spectator, who is then pressed to reconsider his/her politics of the visible and of recognition.

Paradise – Private Collection [183]

[183] Please consult *Paradise-Private collection* Image Atlas in the annexes, pp. 391 - 408.

Atlas for a Private Paradise

Toda a tragédia humana de Prometeu se resume nestes termos: não existe uma abóbada fixa sobre nós. Porém, temos de usar esta imagem elevada para proporcionar uma construção auxiliar, ainda que arbitrária, aos nossos olhos perplexos perante a infinidade.[184]
Aby Warburg (2010: 16)

In the somber depths of the mind — here, represented by the theatrical black box — one sees a black metal structure, punctuated by warm, sulfurous, yellow light spots with an apparent disorganized organization (fig. 63). Inside, the spectator can gaze at strange beings to the sound of an intriguing birds chirping. Space within a space, matryoshka for a world of dreams, of imagination or the unconscious, this "kind of suspended cage," in Freitas' words, "that, on the one hand, defies gravity and, on the other hand, has movable and transposable walls, holds flying beings" (Freitas, 2013, n.p.). These are the hybrid and disconcerting beings that flourish in one's imagination, the birds and angels of Paradise, the *phantasmas* of fantasy.

Departing from several versions of paradise, a theme largely embraced by artists and poets in the so-called Western history of art and literature, this dance piece proposes a "private" version of Paradise by choreographer and performer Marlene Monteiro Freitas, interpreted by the other four performers Yair Barelli, Lorenzo de Angelis, Luís Guerra and Andreas Merk. Therefore, focusing on the theme of paradise, iconic for the Judeo-Christian religion and seminal for the understanding of Western cultural legacy, this dance piece departs from an eclectic and heterogeneous assembly of theoretical, artistic, musical, and religious references not only around paradise but also in relation to its entangled opposites: the purgatory, hell, the biblical narratives of the Last Judgment. Hence, evoking the strangeness that results from assembling opposites and dissonant materials such as these, we could consider, in the wake of Foucault, this *Paradise-Private Collection* to be another uncanny "heterotopic" place in the oeuvre of Marlene Monteiro Freitas (Foucault, 2002 [1970]: 9).[185]

Conceived as a choreographic concert, its musical landscape plays a decisive role, combining erudite and popular music genres. The negotiation between heterogeneous

[184] "All human tragedy of Prometheus is summed up in these terms: there is no fixed dome over us. However, we must use this elevated image to provide an auxiliary construction, albeit arbitrary, to our perplexed eyes in the face of infinity." (Aby Warburg, 2010: 16, my transl.).
[185] In the beginning of Part II, in the chapter *Openness*, we have extensively elaborated on the concept of heterotopy by Michel Foucault.

musical and visual elements generates what seems to be a fictional and heterotopic paradise, where bewilderment and strangeness coexist. In fact, this paradise can be seen as a territory of freedom where contradictory elements converge and are activated by opposing dynamics of repression and desire, producing a fertile imagery of unforeseen figures, body-images and gestuality that dissolve any expectation of a coherent, linear, and logical comprehension of the whole.

On the stage, a more attentive spectator identifies traces of the paradise by artists and poets, gestures and “migratory images” (Warburg) of religious iconography, namely, from the eleventh century mosaic of *Last Judgment* in Torcello (fig. 84-6), from Hieronymus Bosch’s *Garden of Earthly Delights* (fig. 91-5), from Lucas Cranach the Elder’s *Garden of Eden* (fig. 87) and Jan van Eyck’s diptych *Crucifixion and Last Judgment* (fig. 89), as well as echoes from Messiaen’s ecclesiastical musical landscapes. From a more pagan perspective, Marlene refers, there can be connections “with the grotesque and becoming other of Carnival” (Freitas, 2013, n.p.) — in this case, with the singularity of São Vicente’s spontaneous Carnival —, with surrealism and literary fantasy, or even with the visceral and sensuous rhythms and dance movements of samba, funaná and batucada.

From Western film history, besides Jean Rouch’s *Les Maîtres Fous* — a key reference for the choreographer's interest on how performance can induce states of trance — other visual influences permeate this piece, such as the surrealist film *Le Chien Andalou* (1929) by Salvador Dali and Louis Buñuel (fig. 102), *L' Enfer* (1964) by Henri-Georges Clouzot (fig. 103), or the film *Yellow Submarine* (1970) by The Beatles (fig. 98). However, something paradoxically familiar unravels the strangeness of this hybrid assemblage of appropriations and inventions, as if by intuition, the spectator is able to recognize some figures or emphatically relate to what s/he is experiencing. In fact, instead of coherent messages or narrative, Marlene’s work is very efficient in engaging the public emphatically, through the forces and emotions it propels on stage, as we will try to elucidate.

Let us, then, take a closer look at Marlene Monteiro Freitas’ *Paradise – Private Collection*. The piece begins at the smooth sounding of Haendel’s baroque aria *Ombra mai fu*, while the four interpreters on the scene remain immobile, under the warm gaze of the suspended lights. These seems to be four creatures of hybrid genesis, half-naked, three of them resembling worms that lye side by side facing the ground. These are dressed only with dark neoprene pants and having wigs on their heads, while the fourth hybrid creature evokes a

bird, sitting on the back of the stage, its back turned to the audience (fig. 63-5).

The sound of Olivier Messiaen's organ, dense and distressing, precipitates the trembling of those three creatures' bodies that, horizontally, shake the pelvis in a sexual and animalistic cadence. In the background, the bird-creature hops with the caution of an animal that flees here and there, coveting its prey.

A bizarre and androgynous figure makes its entrance—a hybrid of a bullfighter, a magician, or a demiurge—who, with intense facial and hands expression, conducts the four hybrid creatures, their postures, and movements, ordering them to gather (fig. 64-5). It is Marlene Monteiro Freitas, the conductor of this choreographic concert, who also gives indications to the technicians during the dance piece to mute or restore the sound, to increase or decrease the volume. Marlene leads these beings, lifts them up, removes their wigs and places them in line, facing the public. With their bare torso, black neoprene trousers and body paintings, these androgynous and hybrid beings perform *staccato* nervous movements with their heads, gestures that evokes birds' movements. Furthermore, their figures, in particular, their arms and hands' gestures, evoke some religious iconographic figures, namely, of the damned gluttonous (fig. 86) who figure in the Byzantine mosaic depicting the *Last Judgment*, in the cathedral Santa Maria Assunta, on the island of Torcello, Venice.

Further ahead, Marlene, the dominator of her beings, approaches the audience and, in silence, rehearses magic tricks, grotesque poses and features, as if testing her own reflection on an imaginary mirror (fig. 66-9). According to the choreographer,

> (...) em muitos momentos da peça existe esse espelho mental entre os intérpretes e a coreógrafa, e entre estes e o público. Além de se tratar de um jogo narcísico (e o narcisismo é um pecado capital...), é uma forma de conseguir uma presença 'fora de si' à força de se estar exageradamente consigo próprio. Trata-se de uma forma de gerar intensidade, e de o fazer à parte, independentemente da música (Freitas, 2013, n.p.)[186]

Throughout the play, the creatures will always remain hybrid and uncertain: heterogeneous and constantly changing beings, fauns, androgynous and queer, mechanic dolls or puppets, human-horse, human-dog, human-music, human-bird, human-flamenco. These androgynous creatures enter and exit what seems to be Marlene's imaginary paradise, in the

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[186] "In many moments of the play there is this mental mirror between the performers and the choreographer, and between these and the audience. In addition to being a narcissistic game (and narcissism is a capital sin...), it is a way of achieving a presence 'outside oneself' by forcing oneself to be exaggerated with itself. It is a way of generating intensity, and doing it separately, regardless of the music." (Freitas, 2013a, n.p, my translation).

form of this scenario — a transparent cage that also evokes the unconscious and the dream-world. These figures weave multiple and contradictory relationships with their demiurge or creator, in an ambivalent game of submission and desire, veneration and complicity.

Marlene's figure evokes the confluence of several overdetermined images, being at the same time a conductor, a bullfighter, a magician, and a demiurge of her own paradise. Moreover, Freitas also transforms herself into a percussion being, embodying musical instruments that she activates with her own body, producing sound. Furthermore, she is also a narcissus that dialogues with her own reflection, or at the end, a puppet that becomes the Batucada chief at the grand finale of this carnival parade. The piece continues, therefore, as a choreographic mosaic of unforeseen moments, always conducted by Marlene, who combines excess and transgression with humor. We are referring to scenes, such as, the sensual and cadenced movements to the sound of *kuduro* music, followed by the introduction of objects inside the mouth that, deforming the face and producing sound, create hybrid human-musical figures.

Another pivotal moment in the piece happens with the electrifying performance by performer Andreas Merk in the form of a hybrid human-horse that sings Talking Heads' music "Psycho killer," evocative of the band's *Stopping Making Sense Tour* (a title that could not be more in line with this whole ensemble) (fig. 73-4). In short, that is the choreographer's desire: to create a paradise that does not make sense, that interrupts the logic of meaning, making use of strategies of overdetermination, dislocation and transfiguration.

Moreover, in this choreographic ensemble we can trace other hybrid figures, such as human-dogs performing their most primary instincts, making jumps, barking, or clinging to their owner's leg simulating the sexual act. Another performer embodies a bird-creature that sings a solo, while making his chest muscles dance (fig. 76). Further ahead, coming close to the end, Marlene conducts the four performers-as-puppets into a race with their faces covered with caps, unveiling the painting of another face on their necks, hence personifying other figures (fig. 77-8).

Marlene's key choreographic tools are confirmed here once again: hybridity, a metamorphic fluidity of its figures that prevents their crystallization, and indeterminacy and simultaneous contradiction that dislocate any categorical coherence and linear narrative.

Music, like the choreography itself, is a hybrid montage conducted by Marlene and which, in her own words, "comprises interruptions, silences or changes in volume that either

leads to cuts in the relationship with the audience, or calls attention to the scene" (Freitas, 2013, n.p.). Elaborated across musical compositions by Messiaen, Handel, Lully, Purcell, Wagner, Dj Leo Kuduro or Talking Heads, the piece ends in a final ecstatic *batucada* [drumming] recalling Marlene's Cape Verdean musical heritage.

Moreover, Freitas pays particular attention to choreographic details that, by destabilizing the imagination of the performers and the public, contribute significantly to the general strangeness. I am referring to the polysemy of costumes, props and objects used on stage, as well as the detailed precision of the performers' gestuality, veiling a semiotic and iconographic complexity. As an example, we can highlight the use of gloves that, in Marlene's words, "make us less human" (Freitas, 2013, n.p.), while evoking puppets, and cartoons. Likewise, the paintings on the body refer to "tattoos, (…) to marked bodies, (…) dark areas (dark holes, the absence of matter)" (*idem*). In addition, the black neoprene pants "create a micro-climate (...), help to produce sweat, . . . the paint spreads over the body, [and produces] more dirt" (*idem*). Hence, Marlene explores in all details the intensity that results from contradictory simultaneity in this imaginary paradise: the beautiful and the ugly, the dirty and the clean, the rational and the irrational, the human and the non-human, the sacred and the profane, the pure and the impure.

As for colors, we may highlight the use of black, violet, purple, green, and yellow, evoking both artistic and religious references. Although having acquired different connotations over the centuries, the color black may evoke the absence of light, blackness, tattoos, "black holes or mystery" (*idem*). The violet and purple colors, according to Marlene, summon the "majestic," the pagan, the "religious," or even the costumes of magicians and bullfighters. Green is a color that conveys ideas of both "vigor, vegetation (...) fertility," continues Freitas, as well as "death. . . mold, poison. . . or Devil" (*idem*). In the same way, yellow can symbolize, simultaneously, "light, sun, aging, gold," as well as "transition, diabolical, angry, God" (*idem*). Hence, in her choreographies, colors also constitute fields of overdetermination.

In addition, in a work that is always guided by hybridity, Marlene explores the plasticity of the mouth, tongue and eyes that disorganize the area of identification of the subject's face. Therefore, she uses props that inserts into her own mouth and that of the performers, deforming their faces and contributing to their temporary mutations. As an example, Marlene discreetly introduces a small harmonica into Andreas Merk's mouth, transforming his face

into an image of a man-horse (fig. 71-2). By doing so, she also signals the mouth as a body opening for a plurality of uses, namely, to produce sound through the simple fact of breathing. In her own mouth, Marlene discreetly introduces two small spheres that are, in fact, two maracas that dilate her face creating two strange round protuberances, transforming her into a strange percussion hybrid creature that produces sound while moving her head (fig. 75).

Therefore, all the choreographic details are exhaustively written, and there is an emphasis on hand gestures, which recall Christian iconography, the representation of figures inherent to the religious representations of Paradise, the Last Judgment and Hell. In fact, as referred before, Marlene is not interested in placing the opposites in dichotomous relations, but in placing these opposites in circularity, generating a much higher degree of tension in the whole theatrical scene. Moreover, beyond artistic and religious references, the Papua New Guinea's splendorous *Birds of Paradise* (fig. 100-1) where also significant, with their gestuality, relations, colors, sounds and dances (Freitas in Balona, 2019: 255).

Further ahead, in the middle of the choreography, a particularly unusual moment stands out: without any previous warning, the choreographer gives a sign of intermission to the interpreters and to the stage technicians and interrupts the dance piece. The spectators wonder whether it is an effective pause, an error, or some other problem. While the performers make a pause and relax, crossing the limits of the scenario, Marlene sits on the stage lateral and fetches a take-away food package. To the audience surprise, she takes some pieces of roasted chicken and starts eating on stage. This interruption in the choreography, which initially looks like a mistake or a failure, belongs to the choreographic structure itself, and the spectator slowly becomes aware of it, despite the strangeness that whole scene evokes. While Marlene, the demiurge of her paradise, rests and feeds herself, the other beings, who meanwhile assume their non-theatrical presence, evoke a clear subaltern position. This disconcerting gesture certainly may raise several readings. Not only does Marlene introduce what could be a backstage scene into the unfolding of the choreography (in the lineage of post-dramatic theater deconstruction strategies), as she displaces common assumptions in terms of gender hierarchies and power relations.

In fact, unlike the biblical narratives, which depict the Christian demiurge god in a white and male human figure, the demiurge of this paradise is Marlene, a being in a queer female figure, who at certain times also metamorphoses into hybrid creatures in-between the human, the puppet, the animal, or the musical instrument, dislocating not only a series of

religious postulates but also the definition of the human. This disconcerting gesture accentuates the challenging freedom that contributes to the singularity of the work.

This unrestrained openness that results from the potentiality of fiction, montage and imagination is combined with the subversive power of unconscious and emotional forces that permeate the dance work. Forces that could be recognizable by incorporation and affectation, however not rationalizable. Forces that we would risk comparing to what Aby Warburg coined as the posthumous life (*Nachleben*) of a certain pagan and Dionysian experience. In fact, a tremendous energy condensed in gestures, music and in the body-images infiltrates the audience, instigating vibrations of an emotional and instinctive order, that are hardly processed in rational terms.

For Warburg, as already widely elaborated in Part II of this dissertation, symbols and images are the “crystallization of an energetic charge and an emotional experience that has survived as a legacy transmitted by social memory and that, (...) while dynamograms are transmitted to artists in a state of great tension,” the latter being responsible for polarizing this received energy, infiltrating and purifying these images, or “engrams ”of a culture's spiritual tensions, in their own works (Agamben, 1999: 94).

Moreover, Warburg dedicated the last years of his life to the organic assembly of an image atlas, a project he called *Bilder Atlas Mnemosyne* and which, according to him, would be “a kind of condenser that would bring together all the energetic currents that animated and continue to animate Europe’s memory, based on its ghosts” (95). Therefore, we propose this piece to be an Atlas of (living) images, not of still images but figural gestures and body-images in motion. In this sense, in line with Warburg’s thought, *Paradise - Private Collection* proposes itself as an ironic diagnosis of a time that, happening in the now, finds its possible legibility in its “attempt to descend to the depths where the impulses of the human spirit intertwine with the achronologically stratified matter” (Warburg, 2010: 4, my transl.). “Only there,” Warburg claims, “do we discover where the expressive values of the pagan shudders derived from the original orgiastic experience were coined: the tragic *thiasus*” (*idem*). Hence, this dance piece could be seen as a symptomatic cartography of human nature, of our polarities and errancies, human beings between the visceral and the astral, animal creatures that wish to be gods, and things that only the imagination—in what it has of madness and illusion—may allow us to glimpse.

A Disjointed Paradise, Out of Time and Out of Place

In fact, departing from an already invented idea — the Paradise — Marlene sets herself the challenge of fictionalizing her own Eden.[187] Starting from a close investigation on artists and poets' representations not only of Paradise but also of The Last Judgment and Hell, Marlene elaborates a livable and mutable imagery atlas assembling her private collection.

Thus, from the pictorial and iconographic universe, the choreographer focuses on the symbolic representations of the hands and the face, on the pictorial chromatic tonalities that distinguish the figures, on the flight of angels and birds, as well as the prevalence of gardens and their ruins, highlighting a particular sun light that influences the contours of the space and its figures (Freitas, 2013, n.p.). That imagery of the sun light, according to the choreographer, was extremely relevant to conceive the choreography light design, while the scenario was thought of as a ruin or as a bird cage with a transposable metallic structure, from where the performers could exit and enter (*idem*). Hence, we propose to depart from some of Marlene's main key inspirations, to which we will add our own perspective, analyzing how and why these and other references echo in Marlene's performed Paradise.

From the pictorial and literary universe, we will start by addressing the early Byzantine mosaic of the *Last Judgment* (11th-12th century), in the Basilica of Santa Maria Assunta, in the island of Torcello, Venice, as well as the literary representations and illustrations of hell, purgatory and paradise in the much-celebrated poem by Dante Alighieri, the *Divine Comedy* [*Divina Commedia*] (1308-20). Widely considered a world literary masterpiece, this poem narrates Dante's travels through the afterlife world, starting in hell, then purgatory and finally, towards paradise or heaven. It is an allegorical literary representation of the soul's journey from sin to redemption through these three levels, drawing on medieval Roman Catholicism, theology, and philosophy. We consider that some of its illustrations may also have influenced Marlene's imagery for this dance piece, as we will elaborate further ahead.

Moreover, we will highlight the hybrid figural and imaginative universe in Hieronymus Bosch's *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (1400), the pictorial representation of the

[187] We also recall that the Cinema *Éden Parque* in Mindelo, São Vicente, was the main cultural center in the city, a triggering spot where the population could see Hollywood films, one of the main centers for Carnival events, and where Marlene came to present some choreographies of her early dance group *Compass*. Several references are convoluted in this fertile idea of Eden or Paradise.

Garden of Eden (1530) by Lucas Cranach the Elder and the diptych *Crucifixion and Last Judgment* (1426) by Jan van Eyck.

Furthermore, moving on to works that enhance the creative potentiality by imagining the paradise as an utopian world, we will evoke how the following references touch upon Marlene's work: the literary-political universe of Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), an island in a *no-place*; the worlds of Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* (1871), where time not only stops, but it goes in reverse, evading the laws of possibility; the surrealism of Luis Buñuel's *Le Chien Andalou* (1929); the hypnotic dream-visions in the film *L' Enfer* (1964) de Clouzot; and the universe of critical fabulation in The Beatles' film *Yellow Submarine* (1968). All these references will be considered with and through their visual overdetermination, entangled with layers of condensation and dislocation proper to the dream-work (as developed in Part II of the dissertation). In addition to these we should also mention Carnival's unlimited possibilities of "being other," namely, Marlene's influential legacy of São Vicente's spontaneous Carnival (as explained in the last chapter of Part II).

Hence, in this dance work, Freitas entangles in circular tensions the binaries of the paradisiacal and the diabolic, of the human and bestiality, eroticism and violence, beauty and ugliness, the sacred and the profane. To these clashing forces contributes the idea of choreography as montage, influenced not only by the potentialities of moving images' montage in cinema, but also from some pictorial representations of several *Garden of Eden* that in the same painting depict, simultaneously, several biblical scenes. It also echoes the various visual registers in Torcello's *Last Judgment* mosaic, in Giotto's *Last Judgment* in Padua, or again, in the three spiraling stages of purgatory described in Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

We will then start by Torcello's Byzantine mosaic, a fabulous art piece that recalls, on the tracks of Warburg's thought, how images are privileged vehicles for transmitting an afterlife of gestures and their *pathos*, unravelling geographical and cultural determinations. In this case, the mosaic reveals how images have migrated from the Byzantium empire in Constantinople to Torcello,[188] the mother city of Venice.

The Basilica was founded in 639, and further expanded and rebuilt in 1008, then dedicated to Santa Maria Assunta. The main apse has an eleventh century mosaic depicting a

[188] In fact, Torcello, the island that was previously the center of the commercial activity of Veneto and that a thousand years ago housed ten thousand inhabitants, laying the foundations of what would become the Republic of Venice, hosts one of the most fascinating mosaics regarding the iconographic encounter between the era of Byzantium and Western Christian representations.

Madonna with Child against a magnificent gold background, above a register of standing saints. In a second phase, around the last half of the eleventh century, a full height gold-glass mosaic on the opposite wall over the main door entrance shows in six horizontal registers an inspiring visual information, as describes writer James Panero: “scenes of the crucifixion, anastasis (resurrection), deesis (Christ with Mary and John the Baptist), and psychostasis (the weighing of souls) all rest on vignettes of heaven and hell divided in the lowest registers” (Panero, 2019).

According to Patrick Martin, the iconography of the *Last Judgment* is Byzantine, based on the “motifs that became the standard model for the Eastern Last Judgment around the beginning of the eleventh century”, contrasting “sharply with the Western model,” and “making a statement of common interests between Venice and Constantinople” (Martin, 2016: 1). Moreover, Martin argues, in the second half of the eleventh century Venice would profit from portraying itself as an ally of Byzantine empire, since that alliance benefited the city not only in trade, but also in protection against the threats from the Germans in the north, and other Italian states and the Normans in the south. This prestige was shown through the presence of mosaic works, which demanded for Eastern European craftsmen’s expertise (*idem*).

The Torcello’s mosaic had some innovations regarding its Eastern Mediterranean models: firstly, instead of being placed in the narthexes of funerary chapels, it was flattened into a western interior wall; secondly, Martin claims, its innovation rests in “the unique combination of Crucifixion, Anastasis [resurrection] and Last Judgment” (Martin, 2016: 2). Positioned with that unique configuration, the Torcello’s *Last Judgment* could serve the patrons intentions of both “meditation and instruction”, as Martin clearly explains:

> Reading from the Crucifixion downwards the viewer saw the cosmic drama of salvation, out of time and authenticating the timeless reality of Christ in the sacraments, in the church and in the resolution of history. Reading from the bottom upwards the viewer, as he left the church or watched the newly baptised enter, was confronted with the choice of virtue or vice, Paradise or punishment, with a message of hope in God’s mercy and of threat in God’s judgment (*idem*).

In effect, the iconographic splendor of this mosaic barely holds its dynamic forces together, as James Panero describes:

> In the upper registers, an expressive Christ pulls the souls of the Old Testament up from limbo to heaven by their wrists. Below, a snaking line of judicial plumbing leads down to increasingly explicit visions of hell. Two demons try to tip the scales of Saint Michael

> with their pitchforks while pouring out sins from bottles and bags. Meanwhile the damned are subdivided among the lustful, gluttonous, wrathful, envious, avaricious, and slothful, where they endure fiery and icy torments, when not being eaten by worms (Panero, 2019).

Like all her choreographic work, in this dance piece Freitas operates again through simultaneous contradiction, placing opposites in circularity and reiterating her interest in the resulting tension. Therefore, the choreographer is not only addressing Paradise's pictorial imagery, but also evoking its opposite, the Christian narratives and imagery around purgatory and hell. Thus, the fabulation of her paradise combines iconographic representations of both celestial chastity and sinful registers of existence according to Christian exegesis.
Hence, we can find in Freitas' Paradise several resonances from Torcello, and other Christian pictorial depictions around the Last Judgment. In the choreography starting scene, we see three figures crawling on the ground, which according to Marlene are worms, evoking the lowest organic forms of existence — be them earth worms that will be the prey for the small bird-creature that bounces in the background — or the worms of afterlife that we see consuming the entrails of the condemned in Torcello's *Last Judgment* mosaic.

Without any sequential narrative — because what interests Marlene is not the transmission of a linear message but the production of intensities — Freitas raises these worm figures and places them in line in front of the public. When these hybrid creatures start feeding each other (fig. 66), we can see impressive similarities with the four condemned gluttonous depicted in the lower hand-right side mosaic of Torcello (fig 86).[189] In fact, according to the biblical tales, in Paradise instead of food scarcity there was abundance, and the prey and predator food chain did not take place as we know it. Accordingly, Marlene argues: "in paradise we do not eat, we are fed" (Freitas, 2013, n.p.), thus, it is not by chance that in the choreography each creature feeds the one on the side instead of feeding itself. And let us recall that feeding also evokes pleasure and gluttony, one of the capital sins.

We wonder what other deadly sins Marlene evokes in this Paradise. From the beginning, her figure as a conductor and demiurge calls for stances of pride and narcissism, also evident in the relevance that the mirror assumes as a tool for the choreographic writing. In

[189] This is probably the image that Marlene refers in an interview: "Escolhemos uma imagem de que gostámos muito e que nos acompanhou bastante na peça, e que vem de um mosaico da Igreja de Santa Maria de Assunta" [We chose an image that we liked very much and that accompanied us a lot in the piece, and that comes from a mosaic of the Church of Santa Maria de Assunta", my transl.] (Freitas in Balona, 2019: 255).

addition, the moment of pause in which the dance piece is deliberately interrupted so that Marlene can eat alone while the rest of the performers rest may also evoke, once more, gluttony and avarice.

On the other hand, there is another element with an enormous choreographic presence in her work, which also has negative connotations in several iconographic representations around Paradise and the Last Judgment: music and musical instruments. Both in Bosch's *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, as in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, musical instruments emerge as inducing behaviors of lust, as corruptible and deviating apparatuses of Catholic prescribed behavior. Bearing in mind the importance of music both for Cape Verdean performing practices, and in Marlene's family history (whose grandfather was an important music conductor), it is not surprising this sarcastic criticism of the censorship that Catholicism imposed on some performative practices of dance and music.

In addition to the reminiscences that are visible in *Paradise – Private Collection*'s figural work, we can trace an evident chromatic influence between these iconographic representations and the colors used in the choreography's costumes. Noteworthy are the red, purple and gold colors of Marlene's cover, which evoke the colors of God's garment in several paintings of the Last Judgment and Paradise, but also the illustrations depicting Dante in his journey in the *Divine Comedy*. Therefore, these are colors attached not only to the representation of divine figures, but also of poets and artists themselves, as it is the case of Marlene, the creator of her own paradise.

Furthermore, the black color that we see in the performers' costumes and in the black paintings that cover part of their bodies evoke, firstly, the dark figures as demons that populate several biblical representations, and the terrifying somber and dark landscapes that serve as a background in several representations of purgatory and hell, namely, in right-hand panel of Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*, on in the register of the damned in Torcello's *Last Judgment* mosaic. The blue color that paints the tongues of the hybrid creatures surrounding Marlene also recalls the colors of devils and other hybrid beings, between the human and the animal, that populate the representations of these damned.

In addition, blue is also the color of the Blue Meanies in Beatles' film The Yellow Submarine. The Blue Meanies imprison Pepperland by immobilizing all music players, whether classical music (high culture, or musical compositions that use orchestration) or vernacular music (popular forms of music, also including pop, jazz, dance, or rock-and-roll

music). The Blue Meanies' big blue glove (fig. 98-9) with the pointed index finger destroys all musical instruments that symbolize the enchanting power of music, as well as it freezes the figures involved in pleasurable activities around music and dance. This glove as figure also finds resonance in Marlene's choreography in the gloves that performers use, highlighting their hands' gestuality. In the film, The Beatles free Pepperland by releasing all musicians, uniting the groups represented by classical and vernacular musical codes, transmitting a message towards an idealistic goal that has music as a redemption apparatus.

Regarding the yellow spotlights that punctuate the dance stage suspended on metal rods, they recall both the star representations of the celestial sky that we see, for example, in Giotto's *Last Judgment*, or in the engravings that accompany the first printings of Dante's *Divine Comedy* (fig. 90).

Other examples of representations of paradise can be found, namely, in the work of the German Renaissance painter Lucas Cranach the Elder, who painted several works entitled *Garden of Eden* (1530), depicting biblical mythical scenes around the theme. Hence, in a wide exotic green landscape we depict Jehovah imposing the prohibition on Adam and Eve, but also scenes of the creation of Adam, the creation of Eve from Adam's rib, the fall of man, the discovery of the sin and the expulsion from paradise. In this painting, the green and fertile landscape stands out, as well as the peaceful coexistence between Adam and Eve and the wild and docile animals of paradise, in particular, the horses, the dog, deer, goats, but also lions, birds and peacocks. One can also glimpse the Tree of Knowledge, and in terms of colors, the green that covers almost the entire landscape of the *Garden of Eden* prevails, and the red of God's garment marks the landscape not only in the central scene, but also in three other distant scenes.

Instead of the evoking the biblical tales of Paradise and the theological eschatology of the Last Judgment, and although influenced by its pictorial tonalities and the gestuality of its figures, Marlene's idiosyncratic paradise conveys instead a fictional utopian and imaginary world. Similarly, the early Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch's triptych *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (1490-1510) can be seen as resting on one of those pivotal moments when art ceases to be subsumed to ecclesiastical orders, and where a bourgeois and intellectual elite assumes artistic patronage and becomes accomplice of the artists, heralding an era of art collection.

No longer medieval and not yet modern, the work was painted in a time of world

travelling, of arrivals at the so-called New World, announcing the beginning of European colonial imperialism. Influenced by early developments of science and informed by travelling literature, Bosch pictorial realms also stand out for its psychological and social critical realism. According to German scholar Hans Belting, the work is modernly unsettling for its enigmatic subject matter. It proposes an artistic freedom that goes beyond the traditional Christian iconography, and ventures into the fantastic realms of personal imagination. It is precisely for refusing aesthetic conformities that Bosch's work is a key reference in Marlene’s private paradise.

In the *Garden of Earthly Delights*’ triptych, Bosch depicts the paradise on the left panel, and the world of hell on the right one, but it is the central panel which has raised insatiable demand for ever new interpretations, since it seems to be a utopian paradise that never existed on Earth, and for which there exists no tales or explanations. Belting shares American writer Peter Beagle’s opinion when he describes this work as an “erotic derangement that turns us all into voyeurs, as a place filled with the intoxicating air of perfect liberty” (Belting, 2018 [2002]: 9). A similar sensation of being transformed into a voyeur can be said in relation to Marlene’s paradise: a voyeur of a world of excess, hybridity, queerness, and gender indeterminacy, where eroticism, sadism and manipulation are combined, hence, a world of freedom where anything can happen, even that which falls outside the categories of what is socially commonly accepted.

Moreover, although knowledgeable of biblical narratives, Bosch does not aim at pointing out obscene sinfulness, because that would be condemned as heresy in a time where religious images were under scrutiny. Since he depicts a garden that has no resemblance with Christian descriptions of paradise, Belting argues that Bosch forces “the spectator to gaze upon a painted paradise as though upon an innocent counterworld in which his own standards of guilt and sin did not apply” (Belting, 2018: 14). Again, curiously, similar words could be voiced in relation to Marlene’s Paradise, where manipulation and what could be considered abuse in social terms, is simply the depiction of a fictional world, beyond any censorship.

In the left-hand panel, as the triptych overture, Bosch portrays what seems a more candid version of Paradise, where God presents Adam and Eve. There is no representation of the original sin, and although the panel seems to be colored with an ethereal harmony, strange and fantastic hybrid fauna and flora populate the idyllic scenario, disrupting its apparent innocence. Blending the realism of nature with the artist’s fictional forays into the

exotic, Bosch's "combination of scientific precision and free imagination," Belting claims, "touches the very pulse of the era" (27).

The world of hell portrayed in the right-hand panel stands in opposition to the other panels, not only for highlighting iconographic conventions, but also because it portrays an entirely man-made world in a nightly atmosphere where nature is completely absent. This stands apart from other artists' depiction of Hell, as Belting argues:

> Human beings exist here, not in natural surroundings, but in a civilization they have created themselves: cities ravaged by war, taverns full of drunkards, torture chambers where cruelty reigns supreme. Even the musical instruments are human inventions that turn against mankind in this place. Fantastic as the imagery may be, there is little here that humans have not brought upon themselves. They have succumbed to the temptations of the devil, who now reaps the reward of tormenting them in all eternity (35).

In fact, the image of hell that Bosch offers us to see—despite the hybridity of its figures as a bird-headed monster that eat and defect humans, or musical instruments that become tools of human torture, where the pleasure of music, the lust of body, the greed of the gambler becomes violence, torment, and punishment—could be considered as the reflection of a world that mirrors earthly catastrophes and human bestiality.

Claiming a bizarre pictorial world as his own imagination, Bosch metamorphosis between realism, allegory and the grotesque are evident not only in the figure of the tree man, but also in a fat pig wearing a nun veil trying to seduce a man, just one of the commentaries on the sinful behavior of the Church, presaging the Reformation controversy (44).

According to Belting, when called to comment the issues of the day, artists and poets favored ambiguity to express themselves (96). One can find similarities of the themes Bosch addresses in his work in some literary oeuvres of his time, namely, Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools* (1494)—with affinities in Bosch satirical social portraits—or Erasmus of Rotterdam's *The Praise of Folly* (1509), whose fictional and poetic rendering of an imaginary paradise can be compared to Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*. In both cases, the authors create fictional characters to convey messages in disguise. It is, in fact, the recourse of fiction and ambiguity that frees these literary authors, as well as Bosch, from institutional or religious repressions.

In Bosch's work we can see echoes of *The Ship of Fools*, a satire of the world where fools are on the fringe of hell, only realizing it when they have already step into its threshold. Foucault also commented this work in his genealogy of madness, demonstrating how the

madman's behavior was compared to the animals' bestiality, cataloged in sexual promiscuity, social deviancy, and heresy, among others. In Erasmus' *The Praise of Folly*, folly appears not as "a sin, but the ineluctable law of life," as Belting adds, since only "by accepting one's folly is it possible to avoid the imagined wisdom that is the worst kind of illusions" (Belting, 2018: 96). One cannot claim direct resemblances between literary works and painting. However, by also portraying his fictional invention of a paradise lost with no religious utility, Bosch created a work that heralded the era of art for art collectors, who became accomplices of the artist's genius, art forms that start to take "significance as *mirabilia*, things to be marvelled at" (97).

Just as Thomas More presented in his *Utopia* (1516), a no-place beyond the real world, Bosch central scene of the *Garden of Earthly Delights* also presents a world beyond history in a "no-time (Uchronia)" (98). In the teleologic Christian narrative, the history of mortal humans began with the Expulsion from Paradise and ended in the Last Judgment. Like Bosch's vision of a paradise beyond time, also Marlene Monteiro Freitas stages her own Paradise in the fictional space of the theatre through contemporary dance, opening space for the impossible to take place and if it were an imaginary and singular universe.

In the same way that Bosch chooses to confer painting the kind of artistic freedom that poetry and literature enjoyed in drawing upon metamorphosis and fantasy, also Marlene frees her Paradise orchestration from the mimesis of the world, binding it instead to dream-like imagination and allegorical ambiguity. Similarly, and although influenced by religious iconography, Marlene's *Paradise – private collection* undermines biblical authority in its descriptions and transfers her choreography entirely to the realm of fiction.

Etymologically, the word *paradise* refers to an enclosed idyllic garden where humans, animals and plants coexist harmoniously. The Greek word *paradeisos* derives from the Persian word *parideza*, also relating to an enclosed garden where Persians indulged in the art of hunting. In this paradisaical universe, in Bosch's time, there are reports of exotic scenarios found in the New World of the era of discoveries and colonization. This imagery influences the painting of creatures never seen before, hybrid and fantastic. The same happens, albeit with a different temporality, in the hybrid figures that Marlene creates, evocative of classical mythology, such as fauns and other metamorphic beings, who shift the thresholds between the human and animality, or even between the human and the universe of cartoons, revealing the extensive fabulation of her fantastic paradise.

Mirroring, or Spaces of Imaginary Projection

One of Marlene's main choreographic guiding forces in *Paradise – Private Collection* was a relation to one's reflection in a mirror. It was a way not only of dislocating the subject, of being beside or beyond oneself and relying on one's own reflection as a guiding figure, but also of conceiving the mirror as a space of imaginary projection, as Marlene clarifies:

> O espelho é esse elemento que permite deixarmo-nos guiar pelo nosso reflexo—estar com o nosso reflexo como uma forma de estar consigo próprio, mas estando fora de si. (...) vejo o espelho como uma porta que se abre para outra realidade, inclusivamente associada à magia. Uma forma de se estar noutro sítio, que não se sabe o que é, mas que se projeta como sendo esse lugar do paraíso. O espelho para mim pode ser esse lugar de projeção (Freitas, 2013, n. p.).[190]

Mirrors also have had a long and vexed journey from antiquity to the present day, from wondrous objects to ordinary things. In her celebrated book *História do Espelho* [Histoire du Mirroir] (2016 [1994)), Sabine Melchior-Bonnet considers the mirror's significance in moral, religious, and philosophical discourses throughout history, demonstrating how a rare and costly object then became, through technological development, a staple artifact of modern experience. Melchior-Bonnet demonstrates how the mirror's significance and use, from antiquity onward, varied according to how perception and representation systems evolved along the different epochs.

The mirror has not only allowed us to gaze upon ourselves, but also represented what was most wonderful and challenging about sight, bestowing a power both fascinating and terrifying. In fact, from the moment the mirror exists, there is a whole deriving universe of fears, desires, and ghosts. For the Christian Fathers in Middle Ages, the worst sin of the mirror would be the fabrication of mirages and simulacra of God's creation, including the image of humans. This negative symbolism of the mirror, Bonnet-Melchior explains, starts with the fascination of seeing one's image reflected in that surface, but this reflection could also transform the image in madness, pride, and melancholia (Bonnet-Melchior, 2016: 266).

[190] "The mirror is that element that allows us to let ourselves be guided by our reflection - to be with our reflection as a way of being with oneself, but outside of oneself. I see the mirror as a door that opens to another reality, also associated with magic. A way of being in another place, which is unknown, but that could be projected as the place of paradise. The mirror for me can be that space of projection" (Freitas, 2013a, n.p., my trans.).

Associated with vision, to the mirror were related some of the cardinal sins, namely, pride, narcissism, and vanity, not to mention heretical practices associated with magic and divination. Since it reflects an image that does not exist, the mirror was then considered the carrier and origin of falsehoods, a Satan's instrument or even a target, especially for women, whose practices associated with these instruments were made monstrous and threatening. The mirror, then, was related to a moral and theologian discourse that departed from a series of interconnected dialectics: between essence and appearance, truthfulness and falsehood, God's versus Satan's creation.

From the Renaissance onwards, the mirror becomes associated with the metamorphic potentiality of imagination, represented in the form of a concave mirror that has the ability, on the one hand of affecting and distorting reality and, on the other hand, of inspiring poets and artists in their creations with images either graceful or frightening. Hence, the mirrors of truth and vanity were combined with the distorting mirror of madness, and the permeable mirror of dreams, which presented alternative and contingent realities. Therefore, "the mirror shares with the art of painting an emphasis on the relevance of image, resemblance, and simulation, all of which are intertwined with the theme of looking at oneself" (Melchior-Bonnet, 2016: 14, my transl.)

Therefore, as Marlene refers in relation to the use of the mirror as an intangible choreographic tool, the mirror can provide that openness towards the realm of imagination and dreams, an entry space towards the projection of other realities, but also related to magic, delusion, and madness. Let us recall that both madness and the mirror were considered carriers of inverted visions of the world, and the figure of the insane and the abnormal was used, at the end of Middle Ages, to portrait the world's instability, the subversion of the real and the realm of sin. Thus, from Christianity's perspective, the only pure mirror was the divine one, hence the prohibition of gazing oneself or the other, as well as the condemnation of the seductive women with its mirror, as a symbol of lust and of the Devil's accomplice.

According to Melchior-Bonnet, the women looking at the mirror is also present in Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*: in a dead and sterile landscape that counters the paradise's fertility, a woman looks at a mirror that stands at the devil's tail, while other demon embraces her, symbolizing lust, and vanity, but also the sterility of the narcissistic woman that by contemplating herself is incapable of generating life (284-5).

Therefore, the representation of the self and the mirror image was received and

comprehended in tandem with the complex idea of the human that conceived the body separated from the soul. It was a concept predicted on dichotomies between appearance and existence, semblance and truthfulness, earthly matter and divine aspiration, polarities that also organized concepts around paradise and hell. Later, from the Renaissance, this specular mirror image began to contribute to the organization of the self, confirming the existence of the subject day after day, and beauty and nudity depictions in artworks became admirable examples for their aesthetic qualities, for the delight of those contemplating them (289).

In addition, Melchior-Bonnet argues, the mirror image and a notion of "bodily perception" has also been considered by psychologists and psychoanalysts as relevant for the construction of the subject:

> The subject, capable of objectivizing himself and of coordinating exterior perceptions with interior sensations, can then progress from the consciousness of the body to the consciousness of the self. This notion of the 'bodily projection,' the representation that each person makes of his or her body in space which culminates in its recognition in the mirror, was revisited by psychoanalysis, which instead prefers the idea of a 'libidinal structure' of the image of the body (Melchior-Bonnet, 2001: 3-4).

In fact, Jacques Lacan's famous psychoanalytical concept of the "mirror stage," initially developed around 1930s, posits that very young children between the ages of six to eighteenth months old become able to recognize their reflected images in mirroring surfaces. Lacan suggests that the child, being in a less developed physical and mental state than that of his/her caregivers, can feel insecurity and anxiety. The ability to recognize your image in the mirror, according to Lacan, can help to compensate for the infant's feeling of helplessness and of dismemberment when he/she sees, to a certain extent, his/her image reflected as a unified whole, an integrated totality similar to that of the adults around him/her.

However, this narrative of the mirror stage is an explanation for the formation of the Freudian Ego, which for Lacan is considered an object and not a subject. Hence, the young child's ability to identify with the *imago-Gestalt* of the "I" not only entails alienation, as it is infused by the caregivers' narratives that encourage the child to recognize with that image construction. For this matter, Lacan considers this recognition a 'misrecognition' (*méconnaissance*)" (Johnston, 2018), which likewise contributes to ensuing experiences throughout life of recognizing the self as being a particular kind of "I" that corresponds to the desires of others, namely, his/her caregivers. In this sense, for Lacan,

> [t]he ego is not only a congealed, heteronomous object rather than a fluid, autonomous subject, but also, in its very origins, a repository for the projected desires and fantasies of larger others; the child's image is a receptacle for his/her parents' dreams and wishes, with his/her body image being always-already overwritten by signifiers flowing from the libidinal economies of other speaking beings (Johnston, 2018).

Following this explanation, the recognition of the Ego as "me" means the embodiment not of a unique and authentic selfhood, but the "misrecognition of the subject with that objectified image as ego, that ultimately is an alienating foreign introject through which [the subject is] seduced and subjected by others' conscious and unconscious wants and machinations" (*idem*).

Therefore, we can better understand Marlene's citation on the potentiality developed by gazing an imaginary mirror that allows herself and the other performers to invert the process and be guided by that imaginary reflection. In addition, the mirror can be a threshold for another reality, associated with magic, or it can operate as a space of projection of a fictional world. That gazing at the mirror also allows the performers and choreographer to explore their kaleidoscopic fragmentations and distortions, deconstructing the autonomy and the integrity of the subject.

In addition, the mirror image as a tool for both recognition and misrecognition not only accompanies the human quest for identity, as it has also been related to numerous mythical fabulations, namely, the several versions of the myth of Echo and Narcissus;[191] or given rise to literary works around the magical and creative power of mirrors, such as in Lewis Carrol's *Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There* (1871) the sequel of Carrol's much-celebrated *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865).

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[191] In the classical version of the myth of Echo and Narcissus found, namely, in Book 3 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, one encounters already the premonition that one's image reflected on a mirrored surface can bring deadly dangers. Narcissus was a beautiful young hunter in Greek Mythology, and although many fell in love with them, he only showed disdain and contempt. The Oread nymph Echo also fell for him, but after being despised and rejected by Narcissus, she spent the rest of her life wandering in the woods in regrets, leaving only the echo of her existence. Nemesis, the goddess of revenge punished Narcissus. On a summer day, a thirsty Narcissus approached a pond to drink water and fell deeply in love with his own image, although not realizing it was a mere reflection. Unable to leave that seductive image, when he realized his love could not be reciprocated, in Ovid's version of the myth, he melts away with the fire of passion and metamorphose into a flower, and in other versions, he commits suicide, or drawn while trying to embrace his own beloved reflection (Britannica, 2019, accessed May 14, 2021). This myth gave rise to the psychological term of "narcissism," considered to be a fixation on oneself's image and public perception. The German psychiatrist Paul Näcke (1851-1913) coined the German term *Narzissismus* [Narcissismus] in his "Die Sexuellen Perversitäten (1899), comparing the term previously suggested by Havelock Ellis, in relation to the Greek myth of Narcissus, expressing an inflated self-image, a reactive behaviour when the narcissistic self-confidence is threatened, and a tendency to take others for granted (Brittanica, 2019, accessed May 14, 2021).

The myth of Eco and Narcissus evokes the dangers resulting from the subject's obsessive fascination with his/her reflection or self-image. This exacerbated fixation in the subject's self-image and public perception can result, as the various versions of the myth tragically suggest, in the subject's dissolution, either through metamorphosis, through despair and suicide, or through drowning in an attempt to grasp that loved mirror reflection.

In Carrol's *Through the Looking Glass*, Alice enters a fantastic world, this time by climbing through a mirror into a world that she cannot see beyond. There she finds that, just like a reflection, everything is reversed, including logic (for example, running helps one remains stationary, walking away from something brings one towards it, chessmen are alive, and so on). According to Hélène Cixous and Marie Maclean introduction to Lewis Carrol's *Through the Looking Glass and The Hunting of the Snark*, this novel is not only the story of a mirror surface between game and dream, but it is also "the mantle of drama which obsessive features produce from the very first a strongly symbolic space" (Cixous, Maclean, 1982: 238). Moreover, Cixous and Maclean claim how the book's title already lends it to multiple interpretations: either Alice sees through the mirror, or Alice is seen through the mirror, or even, Alice sees herself seeing through the mirror. Thus, the looking glass, or the mirror, embodies diverse possibilities: it can be the "glass for seeing, the glass to be seen, the glass which sees, the glass where I see myself seeing, and seeing myself seeing myself" (*idem*).

Furthermore, in this journey through the mirror, Alice opens a gap in the world of adults and Western rationality, for dreams and desires to be reborn on the other side of the mirror, in a world of fantasy, of the imaginary, in a universe free from the penalties of guilt and causality, where non-logic prevails. However, to get there Alice engages in a transgression, which is not without risks since she sees herself projected in another world whose rules she does not know, with inverted geometries, with spaces that recede as she approaches, with a time that goes back instead of moving forward. In this mode of existence of discontinuity and instability, Alice realizes that she herself exists only as a mirror reflection, as a projection of the other. There, identity is fragile and intangible and just one breath is enough for madness to slip into delirium. In fact, the mirror is that surface between the realm of real life and rationality, whereas the other side is the realm of dreams or of the artist's imagination. Therefore, as Melchior-Bonnet refers, "the one who settles in a long-term way over there, risks falling into madness" (Melchior-Bonnet, 2016: 357). This notion of the mirror as a space of otherness, madness, magic, and unlimited imaginary possibilities comes closer to the notion

of the mirror as an opening to fictional realms, so kin to Marlene Monteiro Freitas' work.

The artist Francis Bacon, another strong influence for Marlene's work, also has a series of portraits that use mirrors, where these objects can be anything except a reflecting surface. In *The Logic of Sensation* (2003 [1981]), Gilles Deleuze elaborates how mirrors in Bacon's paintings are not experienced in the same way as in Lewis Carrol's literary works, as a threshold one can cross in order to find what exists behind. On the contrary, Deleuze argues, "nothing is behind the mirror, everything is inside it. The body seems to elongate, flatten, or stretch itself out in the mirror, just as it contracted itself by going through the hole." (Deleuze, 2003: 18).

In the same way, the thickness of the mirrors in Bacon's paintings, heralding a self that is fragmented, dismembered and out of joint, acts as an imagined device for deformation in Marlene's choreographed figures. We need only to remember the strange and animalistic grimaces that Marlene operates in her own face when she approaches the front stage, as if she is gazing a mirror. In fact, we realize that there is a filter between her gaze and the audiences' gaze, an invisible surface she stares at. It could possibly be that thick mirror that reciprocates images of duplicity, of illusion and, eventually, of madness, exploring something similar to what Deleuze claims in regard to Bacon's figures: "(…) the Figure is contracted or dilated in order to pass through a hole or into the mirror; it experiences an extraordinary becoming-animal in a series of screaming transformations" (Deleuze, 2003: 32).

After that choreographic moment, Marlene abandons that hypnotic state of gazing at the mirror and returns to her hybrid beings. However, that dialogue/monologue with her imaginary reflection evokes the inseparability in her work between the conscious and the unconscious, the visible and the invisible, the rational and the irrational, and the impossible convergence between what she performs and what the spectator sees.

Image Dissociation and Formless Resemblance in Freitas' Paradise

In films such as Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), or in the later unfinished film *L'Enfer* (1964) de Jean Jacques Clouzot — two key imagery references for Marlene's *Paradise - Private Collection* — the exploration of cinematic processes of dissociation may have influenced Marlene's choreographic methodology for their parallel with the dream-work operations (extensively analyzed in Part II), namely, the strategies of

simultaneous contradiction, condensation, and dislocation.

This process of dissociation, according to scholar Elisabeth Lyon in her essay *Luis Bunuel: The Process of Dissociation in Three Films* (1973), is probably one of the most important legacies of the surrealist movement in cinema, even if already explored before in literature and theater by authors such as Alfred Jarry, Edgar Alan Poe, Rimbaud, Mallarmé or Artaud. Hence, the surrealist process of dissociation, according to Lyon's reading of Breton, implies the haphazard placing together of two oppositional elements or realities, creating shock and surprise in the spectator (Lyon, 1973: 45). Moreover, Lyon refers, "for this random assemblage not to remain just an assemblage, the juxtaposition must produce a transformation in the relationship between the elements within the image and between the beholder and the object" (*idem*), producing that effect of shock and strangeness. In dance this process of dissociation involves not only placing together disparate forms, materials, and body-images, but the unexpected manipulation of body, space, time, and movement.

In Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou*, a film that departed from the unexpected assemblage of dream-images by both Buñuel and Dali, the most obvious dissociative processes are the use of semi-automatic images translated from the realm of dreamlike subjective reality which function as a series of gags that unable any rational comprehension of the whole. The film begins innocently as a fairy tale with a calm and reassuring atmosphere, when the spectator is suddenly interrupted by the now much-celebrated shocking image of the razor cutting the young woman's eyeball. According to Lyon, the shock wave that initiates here and continues along the film results, precisely, from the contrasting series of disparate images, which defy any rational comprehension and proceed as a montage of grotesque and incongruous dream-like images: "the ants crawling from the palm of the man's hand, the pianos, dead donkeys and priests tied together, the androgynous playing with the severed hand, the man with bloody saliva drooling from his mouth and he fondles the girl" (46).

In addition, another tool used by Buñuel to increase tension, and which we also see very clearly in Marlene's choreography, is the careful selection of music that acquires such a strong presence that undermines the image predominance, emphasizing the absurd of the sequences. Similarly, Marlene also uses unexpected music changes, cuts and volume alterations that dislocate the acoustic equivalence with the movement and the body images. Let us just recall that the first mirroring scene where Marlene establishes a visual monologue with her own reflection is a brief silent moment that makes the transition from Messiaen to the

ecstatic solo by Andreas Merk singing *Psycho Killer* (1977), by Talking Heads. The polyphonic universe of this paradise goes hand in hand with the polysemic and fertile symbolism of all its elements, especially due to the disparity caused by the simultaneity of opposites and the hybrid figures the choreographer creates.

As in *Un Chien Andalou*, also in Marlene's *Paradise* the spectator tries, although unsuccessfully, to establish connections between the incongruous scenes in the choreography. In the same way that Buñuel manages to translate into cinematic terms the fantastic dreamlike universe, alienating and disorienting the spectator, Marlene invites the public to an uncanny dislocating version of a paradise that is more shocking and disturbing than pacifying, contrary to what one could initially fantasize regarding such a peaceful theme.

Another film that was also influential for Marlene's *Paradise* is the 1964 unfinished film *L'Enfer* de Henri-Georges Clouzot, a film that in parallel to some surrealist films, instead of representing something, it was thought from the beginning to function as that which it wishes to reflect upon: the psychological and insane *enfer* [hell] of jealousy. Exploring the boundaries of human cognition and emotional imbalance, Clouzot questions the ontological limits of a jealous male subject Marcel towards his married wife Odette, whom he suspects of infidelity. Through uncanny and hallucinatory dissociations, Clouzot experiments how the limits of human delirium and irrationality reaching the threshold of madness could be transposed into the film's structure, texture, color and sound itself. The result, according to Marion Schmid, is a film in an intermedial relation with visual arts, literature and sound experiments that tries to capture "the monstrous proliferation of thought, aural and visual distortions, (…) the sensory-driven conception of time," inspiring its "narrative and spatio-temporal organization" (Schmid, 2014: 79). Hence, like some surrealist films, *L'Enfer* oscillates in the permeable temporal boundaries between images of the present and memories of the past. Therefore, Clouzot breaks free from the traditional linear sequences of the plot, "in favor of an associative narrative driven by memory and sensory experience, in which the [male subject] protagonist (and the viewer) navigates space and time freely" (80).

According to Schmid, *L'Enfer* can be related to what Deleuze called the 'time-image,' as a tradition of modern cinema in the second half of the twentieth century that eschewed "the action and causality-driven plots of the mainstream to embrace more complex phenomena of memory, time, perception, and human consciousness and subjectivity" (Schmid, 2014: 81). Echoing the uncanny terror and horror of images of dismembered bodies, when

Marcel approaches sleeping Odette, her figure seems distorted and decomposed into parts, before morphing into a grotesque hybrid and abstract figure, in between plant, human and metal.

As in the several pictorial descriptions of paradise, of purgatory and hell depicted in paintings and literature as nightmarish fantasies and impossible worlds of delirium, Marlene also welcomes from *L'Enfer* how fictional and hallucinatory mental images can be transformed into alluring and richly textured performed images of delusion. Dislocating any possible connection with objective reality, she exposes through choreography not only the wonders of fictional worlds, but also the tortuous realm of human subjectivity, hence dislocating, once more, the rational and moral predicates of the Western modern autonomous subject.

In addition, through a philosophical lens, Marlene's choreographic work can also be related to Bataille's concept of *l'informe*, translated into English as formless, an anti-categorical operation with the purpose of unravelling the stability of meaning.

Although a direct translation between the realm of visual montage to dance would be impossible, we can consider choreography as a fertile terrain similar to Bataille's magazine-project *Documents*. The interaction between text and images, as well as the relation in-between images in *Documents* was complicated and unexpected. The use of formless resemblance drew visual and thematic parallels, hilarious and shocking, undermining categories, and rational comprehension. In the case of Marlene's choreographies, and Paradise is a good example, the sequence and unforeseen montage of disparate dance scenes and figures also operate as strategies for destabilizing and undermining categorical determinations, echoing uncannily in the realm of unrelated ideas. In fact, choosing a theme with such a strong iconographic legacy in the history of so-called Western culture, and infiltrate it with elements of certain cultures, which at times were also the target of censorship by a once more orthodox Catholicism — namely, performative practices of African and Cape Verdean influence, such as kuduro, batucada, or samba — is nonetheless a challenging gesture that displaces univocal categorical perspectives of a so-called Western epistemological ground.

In Georges Didi-Huberman's book *La Ressemblance Informe ou le gai savoir selon Georges Bataille* (1995), the author elaborates on Bataille's thought departing from his project *Documents*, suggesting a deliberate strategy where forms, placed in juxtaposition, *de-form* themselves (Didi-Huberman, 2006: 36). In *Documents*, the reader is invited to establish connections between images placed in different articles without any aesthetic or art history

explanation. The strategy aims not only at triggering the viewer to uncover possible missing links, but also to confuse rather than elucidating.

In the 1929 critical dictionary section of Documents 7, Bataille devoted an article on "Informe," proposing that figures can exist where formless is present:

> Un dictionnaire commencerait à partir du moment où il ne donnerait plus le sens mais les besognes des mots. Ainsi informe n'est pas seulement un adjective ayant tel sens mais un terme servant à déclasser, exigeant généralement que chaque chose ait as forme. Ce qu'il designe n'a ses droits dans aucun sens et se fait écraser partout comme une araignée ou un ver de terre. Il faudrait en effet, pour que les hommes académiques soient contents, que l'univers prenne forme. La philosophie entire n'a pas d'autre but: il s'agit de donner une redingote à ce qui est, une redingote mathématique. Par contre, affirmer que l'univers ne ressemble à rien et n'est qu'informe revient à dire que l'univers est chaque chose comme une araignée ou un crachat (Bataille, 1929: 382).[192]

In the iconographic and richly illustrated magazine *Documents*, as Michel Leiris would have said, "Bataille played, after all, the game" (Didi-Huberman, 2015 [1995]: 22). A game where Bataille could simultaneously question practically and theoretically the notion of resemblance, that is, the most evident visual relationship, and perhaps the most disconcerting, of one's daily relationship with images. Thus, *Documents* allows Bataille to test and subsume the notion of resemblance through experiences and metamorphosis, first, textually—questioning theoretical assumptions of resemblance in essays placed in relation—and secondly, in *Documents*' figural work, through which Bataille embarks on an "amazing network of relationships, of explicit or explosive contacts, of true and false similarities, of false and true dissimilarities..." (Didi-Huberman, 2015: 23, my transl.).

In *Documents*, Bataille could be able to tear apart resemblance, or even to tear down "the focalizing regime of the image," proposing a regime that "would tend to the mobility and criticism of all image substantiality," a regime that would suggest a visual "*gay savoir*," where "images could be felt as indefinitely (...) new, provocative, and affirmative - albeit distressing, albeit tearing, cruel and screaming "(Didi-Huberman, 2015: 21, my transl.). Proposing what Didi-Huberman refers to as a "museum of deviation," Bataille opens space

[192] In the section "Dictionary" of Documents 7, 1929, p. 382, one can read Bataille's definition of "Formless": "A dictionary begins when it no longer gives the meaning of words, but their tasks. Thus, *formless* is not only an adjective having a given meaning, but a term that serves to bring things down in the world, generally requiring that each thing have its form. What it designates has no rights in any sense and gets itself squashed everywhere, like a spider or an earthworm. In fact, for academic men to be happy, the universe would have to take shape. All of philosophy has no other goal: it is a matter of giving a frock coat to what is, a mathematical frock coat. On the other hand, affirming that the universe resembles nothing and is only *formless* amounts to saying that the universe is something like a spider or spit" (Bataille, 1985: 31).

for what could be considered a counter-history of art, where images seem to appear as objects found randomly, placed side by side without an apparent relationship of continuity. This would be no less than a principle of insubordination that claimed not the possibilities of the imagination advocated by Breton's surrealism, but "the impossibility of the real" in a critical operation in which *informe*, or formless, more than transgression of form was also claimed against all Western philosophy. According to Didi-Huberman, in Bataille's thought "form and transgression owe each other the density of their being," as well as "taboos are meant to be violated" (28). This transgression in Bataille, Didi-Huberman argues, "is not a refusal, but the opening of body to body, of a critical attack, in the very place of what will end, in such a shock, transgressed" (*idem*).

Marlene's choreographies, namely, this *Paradise – Private Collection*, also negotiate around assumptions of resemblance and formless transgression, because its figures, movements and gestuality will never stop resembling other things, opening entangled threads of relations in-between the choreographic elements, and between the choreography and each spectator's singular perception. Like Bataille's attitude regarding images and their uses, it is up to the spectator to move beyond the obvious and acceptable in favor of an uncomfortable movement, as Bataille suggests, "from high to low" (Baker, 2006: 40).

Bataille's thought also echoes in Marlene's choreographic work, particularly, in the insurgent erudition of her references, swinging from high art history, psychoanalytic and image anthropology to popular culture. In addition, anchored in the montage of unconscious overdetermined images, her choreographic writing reiterates a critique towards logical and rational discourse, hence, dislocating the foundations of Western post-Enlightenment onto-epistemology.

In terms of intensity, we can also trace some parallels between Bataille and Marlene, however diverse their media might be, namely, in the exploration of transgression, excess, eroticism, and their interests in unravelling the dialectical circularity between the sacred and the profane, violence and pleasure, good and evil, beauty and ugliness, the clean and the dirty, the pure and the impure, high and the low culture, spirit and flesh, Western and non-Western references, among others. Bataille's *Documents* was at its time considered a privileged platform that voiced the conflict between West and East, proposing a counter-art history that revealed how Western civilization in antiquity and the Middle Ages showed a strong influence from Eastern ethno-cultural elements.

Like Bataille's archaeological interests, in her private Paradise, Marlene is also negotiating in the heretical margins of Christian doctrine, choosing foreign Eastern Byzantine iconography as a way of underlying "impure" remnants in the geopolitical cartography of Western culture where a Greco-Roman legacy still prevails. Moreover, the choreographer not only introduces the East in her vision of paradise, as a series of other non-Western references, namely, from the cape Verdean performing arts legacy, building upon a radical openness towards an irreducible freedom. Through these poetics of relationality, her dance becomes a place for questioning not only Western contemporary dance aesthetics, but also, through her hybrid figures, Western modern colonial onto-epistemologies.

Finally, all these references are just touchstones, conscious or unconscious impressions that left their imprint in the choreographer, as well as in the spectators. Her dance work mirrors less these textual readings than the critical and energetic force that works like Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*, or Torcello's *Last Judgment* cause when we stand before then; or when Messiaen's music "Les deux Murailles d'eaux," from *Le Livre du Saint Sacrement* (1984) or Talking Heads' *Psycho Killer* (1977) produce a particular effect when we listen to them. The remaining question is what happens when these reverberations clash in that in-between space between the stage and the public. In the end, that is the moment where dance really happens, opening the sensory and the aesthetic to the unforeseen, having a transformational impact on the modalities and intensities of co-being, opening potential alleys of subjectivation.

Bacchae – Prelude to a Purge [193]

[193] Please consult *Bacchae – Prelude to a Purge* Image Atlas in the annexes, pp. 409-432.

The Bachaae, a Prelude to a Timeless Purge

From the sound of trumpets playing a Cape Verdean funeral march to the ecstatic percussion of *Tabanca* (1980) by the Cape Verdean band *Os Tubarões*; from the languid sounds of Tom Jobim's "*Desafinado*" (1959) to the frenetic rhythm of Brazilian funk; from the sensual melancholy of Cape Verdean Cesaria Évora's *mornas* to the black queerness soundings of Grace Jones' *Walking in the Rain* (1981); from the Baroque lament of Henry Purcell's aria in *Dido and Aeneas* opera (1688) to the rhythmic crescendo of *Boléro* by Maurice Ravel (1928) — these are echoes of Marlene Monteiro Freitas' *Bacchae – Prelude to a purge* (2018) — the choreographic reading that this Cape Verdean dancer and choreographer proposes of the much celebrated Euripides's Greek tragedy *The Bacchae*. In fact, Marlene anchors her proposal in the fusion between music and myth, which according to Nietzsche, are the grounding foundations for the Greek tragedy.

Marlene Monteiro Freitas was invited by Tiago Rodrigues, at that time the director of the National Theater D. Maria II, to choreograph upon a Greek tragedy, having suggested for that matter Euripides's tragedy *Medeia*. Instead, Freitas proposed to choreograph the *Bacchae* because, according to her, it is Euripides' tragedy that highlights the polarity between the rational and the irrational, producing on Freitas the restlessness that triggered her a desire to work upon it. Moreover, according to Freitas, it is also the tragedy that portrays the insanity of a mother, Agave, who in a state of delirium under the forces of Dionysus kills her own son Pentheus convinced that he is a wild prey. Hence, it is in the tragedy's closing moment that Marlene finds one of the structuring moments for the whole choreography: when this delusional mother faces her own father Cadmus, the former king of Thebes, who brings her daughter back to reason, and makes her see the tragic act she had just committed.

This dance work, then, confirms some of Marlene's choreographic lines that we have extensively developed above: it departs from the curiosity for the incomprehensible and the irrational to a choreography of figural work that escapes the sequential linearity of a narrative. It is a work that does not lend itself to a reading through language but operates through choreographic tools close to some of the Freudian dream-work operations (condensation, dislocation, transfiguration, and conditions of figurability),[194] proposing choreographic

[194] For a reflection on the subject, please consult the chapter "Freudian dream-work operations as choreographic tools" in Part II of this dissertation.

fictions that result from overdetermined and unconscious montages.

Hence, articulating simultaneous contradictions, dissolving the logic of cause-effect, and placing opposites in circularity, Marlene's figural choreographic work operates through strategies of hybridity[195] and animism,[196] producing forces, affect and intensities on stage, interdependent from the public's own emotional energies. Through these transfiguring strategies, her choreographies have the power to dislocate some of the Western modern onto-epistemologies,[197] namely, racial and gender binaries,[198] the dichotomies between the human and the nonhuman, nature, and culture, but also Eurocentric hegemonic aesthetic discourses on contemporary dance, complicating through the play of emotions the expectations of the Western theatrical spectator.

Grounding her methodology on references from various fields — from literature to art history, from musical compositions to cinema, from her own personal and cultural repertoire — the choreographer builds up a montage of image-sound-text elements, as a kind of visual and sonic atlas that accompanies and contaminates the creation. In permanent metamorphosis and escaping categorical crystallization, her creative methodology conveys another one that was extensively evoked in this dissertation, the project *Bilder Atlas Mnemosyne* by Aby Warburg,[199] which reveals the possibility of producing knowledge (or artistic creation) upon the relation between images. This atlas of references in motion that conveys the survival of emotional forces can foster the entanglement of fertile and unforeseen imaginative potentialities.

In addition, these visual and sonic references also reverberate in the choreographer's and performers' body, echoing in their movement and producing a dance work that, at the end, acquires a life of its own, and which, Marlene refers, she cannot fully control or understand. Furthermore, although Marlene anchors the choreography in the original tragic text, she does not include it in the dance piece because, as she argues, "a dança é de uma ordem

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[195] For a reflection on hybridity and its relevance for Freitas' work, please consult the chapter "Hybridity and composite beings" and its sub-chapters in Part II of this dissertation.
[196] For a reflection on animism and its relevance for Freitas' work, please consult the chapter "Animism: across the subject-object divide" in Part II of this dissertation.
[197] For a reflection on the dislocation of Western modern/colonial onto-epistemologies and its relevance for Freitas' work, please consult the chapter "Openings that counter modern/colonial onto-epistemologies" in Part II of this dissertation.
[198] For a reflection on the dislocation of gender binaries and its relevance for Freitas' work, please consult the chapter "Queer fabulations" in Part II of this dissertation.
[199] For a reflection on the theoretical endeavor of Aby Warburg and its relevance for Freitas' work, please consult the chapter "Openings through images, montage and formulas of *pathos*" in Part II of this dissertation.

diferente da do teatro" ["dance is of a different order than theatre"] (Freitas, 2019, n.p.), hence, one should not expect this work to be a theatrical staging, but a choreographic reading of Euripides' *Bacchae*.

Euripides' *The Bacchae*, a Dionysian Greek Tragedy

The Bacchae is a tragedy written by the Athenian playwright Euripides during the final years of his life in Macedonia. It premiered at the Theatre of Dionysus in 405 BC, and it proposes a fiction based on the famous Dionysian rituals or religious practices in honor of the god Dionysus (also called Bacchus or Bromium). These practices were documented since the fifth century BC until the sixth century AD, and of which there is historical record in an extensive area ranging from the Black Sea to Egypt, from Asia Minor to Southern Italy (Pereira, 2017, 11). These ecstatic rituals not only evidenced the irrational element in human behavior, but also exposed how human recklessness could be punished in case humans neither acknowledged the existence of Gods, nor recognized their superiority.

Dionysius was the "god of wild fertility" (12, my transl.), having as symbols the plants ivy and vine. He was also the god of wine, the substance that causes changes in states of conscience, which at the time were thought to result from divine intervention. However, it was not the wine that would lead Dionysus' followers to ecstasy, but the god himself. Through the Bacchae's rituals and religious practices, Dionysus would take over their followers' spirit and body, producing the referred Dionysian alienation of personality.

Dionysus was also the god of the mask and the theater, usually embodying the androgynous foreigner who came from abroad, the god of epiphany who incarnated a horned bull, bringing with him his mysteries and processions called the Dionysian *thiasus*. These, also called the Bacchus' processions, with their devout Satyrs and Bacchae, were not individual phenomena, but collective manifestations of delirium that contaminated all those that encountered them, not allowing a passive contemplation.

The Bacchae or Maenads were the female or transvestite figures who followed Dionysus, wielding the thyrsus, staffs with ivy and divine powers, in full communion not only with the god but also with nature. Every three years, in midwinter, these barely dressed and barefoot women would head for the high snow-capped mountains and hold celebrations in a state of communal delirium, which involved running, frantic dancing, and hunting for wild preys,

which were then eaten raw, reaching the referred ecstatic state. There are written records of these celebrations and numerous Greek vases illustrating these scenes, which have survived in various forms, in different times and places (12). These manifestations, Pereira argues, could lead to violent and horrific consequences, as those described in Euripides' *The Bacchae*.

This tragedy recounts how Dionysius, the young god son of a mortal woman, Semen and her union with the god Zeus, was angry because his mortal family, the royal house of Cadmus, has not recognized him as a deity, and has spurned him from the household. In the myth, Semele was mistress of Zeus, and the god's wife, Hera, jealous of his husband affair, killed Semele while pregnant. Most of Semele's family refused to believe that Dionysus was the son of a god, except Cadmus. Expelled, Dionysus travelled throughout Asia and distant lands, gathering a cult of female worshipers called Maenads or Bacchae. In the beginning of the play, he returns to Thebes disguised as a stranger to take revenge on the house of Cadmus, and drives all women of Thebes, including his mother and aunts, into ecstatic frenzy, sending them in religious festivities to the Mount Cithaeron.

Pentheus, the young king of Thebes, successor of Cadmus and cousin of Dionysus, becomes exasperated when he sees that not only the women from Thebes, but also his grandfather Cadmus and the wise blind diviner Tiresias will celebrate the cult of Dionysus. Therefore, the young king forbids those religious practices that subvert the acceptable standards of behavior and orders the arrest of the stranger who calls himself Dionysus. Freeing himself from the chains that imprison him, Dionysus prepares his revenge on Pentheus, penetrating the young king's psyche, enticing him, and feeding his desire to observe the celebrations of the Bacchae. Thus, taken by Dionysus and in an altered state of consciousness, Pentheus accedes to all the proposals that would have disgusted him before and crosses the city dressed as a woman, with a long wig, wielding a thyrsus and dressed in a deer skin (19).

Wearing his Bacchae costume, Maria Helena Pereira describes, Pentheus not only reveals his altered state of consciousness, but he experiences seeing two suns, two cities, and the vision of Dionysus incarnating a bull.[200] In his eagerness to fulfill his unconscious desire to observe these orgiastic and savage rites, Pentheus does not recognize its risks. Thus,

[200] As Pereira refers, this part of the tragedy had several interpretations: from the rationalists, who justified Pentheus' distorted visions as wine effects, to other interpreters who related these double visions with hysterical symptoms, and the animalistic vision as a strange epiphany of the god Dionysus's in his animalistic incarnation (Pereira, 2017: 19).

mistaken for a wild prey, Pentheus is attacked by the Bacchae guided by his mother Agave, who tear his body into pieces and kill him.

It is when Agave returns to the palace that this tragedy reveals its most terrifying and painful traits. Still overcome by delirium, Agave displays on top of her thyrsus the bloody trophy that she thinks is the head of a young lion, boasting for having been the first to attack him, not realizing that she is carrying the head of her dead son Pentheus. Cadmus, the former king of Thebes, returns to the palace carrying the remains of his grandson Pentheus, and it is he who brings his daughter back to clarity, unveiling the punishment and disgrace of the exile that will devastate the royal house of Thebes. At the end, Pereira refers, it is Cadmus who weaves the tragedy's moral message: "If there is anyone there who disdains the gods, let him set his sights on this death and believe in divinity" (Euripides, 2017: 104).

This is a tragedy that highlights the necessity to embrace human modes of existence beyond reason. The dramatic action shows that ignoring the mystery and the precariousness of human existence so evident in Dionysian experiences may lead to tragic consequences. According to Maria Helena Pereira, "(…) *as Bacantes são um documento soberbo sobre a religião dionisíaca e a experiência psíquica que ela comporta e, como tal, uma exploração em profundidade da psique humana, quando sujeita a forças para além da razão*" ["The Bacchae are a superb document on Dionysian religion and the psychic experience it entails and, as such, an in-depth exploration of the human psyche, when subjected to forces beyond reason"] (Pereira, 2017: 27, my transl.).

This is a tragedy that places human wisdom ruled by reason in oppositional tension with the divine wisdom inaccessible to humans. For this reason, the blind sage Tiresias had warned Pentheus against the arrogance of his alleged wisdom that defies the divine one, as argued in the following verses: "*Nada é o que sabemos aos olhos dos deuses*" [Nothing is what we know in the eyes of the gods"] (Euripides, 2017: 48, my transl.). In fact, such Dionysian wisdom beyond reason, which, according to Dionysus, is that in which one should be wise of (Euripides, 2017: 69, my trans.), was not accessible to humans, and Pentheus only had a glimpse of that divine knowledge under the effect of the Dionysian delirium. This tragedy, thus, reveals the dramatic outcome for humans like Pentheus and Agave who neither recognize the god Dionysus nor value his divine wisdom beyond reason.

In fact, Dionysius proposed another kind of wisdom than the sensible and rational *sophia* of the Athenian philosophers, criticized at his time by Nietzsche. In *The Birth of*

Tragedy (1872), Nietzsche proposes that the true Greek tragedy should reflect the deepest human emotions, and not be sacrificed by the tendencies of rationalism and optimistic self-confidence of which Socrates and his followers, including Euripides, were an example. For Nietzsche, all artistic creation arose from the complementary impulse of the Apollonian and the Dionysian forces. If the generality of Euripides' work was received as confirmation of the moral and artistic decline of Athenian society, privileging intellectualism over artistic instinct, *The Bacchae*, at the end of his career, would have been his redemptive work that recovered the relevance of Dionysus.

As we have developed in Part I, for Nietzsche aesthetics was not only related to artistic praxis, but to the way both the subject and the community conducted their lives. Therefore, not only artistic praxis but also life should be an intoxicated doing without purpose, by which the artist realizes him/herself. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche calls this state of intoxication and increased force "Dionysian," one of the two drives of the duality that grounds the continual development of art, the other being the Apollonian:

> [in] the Dionysian state . . . the whole system of the emotions is aroused and intensified so that it discharges its every means of expression at one stroke, at the same time forcing out the power to represent, reproduce, transfigure, transform, every kind of mime and play-acting (Nietzsche, 1998: 48).

Hence, Nietzsche distinguishes the subject's rational and conscious faculties from the intoxicating forces, which are unconscious and escape rational control. Giving primacy to aesthetic over moral criteria, Nietzsche justified existence as an aesthetic phenomenon. Moreover, in the *Birth of Tragedy*, although Nietzsche proposes music and myth to be the single origin of Greek tragedy, it also refers that its deepest root resides in the combination of the two driving forces of the Apollonian and the Dionysian, where each drive seeks the other to achieve its aim in a permanent relation of tension and circularity. The Apollonian is related to "visible form, rational knowledge, and moderation" (Smith, 2008: xvi), while the Dionysian is associated with "formless flux, mysticism and excess" (*idem*). While the Apollonian tends to the world of individuation, the Dionysian evokes the "dissolution of individual identity into a universal spiritual community" (*idem*), gathering human beings in close fusion with nature. In relation to arts, the Apollonian is associated with representational artistic practices, such as sculpture and architecture, while the Dionysian is the divinity of intoxication and music, of non-representational art forms free from the constrains of objectivity,

optical dominance, and formal representation. Musical dissonance, according to Nietzsche, offers a direct access to the dissonance of human existence with its oppositional and complementary divided nature, on the one hand of Apollonian individuation and rationality and, on the other, of Dionysian irrationality and formlessness.

These two-grounding premises in Nietzsche's analysis of Greek tragedy are recovered by Marlene Monteiro Freitas. Firstly, Freitas' chooses to do a choreographic reading of *The Bacchae*, considering it the most Dionysian of the Greek tragedies, exploring the circular and complementary tension between the Apollonian—evident in the abstraction and geometrical nature of the stage design and the rational and mechanical universe of labor evoked by the costumes—and the Dionysian intensification and emotional excess discharged in the whole dance work, explored around music and influenced by the orchestra props, such as the orchestra music stands, that integrate the choreography as figures.

Secondly, and most importantly, the choreography departs from the Nietzschean idea of music being the non-representational art form whose dissonance opens access to the human self's own dissonance and impermanence. In this way, Marlene finds in music the motto for her choreographic reading of *The Bacchae*, anchored not only in Nietzsche's thought, but also in the relevance of music for Cape Verdean culture itself, as a form of performative expression of the tragedies and everyday celebrations of life. For this matter, Freitas includes several musicians in the dance piece playing together with the dancers, in a total of thirteen performers that she names as figures.[201] Thus, upon this musical motto, thirteen musicians and dancers play and perform together on stage. They are Andreas Merk, Betty Tchomanga, Cookie, Cláudio Silva, Flora Détraz, Gonçalo Marques, Guillaume Gardey de Soos, Johannes Krieger, Lander Patrick, Miguel Filipe, Tomás Moital, Yaw Tembe and Marlene Monteiro Freitas. Almost all the performers are close to the choreographer, and we recall some of them in Freitas' previous works, such as in *Paradise – Private collection* (2012), *Of ivory and flesh – the statues also suffer* (2014) and in *Jaguar* (2015), the duet with Andreas Merk. Hence, "[m]usic and tragic myth," Nietzsche claims, "are equal expressions of the Dionysian capacity of a people and are inseparable from one another" (Nietzsche, 2000: 130). Or, as Marlene recalls, "a música pode tocar-nos de modos diversos, em partes físicas e sentidos

[201] For a reflection on the concept of figure and the figural and its relevance for Freitas' work, please consult the chapter "The figure and the figural" in Part II of this dissertation.

diferentes" ["music can touch us in different ways, in different physical parts and senses"] (Freitas, 2013, n.p.).

Regarding the musical composition, *The Bacchae* is the only Greek tragedy with reference to drumming instruments. Thus, percussion maintains a strong presence in Freitas' choreographic reading, introducing Cape Verdean musical compositions such as Tabanca or the Brazilian funk, performative practices also associated with a certain Dionysian paganism. In addition to percussion, Freitas also emphasizes the trumpet, arguing that it is "*o instrumento mais próximo da voz humana, da loucura, do sopro, e do vento*" ["the musical instrument closest to the human voice, to madness, to blowing, and to the wind" (Freitas, 2019: n.p.). It is also an object with an intimate relationship with the musician through the mouth and the act of breathing, and which can summon contradictory forces, such as, "*a tristeza e o fúnebre, a alegria, o estridente e o carnavalesco*" ["sadness, the mournful, joyfulness, the strident and the carnivalesque"] (Freitas, 2019: n.p.).

In addition, musical instruments, and orchestral objects, such as the orchestral stands, play an important role in the choreography, being animated and metamorphosed throughout the dance piece, taking on various figures and roles. In addition to the orchestra stands, also the trumpets, the percussion batons, and the rubber hoses are metamorphosed throughout the piece, acquiring different uses and modes, as if they took on a life of their own. Trumpets become noses, flutes, ice cream cones, and orchestra stands resemble, above all, the mythical Dionysian thyrsus, but also assume figures such as shotguns, typewriters, virtual reality glasses, phalluses, bicycle handlebars, among others.

In this process, some of the choreographic tools analyzed in Part II of this dissertation become evident. We are referring to strategies of animism,[202] hybridity[203] and metamorphosis, also evoking a criticism of an anthropocentric humanism, when attributing life and subjectivity to objects. Themes such as robotics and the transhuman, or the dislocation of the boundaries between the human and the cartoon are also called upon, unravelling any expected rational understanding of the choreographic figural work. The freedom that results from animism and the metamorphosis of objects, from the cartoon that escapes the logic of

[202] For a reflection on animism and its relevance for Freitas' work, please consult the chapter "Animism: across the subject-object divide" in Part II of this dissertation.
[203] For a reflection on hybridity and its relevance for Freitas' work, please consult the chapter "Hybridity and composite beings" and its sub-chapters in Part II of this dissertation.

cause-effect, or the use of the *Deus ex machina*[204] (the theatrical artifice that appears without meaning or context), allows the theater to become this privileged place where one may question discursive hegemonies and concepts, opening space for the unforeseen.

***Prosopon*, the Mask-face and the Reciprocity of the Gaze**

Recovering the etymology of the word “theater” as the place from where to see, also in Freitas's *Bacchae* the gaze, the face and, with it, the mask, acquire a particular relevance. The face, as the subject’s area of identification, has always assumed relevance throughout Marlene's work, namely, through the exploration of the eyes and the mouth’s expressiveness, and through her use of grimaces that destabilize the face, an area not only of the subject’s recognition, but also a privileged place to experiment its metamorphosis.

In turn, as referred above, Dionysus, was also the god of the mask and the theater, the deity who came into contact with his followers through his gaze. Hence, the way Greeks represented their figures pictorially in vases, stone, or in the theater, became crucial for Marlene in the way she positioned the figures in the space, and the relationship between these and the spectators. For this research, Marlene points out the work of the French historian Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux as a reference, namely, her study of the very particular relationship between mask and face in ancient Greece in her book *Du masque au visage, Aspects de l’identité en Grèce ancienne* (2012).

According to Frontisi-Ducroux, the mask in Greek culture does not hide the face of the wearer but, on the contrary, the mask also serves to reveal and identify the one who wears it. In ancient Greek, the same word *prosopon* is used to signify both mask and face. As Frontisi-Ducroux argues, “[l]*es lexiques anciens nous apprennent que le grec disposait de deux terms principaux pour designer le masque: le mot ‘prosopon’ et son dérivé, relativement tardif, ‘prosopeion’*” (Frontisi-Ducroux, 2012: 25). However, their use is different, because *prosopon* has a meaning other than mask, approaching the semantic field of the face. In other words, the ancient Greek word that is most used to refer to mask, *prosopon*, is the

[204] This Latin phrase originally described an ancient plot device used in Greek and Roman theatre, meaning the appearance of a god or a thing to unravel or resolve the plot: “The *deus ex machina* was named for the convention of the god’s appearing in the sky, an effect achieved by means of a crane (Greek: *mēchanē*). The dramatic device dates from the 5th century BC; (…) Euripides usually solved his plays recurring to divine intervention.” Since ancient times, this sentence has also been applied when an unexpected event of figure appears in order to bring order out of chaos ((Brittanica, 2020a).

same to refer "face". Moreover, Frontisi-Ducroux refers, *prosopon* was translated into Latin as *persona*,[205] which has no etymological relation to the Latin word for face, "*vultus*" or "*facies*," (37) and is the ancestor of the English word '*person*' (*idem*). It is relevant to highlight the difference between the meaning of mask in Latin which is related to a world of invisibility and formlessness — "*une puissance surgie du séjour des ténèbres, de l'invisible et de l'informe, du 'monde où il n'y a plus de visages*'" (*idem*) — and mask for the Greeks, which are as visual and visible as the face, only existing in day light and depending on the gaze to define themselves, as Frontisi Ducroux demonstrates:

> [l]es masques des Grecs, aussi visuels et visibles que les visages avec lesquels ils se confondent, n'ont l'existence que sous la lumière du jour, ne se définissent que par rapport a un régard. Leurs significations et leurs valeurs symboliques ne peuvent êtres comprises qu'à travers celles du visage, 'prosopon' (38).

If the mask is a face, then what is a face to the Greeks? As Frontisi-Ducroux points out, the etymology of the word is revealing. The word *prosopon* comes from the root *-ops*, which means "eye, face," and the first element of *prosopon*, *pros-*, indicates a position in space, but with an orientation that implies a relationship between two points, that is, between two eyes that look at each other. Thus, *prosopon* is understood as 'standing in front' in relation to an observing subject, or in the words of Frontisi-Ducroux, "*ce qui est face aux yeux [d'autrui]*" (40-41). These are the two basic characteristics of *prosopon*: looking and facing the other that looks back (40). Hence, it implies a reciprocity of looking. The face is then considered by the Greeks a privileged medium for relationships among individuals, with a visual language on its own, and able to interfere in the outcome of those relationships (46).

Therefore, Frontisi-Ducroux adds, the mask does not hide the face of the tragic actor, rather, "the mask is the face" (39), the mask is the god, and that significantly alters the way we understand both the mask and the actor's role in the dramatic performances. This conceptual relation for the Greeks between face and mask liberated the choreographer from conceiving the masks (or the faces) as filters because, as Freitas refers, "what we see is what it is" (Freitas, 2019: n.p.).

Furthermore, the Greek figures were pictorially represented in different positions depending on the situation in which they found themselves. Frontisi-Ducroux argues that

[205] According to Frontisi-Ducroux, the etymological root of the word "persona" could be better found in the obscure Etruscan figure of "*Phersu, un demon infernal apparenté par son nom à Perséphone, la souveraine des morts, et à Persée, le maître d'épouvante*" (Frontisi-Ducroux, 2012: 38).

figures in situations of war and of love were generally represented in a profile position since they were in dialogue or interacting together. Dead figures, figures in a state of drunkenness or asleep were represented in a frontal position, denoting the interruption of the visual relationships of the figurative recitation (161). This emphasis on the look and on face expressiveness led Marlene to concentrate her choreography on the proscenium, on the frontal part of the stage, closer to the audience. In addition, the fact that most of the figures depicted in Greek ceramics or bas-reliefs were in a sited position, also influenced Marlene's choice of position her figures in benches. These objects, by the way, also incorporate and metamorphose into several figures themselves, namely, (the Bacchae) horses, bicycles, boats, or simply working benches.

And there are many other references that directly or indirectly inform this choreographic encounter between Marlene Monteiro Freitas and Euripides' *The Bacchae*. From contemporary tragedies of sinking boats, crashing planes, to the materiality of plastic that invades the oceans and that we recognize in the costumes of Freitas' *Bacchae*; to cartoons, to the various representations of *Pietàs* (fig. 152-4) of mothers who kill their children, to mothers who bring them to life. Hence, the choreography highlights the relationships between extreme polarities that connect death to life, birth to loss, and explore the circular dynamics between them. The excerpt from the documentary by Japanese director Kazuo Hara that is screened during the choreography, and which shows the birth scene of his ex-wife who decides to have her child without any exterior help (fig. 121), is one of those extreme examples of great intensity in the dance work, as we will see further ahead.

Therefore, in these *Bacchae*, Marlene exposes not only the animality of human nature, but also all the excesses, chaos and irrationality that, once again, escape the order of language and reason, as well as a scientific and anthropocentric understanding of the world. We are certain that *Bacchae - Prelude to a purge* by Marlene Monteiro Freitas is a work that speaks for itself not through language or narrative, but through the forces and emotions that triggers on stage. As the choreographer refers about her creative process, "daqui eu tenho de ir para ali, e entre estas duas coisas há um mundo que eu ainda desconheço" ["from here I have to go there, and between these two things there is a world I don't know"] (Freitas, 2019: n.p.).

Entangled Tragedies in Freitas' *Bacchae – Prelude to a Purge*

The show starts even before the audience enters the room. In the theater hall, a group of trumpet players make their entrance, announcing the beginning of the performance, playing a funeral march written by Jota Monte, the Cape Verdean conductor, composer, and grandfather of Marlene Monteiro Freitas (fig. 107). The spectators follow the trumpeters, and in the theater room the show is already on. Adding to the sound of the funeral march we listen distant feminine rumors that evoke the laments of the Bacchae.

The scenario is clearly defined by a white rectangle in the background of the scenic space, as if it were a blank white canvas or a light box from which the performers and the objects stand out. On the floor, the rectangular space of the performance is delimited by a yellow linoleum where we see a paraphernalia of metallic objects placed without a clear order: orchestra stands, microphone stands, metal structure benches, and a small podium at the center for one of the figures of the dance piece, the performer Cookie, who will be (among other figures) the conductor of Marlene's choreographic reading of Euripides' *Bacchae*.

On the right side of the stage, we can see a mirror as if it were a door or passage cutting out the white light box that defines the background. This mirrored rectangle whose reflections denote some distortions may have several interpretations: from the famous theatrical artifice that reflects the image of the audience, inserting the public as an intervener in the theatrical piece; as a simple mirror where the performers dialogue with their distorted reflections; or even, it can evoke a passage to another space of imagination and possibilities, a door *mise-em-abîme*, which calls for the spectator's speculative and curious gaze.

The performers are all dressed in working clothes, short white or grey jumpsuits for dancers, blue coats, and dark shorts for musicians. Some dancers wear a golden rubber cap on their heads, and Lander Patrick wears a sports cap. Some have an orange, violet, blue, or green rubber glove on one hand, which makes them look like a puppet or a cartoon. On the top, the geometric lines of light above the stage create a rigorous rhythm that gives the scene an abstract, almost surgical atmosphere, as if it were a laboratory or an aseptic operating room of a strange dystopian fiction.

Some performers are already on the scene from the beginning, such as Flora Détraz, who rehearses gestures and strange grimaces in front of the mirror (fig. 106). Andreas Merk positions the microphone stand (fig. 104), while other performers using headphones, such as Cookie, Lander Patrick, Tomás Moital e Miguel Filipe, rehearse in mute mode their

choreographies and gestuality.

A figure stands out in the center. It is Betty Tchomanga sitting at the front, on the stage's proscenium, dressed in a white jumpsuit, golden cap on her head, a semi-closed orchestra stand in her hand held up like a *Bacchae* thyrsus or a royal scepter. She has her eyes blinded and her mouth covered with white cotton pads (fig. 105). Although we could relate this figure to the blind seer Tiresias from Euripides's *Bacchae*, Marlene has dislocated the spectator's expectations and the figure evokes the character in the tragedy who, according to choreographer, is the blindest of all: Pentheus, the king of Thebes himself, the one who could neither accept nor envision Dionysus' divine power.

While the funeral march sounds in the theater room, Andreas Merk says a few words in Italian into the microphone: "*e qui comincia il tuo desiderio, il delirio del mio desiderio... la musica, il desiderio del desiderio*" ["and here begins your desire, the delirium of my desire... the music, the desire of desire", my transl.]. Let us recall that Dionysius made his entrance into each village through a procession that also included music, and music for Marlene, beyond being a privileged media for accessing singular sensorial experiences, it is the choreographic motto of her *Bacchae*.

Meanwhile, the trumpeters have positioned themselves in front of the audience, on the right facing the stage, in what could be the orchestra pit, and a strange creature enters the scene. From the lateral, with the trunk bent, its size looks like half of a human and it is being brought by two performers. Dressed only in very small red underpants, the creature is placed with its buttocks facing the audience, on which rests a long wig that reaches to the ground, creating the illusion that the buttocks are the creature's face. With a microphone in hand, the creature moves to the shrill metallic sound of "Puli Puli," a song by the Indian metal rock group *Darkeys and The Keys* (fig. 149) as if it were one of the band's vocalists. An alarm siren sounds and announces a state of emergency. The strange creature is taken away and leaves the stage. This scene is so abrupt and unexpected, the music so metallically aggressive, that we can only conceive it as if an apparition of the god Dionysus, transvestite or not, but embodied in this strange and disturbing creature. The central figure that had its eyes covered (probably Pentheus), runs away, and Cookie, one of the musicians, takes his central place as the conductor of this orchestra and announces its beginning with ambiguous words that could have been said by Tiresias, the blind elder: "Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, or gentlemen and ladies! I am not among the tame, and yet no wild animal, but after all, blind

everyday” (Freitas, 2018, excerpt video min. 11’22 – 12’02).

Then, we witness the first entrance of the *Bacchae*’ procession at the sound of trumpets (fig. 109-10). With their white working jumpsuits, golden rubber caps on their heads, they enter in line, holding in their hands rolled green hoses that have a flared bell at the end, evoking what appears to be a horn, but also the Bacchae thyrsus covered with green ivy leaves. During the dance, these hybrid objects are manipulated and given diverse forms and figures: from musical instruments, to necklaces, mouths, virtual reality glasses, stethoscopes, ropes, tails, bows, or whatever our imagination can perceive in them. The dance of these Bacchae looks like a playful and rhythmic march along the sound of trumpets and the pace of percussion, accompanied by Cookie’s voice, and punctuated now and then by the sound of sirens. While dancing, the Bacchae stare at the audience with their eyes wide open and a delusional expression as if they were under spell, with their mouths over-painted in a brownish red as if coming from a meat feast. The dance piece builds around a series of playful scenes where the figures explore the potentiality of the objects they carry, mostly around the theme of music. One such scene is when they blow through their tubes in the shape of a horn, intoning the famous 1959 *bossa nova* music “Desafinado” composed by the Brazilian musician António Carlos Jobim with lyrics by Newton Mendonça, singing the following excerpt (fig. 111):

> *Se você disser que eu desafino amor*
> *Saiba que isso em mim provoca imensa dor*
> *Só privilegiados têm ouvido igual ao seu*
> *Eu possuo apenas o que Deus me deu*
> *(...)*
> *Só não poderá falar assim do meu amor*
> *Este é o maior que você pode encontrar*
> *Você com sua música esqueceu o principal*
> *Que no peito dos desafinados*
> *No fundo do peito bate calado*
> *Que no peito dos desafinados*
> *Também bate um coração*. (Jobim and Mendonça, 1959)

Furthermore, departing from the last two verses of the song, "que no peito dos desafinados também bate um coração" [“that in the breast of the off-key also beats a heart,” my transl.], the choreographer moves on to the next scene where the hoses serve as a stethoscope to amplify the sound of a dancer’s fast beating heart after an accelerated dance (fig. 112).
In fact, Marlene’s choreographic reading of Bacchae is organized upon sequences of scenes

with no apparent relation but that condense an overdetermination not only of images, but of figures, gestures, and composite musical themes. While weaving subtle and imperceptible connections with Euripides' *Bacchae*, this choreography appears as a delusional dream, where intentionalities are transfigured and dislocated to prevent any possible rational reading.

Further ahead, dancer Flora Détraz grabs the microphone and, turning to the public with a voice that resembles that of an insane woman, utters another delirium of these *Bacchae*: "Temptation… temptation. I am talking about sexual temptation, people. A lover, I need a lover right now. You, I want you in the worst way. Fuck me or I will fuck you all right now. Goodbye" (Détraz in Freitas, 2018: video excerpt 23'30 – 25'10). Immediately after this (apparently) decontextualized and unexpected scene, the ecstatic sound of a *tabanca* music enters the scene, by the Cape Verdean band *Os Tubarões*, where percussion and whistle sounds predominate, with a frenetic, lively, and syncopated rhythm (fig. 113-4). It is not surprising that Marlene associates the delirious and ecstatic processions of the Bacchae with the Dionysian festivities of *tabanca* (fig. 135-8), a cape Verdean performative practice from Santiago island, in its origin performed by enslaved or former enslaved persons, and which was highly censored during the period of Portuguese colonial occupation.[206] At the fast rhythm of this *tabanca* music, and keeping the same animalistic and hallucinated grimaces, the performers sit on benches in line at the front of the stage, and move as if they were running fast or riding horses like fools or dangerous warriors, not very different from what the Bacchae would have done when climbing the mountain near Thebes. Bewitched by Dionysus, the public can see their rolled eyes and ferocious mouth, as figures subsumed into a hysterical state of delusion and savagery. The orchestra stands metamorphose into the *Bacchae*'s thyrsus or flutes. The trumpeters and the orchestra conductor Cookie continue to set the tone, following the rhythms of *tabanca*'s ecstatic trance.

The sound of another alarm siren stops the music and the choreography, changing the scene, and the performers move the benches to another part of the stage, remaining seated in group. The orchestra music stands are now transformed into typewriters, computer laptops, or virtual reality devices, followed by the sound of trumpets that resonate the clang of typing. From a scene of delusion and madness to a scene where the sitting bodies seem suddenly

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[206] For a detailed analysis of the Cape Verdean performative practice of *tabanca*, please see the chapter "Music, Dance, Carnival: Cape Verdean and São Vicente cultural traces" in Part II of this dissertation.

controlled and commodified through a biopolitics of labor. With their faces both contracted and alienated, they evoke images that recall Charlie Chaplin's film *Modern Times* (1937), where the figures' gestures pairs with those of the machines in the era of early industrialization, demonstrating the inherent violence of the mechanical instrumentalization of humans as productive bodies. Hence, these Bacchae, now exploring the orchestra stands in unison, evoke puppets or humans performing mechanical functions, like sleepwalkers or mere robots in the age of technology. With humor and irony, in addition to typewriters, the orchestral stands are metamorphosed into church benches, telephones, shotguns, vacuum cleaners, golf sticks, penises, noses, among others. Different sounds introduce dynamism and change the scenes, namely, the creaking of a door, a shotgun blast, the flight of a fleeing bird, a ringing phone, a duck squawking, a horse neighing, the sound of hooves on the ground, among others. All these elements introduce both strangeness and humor in the choreography, ridiculing these *Bacchae*, but also disrupting the public's expectations of a theatrical tragedy.

In this piece, Marlene recovers some of her choreographic tools that we have already elaborated above, namely, animism and hybridity, when we see objects being animated and granting them other livable functions. Freitas explores the potentiality of fiction in the theatre by proposing other figures and subjectivities, not only of human subjects, but also of objects. The whole is subverted. We find ourselves in the absurdity of a dream, or in a dystopic wonderland.

The *Bacchae* processions continue to the now hyper rhythmic and contagious sound of drums, which sounds like an accelerated *funaná*, another Cape Verdean musical genre that was censured and prohibited under Portuguese colonial power. The choreography proceeds with another delusional moment, when the performer Lander Patrick (fig. 115-6), in what could be a contemporary queer Bacchae, begins his incredible solo to the sound of Brazilian funk "Ó Tum dum Vem novinha" de MC Magrinho e MC Romantico, with its frenzy pelvic movement, typical not only in Brazilian dances such as *samba*, but also so much present in Cape Verdean performances such as *batuque* (as we have extensively elaborated in Part II).[207]

"Stop that fucking beat"—we hear the voice of performer Andreas Merk, preparing the space and time for what he will say next (fig. 117). Citing an excerpt of Pier Paolo Pasolini's poem

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[207] For a detailed analysis of the Cape Verdean performative practice of *batuque* and *funaná*, please see chapter "Music, Dance, Carnival: Cape Verdean and São Vicente cultural traces" in Part II of this dissertation.

“10 giugno” (1962), Merk also embodies Orson Welles in the much-celebrated moment in Pasolini’s film “La Ricotta” (1962) (fig. 155), when Welles explains what it means to be a force of the past:

> Io sono uma forza del Passato.
> Sonno nella tradizione mi amore.
> Vengo dai ruderi, dalle chiese,
> dalle pale d'altare, dai borghi
> abbandonati sugli Appennini o le Prealpi,
> dove sono vissuti i fratelli.
> Giro per la Tuscolana come un pazzo,
> per l'Appia come un cane senza padrone.
> O guardo i crepuscoli, le mattine
> su Roma, sulla Ciociaria, sul mondo,
> come i primi atti della Dopostoria,
> cui io assisto, per privilegio d'anagrafe,
> dall'orlo estremo di qualche età
> sepolta. (…)
> E io, feto adulto, mi aggiro
> più moderno di ogni moderno
> a cercare fratelli che non sono più (Pasolini, 1962)

Through Pasolini, Marlene only reinforces what Nietzsche and later Aby Warburg referred regarding the survival, *Nachleben*, of the pagan and Dionysian forces along geographies and times, forces that polarized between the Apollonian and the Dionysian are foundational to Western civilization. Commenting on this poem, Pasolini claims that embodying the force of the past “means perceiving the most vital part of our memory, the grounding of our remembrances and our conflicts” (Pasolini, 2015, my transl.). In fact, for Pasolini the “word Force expresses a present concept of dynamism not necessarily linked to movement;” therefore, neither living in the past nor identifying with it, to be a force of the past for this Italian writer and director means rather to be “alive in the present stimulated by multiform forces” (*idem*). Furthermore, in his own words, Pasolini argues: “I see its rites and its human cycles, gestures repeated in the epochs that collect the feelings of generations, and I feel that my love today has deep roots in that Past” (*idem*).

Thus, what Marlene’s choreographic reading of Euripides’ *Bacchae* transmits is precisely that our forces in the present keep strong roots in the past, and that human gestures and rituals are perpetuated along different epochs, being at each time reactivated in different and singular ways. While the Bacchae proceed their path, here and there we recognize the two figures of the old and sage men using the orchestra stands as walking sticks. These may well be the blind Tiresias and the former kind of Thebes, Cadmus, heading together towards

the mountain to honor Dionysus. Further ahead in the choreography, remaining seated on benches, the Bacchae now appear in line as if they were rowing a rowboat. Instead of following the narrative of Euripides' tragedy, Marlene reinterprets it in the light of the most pressing themes of contemporaneity, from the ecological crisis to the humanitarian crisis, namely, in this scene relating to the migratory flows towards Europe that have made the journey across the Mediterranean Sea one of the deadliest contemporary tragedies, for which Europe and the Western world have not yet acknowledged their responsibility.

The choreography unfolds exploring several episodes of what this delirium of the Bacchae and their Dionysian thyrsus could be, some of these eventually too long and excessive. From these moments we highlight Flora Détraz's solo (fig. 118), which seems to evoke Agave in her state of irrational limitless madness, with her eyes rolled back, and uttering meaningless threats. Another memorable solo is that of Betty Tchomanga (fig. 120), a figure that probably evokes Pentheus in the part of the tragedy when he was under Dionysus' spell, heading towards the mountain to fulfill his unconscious desire of seeing the Bacchae feast. While we see in the background of the scenario a very subtle, almost imperceptible, projection of the words "King Pleasure"—which refers to Dionysus—Tchomanga sings the following excerpt of "Walking in the Rain,"[208] in a cover by Grace Jones (fig. 150):

> Walking down the street, kicking cans
> Looking at the Billboard, oh so bland
> Summing up the people, checking out the race
> Doing what I'm doing, feeling out of place.
> Walking
> walking, in the rain.
> Feeling like a woman, looking like a man
> Sounding like a "no-no," making what I can.
> Singing in the darkness, shining in the night
> The coming conclusion, right isn't right.
> (…)
> Come in all you jesters! Enter all you fools.
> Sit down "no-no," old girl fools.
> Trip the light fantastic, dance the spiral hips
> Coming conclusion, gotten off your lips.
> Walking
> walking, in the rain.

[208] Originally, the song was composed and recorded by Australian band *Flash and the Pan* and included on their eponymous 1979 debut album. It was covered by Grace Jones, who included it on *Nightclubbing* (1981), her second album by Compass Point. (Genius, 2016) in https://genius.com/Grace-jones-walking-in-the-rain-lyrics (accessed June 2, 2021).

Walking
walking, in the rain. (Jones, 1981)

In this choreographic reading, Marlene does not include Euripides' original tragic text, but through dislocations and free associations she incorporates other texts, demanding an active participation of the spectator, both through a deep critical reading and an emphatic (a word that etymologically relates to *pathos*) relationality. In this case, Ketty Tchomanga's performance epitomizes the dissolution of identity in performance itself, a dissolution that happens in performing otherness as in everyday life performance. Let us recall that Pentheus, the king of Thebes, performed disguised as a Bacchae (as in the verses "Summing up the people, checking out the race. Doing what I'm doing, feeling out of place"). Further ahead, the same may refer to Pentheus under the spell of Dionysus in his Bacchanal female costume performing queerness (echoed in the verses "Feeling like a woman, looking like a man"), in line with the multiplicity of the self also evoked by Grace Jones as artist. Jones embodies that experimental queer fabulation so evident in Marlene's figural work, when the performers embody seemingly opposite poles at the same time, dislocating binary systems, and complicating issues of gender, sexuality, race, transhumanism, and cybernetics.

Coming closer to the tragedy's grand finale, Cookie, the musician, performs a solo as a dancer to the sound of a melancholic song from Takeshi Kitano's film "Violent Cop"(1990)'s soundtrack (fig. 151). It seems an interlude, almost introspective, from the musician-dancer to himself, evoking the figure of the wise Tiresias who, although blind, had already envisioned the tragedy's outcome. He ends the solo by holding his head in a sign of disgrace, being then led off stage to join the other dancers who meanwhile are all sited in the front row of the audience staring the stage.

With all the performers sitting in the public, and the trumpet players placed laterally at the stage, facing the background, the audience anticipates that something significant is about to happen. The light on the stage dims and the projection of an excerpt from a documentary film by Japanese director Kazuo Hara appears in the background, to the sound of the last aria "When I am laid in Earth" in the third and final act of Henry Purcell's baroque opera *Dido and Aeneas* (1688).[209]

[209] The monumental baroque opera *Dido and Aeneas*, in a prologue and three acts, by English composer Henry Purcell is thought of have been composed no later than 1688. Considered Purcell's most theatrical work, it is influenced by the Book IV of Virgil's Aeneid, and recounts the love between Dido, Queen of Cartage, and the Trojan hero Aeneas, followed by her despair when he abandons her. (In

To the sound of that magnificent aria also called “Dido’s lament,” the public sees a close-up long shot of Kazuo Hara’s ex-wife in the precise moment when she begins giving birth to her baby. Unexpectedly, and making use of the famous theatrical artifice *Deus ex Machina*, these big plan shocking images of a mother giving life to a child appear when the public would expect instead to see Agave and the other Bacchae killing Pentheus, thought to be a wild prey. Instead of the image of Agave holding her dead son’s head as a hunting trophy, the last frame we see is the mother holding her baby in her arms.

This unforeseen disturbing scene should not be surprising from a choreographer who usually articulates opposite poles, or who experiments around contradictory simultaneity in order to achieve the highest tension on stage. Freitas’ Bacchae, in fact, operate as a purge, where the choreographer manages to completely destabilize the public expectations, negotiating rationality and irrationality, prudence and wildness, the Apollonian and the Dionysian. At the end, Freitas demonstrates that alongside all rationality, autonomy and self-reflexive nature, the human also articulates within what Giorgio Agamben has called an inalienable rift between the human and nonhuman animality, its visceral (or shall we say its Dionysian) nature, between life and death, hence exposed in the ineluctable finitude of the self.

After this emotionally impacting scene, the choreography slowly retakes its time, with short scenes that reintroduce humor and the absurd to ease the tension that befell the theater. Other tragedies are conveyed in the piece, namely, the one performed by Cookie (fig. 122) that recalls the final monologue by Madame Butterfly in the 1993 David Cronenberg’s film *M. Butterfly* (fig. 156).

Freitas’ *Bacchae – Prelude to a purge* heads to its final (fig. 124-6) through *Boléro* (1928),[210] the one-movement musical piece by French composer Maurice Ravel (1875-1937). Influenced by the Spanish musical and dance form called *bolero*, it departs from one single theme that repeats incessantly while increasing the orchestra, starting slowly and softly towards an ecstatic end. It departs from an opening drum rhythm that continues throughout the work, building on a crescendo that almost reaches a trance-like effect. Other instruments are added, from flute, to clarinet, trumpet, strings, among others, until the final

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dido_and_Aeneas, accessed June 2, 2021). The excerpt in Freitas’ choreography is from Henry Purcell: *Dido and Aeneas* (CD). Track 21: Dido and Aeneas, Z.626/ Act 3: *Thy Hand, Belinda… When I Am Laid in Earth* - 4:22 - © ℗ 1989 Deutsche Grammophon GmbH, Hamburg.

[210] *Boléro* was commissioned by Russian dancer and actress Ida Rubinstein and premiered in Paris Opera in 1928 with a choreography by Bronislava Nijinska.

moment when the full orchestra gathers, bringing the piece to a growing intensity, and an "exultant, if abrupt, conclusion" (Schwarm, 2016).

Following Nietzsche, Marlene persuades the spectators to relate to the tragic not through representations and words, but through an unconscious relation with and through music along all her choreographic reading of Euripides' *Bacchae*. Similarly, for Ravel, music was a kind of ritual with its own laws, which could be conducted beyond the outside real world, and resist its interference. Moreover, for Nietzsche, Greek tragedy operates by negotiating the Dionysian capacity of articulating chaos and suffering, intrinsic to human existence, and the Apollonian principles of individuality, rationality, clarity, and beauty of form. Hence, while at his time Nietzsche was condemning the over-rationalism of the nineteenth century, claiming the regenerative potential of music and of myth,[211] proposing existence as an aesthetic phenomenon with primacy over moral criteria, Marlene also works upon the intoxicating power of music and dance, as non-representational artforms that dislocate the confines of aesthetic notions of art and of contemporary dance.

Proposing a choreography of forces through musical dissonance and a dynamic montage of transgression and transfigurability, Freitas' *Bacchae* operates precisely as a purge to contemporary binary regimes, to the over-rationalized systematization of life, to fundamentalist moral structures and to the legacy of Western hegemonic epistemologies, urging for a balance between the vitality of the Dionysian and the stability of the Apollonian.

[211] For Nietzsche, myth was capable of rescuing both the forces of imagination and the aimless roaming of the Apollonian dream. According to the German philosopher, "Greek art and principally Greek tragedy postponed above all the annihilation of myth" (Nietzsche, 2000 [1872]: 124).

Conclusion

The film *Kmêdeus – Spirit of a City* (2020), by Cape Verdean film director Nuno Miranda, between a fictional essay and a documentary, is inspired by an enigmatic street eccentric figure known locally as *Kmêdeus* (literally translated as "Eat God"), from Mindelo, São Vicente Island, Cape Verde. In an affectionate portrait, the film shows that while some considered him simply mentally ill, others respected him, such as local fishermen, well known public figures, writers, and artists, for whom he could have been someone closer to a philosopher or a street artist. In the film, we see extracts of the 2008 dance piece *Kmêdeus* by contemporary dancer and choreographer António Tavares,[212] who mentions how such city lunatics, rather common in São Vicente, also embody the figure of the "other," the other that articulates the threshold between a so-called normalcy and abnormality, but mostly, an "otherness" related to imagination, to an unbounded freedom, to the possibility of escaping a politics of normative social behavior.

Furthermore, Tavares also elaborates on some of the entangled Cape Verdean triangulations: an archipelago in the Atlantic Ocean, between Europe, Africa, and America, a triangulation related to the historical and political conditions of the country's formation, grounded on Portuguese colonialism, with its violent process of creolization, and the archipelago's pivotal role in the colonial transatlantic slave trade. A young country, independent since 1975, composed by archipelagic fragments that compose a whole, where a tradition of migration, diasporic and transnationalism movements also contribute to the country's cosmopolitanism and multiplicity. The film also shows how in São Vicente, the island where Marlene grew up, a relevant triangulation between music, cinema and carnival allows for the articulation of an imagery space, of fantasy and creativity upon which the islanders negotiate, even if temporarily, their insular condition beyond the deep blue curtain of sea and sky, their multiplicities, paradoxes, and the ambivalences of Cape Verdean creoleness.

In her choreographies, Marlene Monteiro Freitas negotiates these triangulations countering identity politics conceived as crystallized and univocal, and proposing instead figures and choreographic constellations that echo how ontologies can only be understood as

[212] António Tavares is now the artistic director of Mindelo Cultural Center, in São Vicente. When based in Lisbon, he was a relevant reference for Marlene, with whom she collaborated as a dancer.

processes, as becomings, as a relational openness of impermanence, and transformation. That becomes evident in another triangulation that Marlene brings onto the stage — dance as Openness, Impurity, and Intensity — that happens in the presential encounter of forces and energetic fields between the performance and the public, conveying figural choreographic realms whose politicality is anchored in fiction, overdetermination, and simultaneous contradiction troubling the theatrical stages.

It is, therefore, a choreographic work that operates as *dissensus*, Jacques Rancière's much celebrated notion, since it cuts across normative modalities of cultural and identity belonging, dislocating hierarchies between dance genres and discourses, and introducing into the realm of theatrical perception other heterogeneous figures, disrupting onto-epistemological Western modern premises and binaries of gender, race, and species beings. Thus, to consider Marlene's politicality as a choreographic *dissensus* implies an openness to a certain impropriety, which her work expands through strategies of the figural, of hybridity, and animism, exploring the porous boundaries between the subject and the object, the human and nonhuman animality, high forms of culture combined with more popular or vernacular ones, dislocating the spectator's expectations and his/her politics of recognition.

Dance, thus, shares some traits with the political in the sense that it can reflect upon the social and political context of its emergence, and for Marlene, choreography is a more complex and profound way of translating her situated world. Moreover, dance can open the sensory and the political to potentialities yet to come, having a transformational impact on the multitude of singularities, opening paths of subjectivation that, in line with Bojana Kunst, can also be processes of "dis-identification, (…) of being torn out of the place of usual political order" (Kunst, 2013: 169).

Conceiving the theatre not as a stable place where bodies move around, but in line with Nietzsche's thought, as a space of alteration and impermanence, of metamorphosis and incoherence, it involves not only an openness to the plurality of beings, but more importantly, we argue that Marlene's work unveils the rifts and fractures within the subject itself.

Hence, choreography as an artistic practice allows not for the rebirth of a new figure from these plural caesuras, but the awareness of the heterogeneity that lies at the core of the subject, embodying otherness as a certain "spectrality" in Derrida's words (Derrida, 1993), that which is always something other and something more than what it seems to be, inquiring towards a doubling or otherness that is perpetually constituting and reconstituting the self.

Moreover, in contemporary dance, that transgression of the borders of the subject also operates to excavate and open un *unthought*, the unconscious forces beyond the cogito that nonetheless integrate the becoming subject, an unthought that also relates to Western modernity's negative side of its Grand Divides.

In addition, the energetic has been elaborated as an aesthetic quality in choreographic practices that discharge forces as tools for bodily transgression, transformation, and intensity in the theatrical apparatus. Freitas' work can be included in these practices that focus on the transmission of forces, and not in the representational character of dance, closely attached to a Nietzschean approach of the Dionysian artist that uses its own force as unchained intoxication, propelling transformation, excess and transfiguration. The use of forces in Freitas' dance reveals not only the rift within the human—a rift diagnosed not only by Nietzsche, but also by Freud's uncovering of the unconscious, by Artaud in his *Theatre of the Double*, or in Michel Foucault unveiling how the constituting of the (Western, white) modern subject came with a doubling of the human, the negative of its rational self-conscious being—but the fractures and fragilities of onto-epistemological and colonial premises of Western European modernity itself.

Thus, dance shares with the political the ability to mobilize forces that can expand or collide not only physical differences in modes and states, but also a transformation in both sensible experience and knowledge, constituting one of the grounds for its politicality. However, according to Gerald Siegmund, since neoliberal capitalism thrives on the consumer's wish, targeting emerging markets that perpetuate commodification and fetishization of difference and experience, artistic practices such as dance should thrive on desire, which relies on a permanent openness since it can never own its desired object.

Marlene's choreographic works are living aesthetic entities since their figures and realms remain open to an impermanent hybridity which does not crystallizes in self-identical subjects, unchaining a force of unknowability that allows for the mobilization of its permanent transformational potentiality. Therefore, avoiding the capitalization of those forces and changes, Marlene's dance work remains *open* through processes of dis-identification, overdetermination, dislocation, simultaneous contradictions, heir to the Freudian dream-work operations and to the legacy of an anthropology of image that conceives (body-)images as vehicles for the recollection and transmission of emotions and gestures of *pathos* along times

and geographies—thus, grounding her choreographic politicality in openness, impurity and emotional intensity, the key three constellations that cross her work.

Therefore, *Openness* in Marlene's choreographic work, as the word itself refers, *opens* unbounded rhizomatic and entangled relationalities, which although being impossible to encapsulate into stable and univocal categories, dislocate some of the following fields: (1) the onto-epistemological field, namely, of Western European modernity to which we still relate biopolitically; (2) the field of Western European art, aesthetics, and contemporary dance, through strategies of image overdetermination, image montage, forces and emotion, which allow for the rewriting and resignification on stage of other bodies and their relationalities, other realms and their conditions of possibility; (3) openness across Marlene's relational geontologies with Cape Verde, addressing the country's process of creolization and its geographic, historical and cultural traces that resonate in Freitas' choreographic work.

Firstly, in *Openings that counter Western modern/colonial onto-epistemologies*, we reflect on some grounding post-structuralist, posthumanism, decolonial and intersectional critiques of Western modern onto-epistemologies from the past century until the present, disclosing how some resonate in Marlene's choreographic work.

Thus, following Foucault' thought, Marlene dance pieces can be considered heterotopic territories that open space for operative fields of overdetermined figures and collisions of dissonant elements, destabilizing any possibility for a coherent rational and discursive ground on stage. This also relates to Latour's critique of Western modernity Grand Divides, which underlies how modern processes of purification of science epistemology, proposing a radical work of separation between the nonhumans and the humans, nature and culture, fail to recognize that they depend on processes of translation and hybridization to realize themselves. Neglecting the proliferating world of hybrids, Western modernity, often conceived in terms of humanism, neglected that the definition of the human also implied its negative, the nonhuman entities, that included not only things and nonhuman animals, but also those reified and colonized subjects considered not yet humans. Consequently, the hybridity that would make this analytical continuity possible, was only applied to geontologies beyond the Western territory and their collectives, namely, in those territories subjected to Western modern imperialism and colonialism.

The intellectual endeavor of feminist, queer, and multi-species scholar Donna Haraway adds to these reflections (1989, 1991). By unveiling Western science knowledge

production on nature and on the human subject, Haraway deconstructs hegemonic epistemologies grounded on clear categorical dichotomies between human and nonhuman, and proposes hybrid figures, such as the cyborg, as escape routes from several modernity's binaries, and as emancipatory conceptual tools for feminists and queers in a post-gender world. Similarly, while proposing hybrid figures between the male and female, the puppet or the robot, the nonhuman animal, or other undefined modalities of existence, Marlene's choreographies propose, even though temporarily in the theatrical context, escape routes that counter Western white male heteronormative and hegemonic premises.

Furthermore, in the constellation of *Openness*, we underline the posthuman and materialist critique of Western modern/colonial onto-epistemologies, respectively, by Rosi Braidotti (2006, 2013), Cary Wolfe (2009), or Jane Bennett (2010)'s thoughts on the posthuman and on vital materialism, countering continental anthropocentric humanism, opposing the fantasies of disembodiment and autonomy of the modern human subject, and anthropocentric cosmological paradigms.

In addition, due the decolonial and intersectional potentiality of Marlene's work that engages with other geopolitical ecologies and cosmogonies, namely, Cape Verdean, and dislocates Western and Eurocentric epistemologies and aesthetic practices, we have demonstrated how some of these decolonial and intersectional critiques (Quijano, 1999; Mignolo, 1995, 1999, 2011; Wynter, 1979, 1992, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2015; McKittrick, 2015; Silva, 2007; among others) have been unveiling the matrix of modernity/coloniality still operating in the present, predicted on dispossess, destruction, war, raciality, patriarchy, and other imposed inequalities.

Therefore, through her choreographic tools of figural work, overdetermination, hybridity, animism, and simultaneous contradictions, Marlene's choreographies counter the modern transcendental and anthropological mapping of the human, crisscrossing the complexity of the intermingled fields of nature and culture, subject and object, countering normatives of gender and raciality, returning the Western modern/colonial gaze back to the spectator, hence, questioning onto-epistemologies, politics of the visible and of recognition.

Secondly, in *Openings through image, montage, and formulas of pathos* we demonstrate how images, their montages and imaginary fictions are privileged choreographic tools in Marlene's methodology, opening the sphere not only of knowledge production, but also of image anthropology, and art history. Hence, for each dance project, Marlene departs from

a very clear idea, upon which she assemblages a living atlas of references (from images to musical compositions, texts, films, among others). This methodology is heir, namely, to the work of German historian of art and culture Aby Warburg (1866-1929), namely, his ground-breaking project *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* [Mnemosyne Atlas of Images], aimed at rethinking Western art history and culture through images montage and beyond textuality. Moreover, the relevance Marlene attributes to overdetermined images and to symptoms also evoke the influence of Sigmund Freud's theoretical work.

Considering images as vehicles for heterogeneous and and heterochronic ramifications of emotions and *Pathosformeln*, formulas of *pathos*, in historical space and time, Warburg proposes the notion of *Nachleben*, or survival, of pagan antiquity through visuality, countering linear art historical narratives of modernity and decay. For Warburg, art was able to intertwine social reality, imagination and affect, and images have the ability to condense gestures and bodily postures conveying emotional states, open to situated cultural and historical reappropriations and resignifications. In this sense, for Warburg the artist could be seen as a sensible seismograph, able to polarize in each historical moment, the symbols and images that would run across geographies and temporalities.

Therefore, conveying montages and collisions of dissonant elements, from visual, to sonic, or filmic references, Marlene's work negotiates opposite emotions embedded in the formulas of *pathos* inherent to these references, revealing how images and sound can be mobile, fluid, and ungraspable floating signifiers, that exceed the domain of art history and touch upon the realm of intensity and emotions, of the unconscious and the psychic symptom. For this matter, we argue that by countering both aesthetic purity and epistemological hegemony, opening contemporary theatres to other potential cosmologies beyond Western rationality, Marlene's choreographies have a seismographic politicality of diagnosing unconscious stratified cultural matter. Proposing cartographies of strangeness and intensity that articulate brutal materials—visceral, emotional, irrational, disobedient, erotic—, with organized signs, such as precise dramaturgical lines and choreographic details, Marlene opens the stages to an aesthetic relationality that negotiates with the public through forces, energies and empathy, conveying not messages to be understood but intensities that are singularly incorporated by each spectator.

Thirdly, in *Openings across relational geontologies: on Cape Verde, creolization, and the arquipelagic*, we begin by briefly contextualize the theoretical complexity underlying

colonial processes of creolization, and creoleness namely, in the Caribbean. In addition, we focus on Cape Verde's creolization process and the country's colonial past until independency, to then reflect on issues beyond identity politics of creoleness, or Cape Verdianity, evoking some of Édouard Glissant's concepts, such as "poetics of relation," archipelagic thought" and "trembling thought" to approach Marlene's work.

According to Glissant, creolization is very different from multiculturalism or postmodern identity fragmentation, since it produces identities based on rhizomatic relations, which do not depend on territorial assertions to emerge, and which tend to exist and evolve in permanent states of diffraction and transformation. Thus, excluding the possibility of a totalitarian and essentialist conception of root or origin, for Glissant creolization presupposes a "poetics of relation" (1997 [1990]), according to which all identity processes extend in relation towards the other.

Moreover, we can relate this view of creolization to Glissant's idea of the "archipelagic thought," as an antithesis to centralized and hegemonic epistemologies that tend to impose themselves to other structures of thought. The archipelagic embraces the global diversity and encourages, in a way, decolonial epistemic rewriting and reimagining. In addition, Glissant also proposes the poetic figure of *Trembling Thought* (Glissant in Diawara, 2009), a utopian thought pointing to global dialogues in which local differences are not erased, but produced, countering the danger of hegemonic discourses. Furthermore, a *trembling thought* is a thought that does not crystallize in stable definitions, that dilutes disciplinary borders between philosophy, poetry, truth, and fiction. A thought that resists being located and reified, that vibrates, staying multiple and leaving its identity undefinable and ungraspable, hence, remaining open and emphasizing each one's singular opacity. Not an opacity as uncanniness, but as that which connects us. Marlene's choreographies also work upon this openness that allows for opacity to take place, trembling and vibrating, her figures and choreographies remain undefinable and do no crystallize. There also lies the politicality of her work.

Around the constellation of *Impurity*, we reflect on some pivotal choreographic tools in Marlene's work: (1) *the figure and the figural*; (2) *hybridity and composite figures*; (3) *animism: across the subject-object divide*; (4) *animality: dislocating human-animal boundaries*; and (5) *queer fabulations*. In fact, Freitas calls her performers figures, since figures allow for greater openness and instability of play and are less conditioned than the theatrical characters, who are often perceived as the illusion of a plausible subject, with a mimetic

relation with the real. After a brief genealogical account of the concept of *figura*, departing from Erich Auerbach's ground-breaking work, we realize how Marlene's work is closely attached to the notion of figure and figural work, a process that disengages the corporal figures from choreographic typologies, mobilizing the forces of disfigurement and transfiguration, inherent of the imaginary and the unconscious, capable not of creating images, but of distorting them.

In Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, the concept of *figura* embodies the possibility of permanent change while remaining the same, as the wax material that can be moulded into different figures but keeps its materiality. Freitas has often referred how she is interested in the possibility of being other(s) while at the same time remaining herself, evoking Ovid's text and this potentiality of permanent transformation embodied both in the wax and in the corporeality of her choreographed figures. Hence, her work demands a figural hermeneutical to explore how these expanded meanings of the term *figura*, anchored in a double and ambivalent relation between the material and the conceptual, the concrete and the abstract, sensible, and intelligible, body and language, the carnal and the spiritual may become entry points into Marlene's figures and choreographic fictions. In a play of oppositions between, on the one hand, appearance, image, and illusion, and on the other, truth, nature, and archetype, *figura* is the elected place for the circular process that not only articulates the polarities of being and appearing, but also heterogeneous geographies and temporalities combined and manipulated in Marlene's figural approach to choreography.

Hybridity is also one of Marlene's pivotal choreographic tools that concurs to the openness and impurity of her work. We proposed a brief genealogical account of the term, from its complex relation to miscegenation in the field of natural sciences since the sixteenth century, to a brief analysis of how hybridity, since the early nineties, became one of the most widely debated terms in the context of postcolonial discourse for its criticism of cultural imperialism, and a response to a new global multicultural awareness. We acknowledge the thought of some of the most relevant postcolonial thinkers of hybridity versus essentialism in relation to identity and culture, such as, Stuart Hall (1992, 1996, 1997), Néstor Garcia Canclini (1995), Paul Gilroy (1993), and Homi Bhabha (1992, 1989, 1994).

Beyond hybridity, Homi Bhabha (1949-) also addressed related terms, such as mimicry, difference, and ambivalence. Bhabha claims that the 'purity' of cultures is untenable, and that cultural statements and systems are elaborated in the in-between space that he calls

the “Third Space of enunciation” (Bhabha, 1994: 37). Hence, for Bhabha the colonizer/colonized relations were interdependent, influencing mutually the construction of their subjectivities. It is the ‘in-between’ space that carries the meaning of culture, and this is what makes the notion of hybridity so important for Marlene’s work, since she seeks that in-between territory of radical openness that allows for zones of indeterminacy, impermanence, and hybrid experimentation.

Furthermore, Bruno Latour’s groundbreaking critique of Western modernity Grand Divides, and the resulting neglect of the existence and proliferation of hybrids in-between nature and culture, object and subject, counters the anthropocentric position that extends political recognition to an ever-more global hybrid world, where all entities are included.

The notion of “interweaving performance cultures” was the alternative term adopted by both performing arts scholars Erika Fischer-Lichte and Gabrielle Brandstetter to analyze how contemporary theater and dance performances were negotiating relational exchanges between Western and non-Western performance cultures. The term “interweaving,” closer to hybridity than the term “inter-cultural” presupposes that cultures are always in permanent change and transformation, escaping the tendency to think upon performances from a Eurocentric comparative perspective. In Marlene’s dance works, the hybrid intrinsically negotiates not only “interweaved cultures,” as it collides a series of Eurocentric hegemonic and normative premises on bodies, figures, their relations, and the fictional worlds they stage.
Beyond the figure and hybrid, other choreographic strategies are evoked in Freitas’ work, such as animism, animality, or queerness.

In *Animism: across the subject-object divide*, we demonstrate how the composite figures in Marlene’s choreographies cross the boundaries between the animated subject and the inanimate object, evoking cartoons, puppets, mechanical beings, robots or cyborgs, statues the metamorphose into humans, and *vice-versa*. Influenced by the early silent movies and animation films, these figures embody a freedom beyond the physical laws of causality and gravity and are not subsumed to the finitude of life and the irreversibility of death, thus, allowing for a greater choreographic potentiality. Hence, the spectator witnesses the expressive and transformational potential of a drawing that rebels and becomes a dance, such as in her solo *Guintche* (2010); statues that acquire life and engage in a lively carnival ball, as in her dance piece *Of Ivory and flesh – statues also suffer* (2014); and objects that are metamorphosed or endowed with subjectivity, being manipulated into figures, as it happens,

namely, with the music stands or the benches in Freitas' dance piece *Bacchae – prelude to a purge* (2017).

Moreover, we argue that animist strategies in Marlene's choreographies have a decolonial potentiality, since they not only dislocate modernity boundaries between interior subjectivity and objectified exteriority, binaries such as subject-object, culture-nature that were naturalized as epistemological truths, but also recall how these cosmological rationales were strategically used for redefining geographical boundaries of modern versus pre-modern world, human versus not-yet-human (colonized) subjects.

Furthermore, in *Animality: dislocating human-animal boundaries*, we approach Marlene's composite figures that negotiate transitional figural modalities between the human and nonhuman animality, evoking through postures, movements, and grimaces hybrid creatures that resemble birds, dogs, horses, simians, serpents, worms, fauns, among others. Performing the animal to unravel the human, through these strategies Marlene produces critical speculations around issues of identity, the subject's autonomy, and its frontiers, contributing to disentangle some premises of Western modern anthropocentric humanism.

Moreover, mobilizing these composite and non-conformist figures, Freitas' conveys not only an ontological hybridity, but a gender fluidity that does not crystallize in identity formations, opening space for queering fabulations, that explore a libidinal economy of desire and strangeness contesting univocal positionings. Therefore, in what Paul B. Preciado called the pharmaco-pornographic contemporary regime, where bodies and sexualities result from both biotechnological constructions and visual and performative techniques, evidencing their irreducible multiplicity (Preciado, 2013), the choreographic fabulations and the expansiveness of gender in Freitas's work embodies a queering perspective that is both fugitive and celebratory, and which, through her dance, infiltrates and devitalizes the biopolitical fabrics of a binary and heterocapitalist Western coloniality.

Finally, in the third constellation of *Intensity*, we demonstrate how Deleuze's thought on sensation, intensities, and affect are closely attached to his notion of figural work, that seems relevant for Marlene's choreographic methodology. Like Francis Bacon paintings, Marlene's works also thrive at connecting primarily to the spectator's sensory and nervous system, creating emotional waves and forces, rather than depending on representations or messages to be conveyed. Her figural work that deforms the real, distorts the visible and the performative, grants dance its fluidity and force, producing sensations. Hence, intensity—a

key term both in Deleuze's ontology of becoming and in Marlene's choreographic work—is differential and resonates with infinite disparity. Therefore, intensity connects to notions of dynamism, variability, and metamorphosis, rejecting determinism and dogmatic positionings, embodying creative desire and affect. Hence, Marlene's dance work happens through the encounter with and through the spectators, and the sensation through dance is intimately related to the intensity of the forces produced, by which the subjects (both the performers and the spectators) engage in perpetual processes of becoming.

Furthermore, still under the umbrella of *Intensity*, we unravel how Marlene's choreographic process of "rewriting" is related to a process of the dream-work, according to Sigmund Freud in his seminal work *Traumdeutung* (1953 [1900]), *The Interpretation of Dreams*, which he names *Entstellung* (distortion, dislocation) replacing the category of representation, *Darstellung*. The other dream-work operations—condensation, displacement, conditions of representation or of figurability, and secondary elaboration also play a role in Freitas' methodology. Hence, similar to the dream-work, Freitas' dance work is also overdetermined and proposes composite figures that result from the condensation of several other images and figures, as broken fragments manipulated and combined into one single event that disregards any logical connections or linear rational narrative, but only simultaneity in time.

The figurability that grounds Freitas' work is also constitutive of the dream-work, thus, internal to the unconscious and intrinsically related to desire, as Freud demonstrates, which has transgression as one of its fundamental modes. Regarding the choreographic dramaturgy, the sequence of scenes or figures should neither be regarded for what they represent not for what they mean, but instead, for the radical openness that results from their overdetermination and opacity. Hence, the dream thought, as well as Freitas' choreographic work, is not articulated as the waking thought "in conformity with the law of identity and non-contradiction," but its language, or what the spectators see from it, "is one in which identity and non-contradiction are strategic, calculated, and misleading after the effects of differential relationships, transformations and displacements" (Weber, 1982: 103). Therefore, Marlene's dance work also includes and supposes gaps in the psyche, acknowledging the unconscious as part of the creative, artistic and subjectivation process of both the choreographer and the spectator.

The third line of thought in the constellation *Intensity* addresses some of Cape Verdean performance practices that resonate in Freitas' work, namely, the diverse forms of music and dance, the syncretic rituals such as the *tabanca* and *colá san jon*, with an emphasis on Mindelo's carnival, in São Vicente. Beyond an analysis of these practices, we also evoke the turbulence inherent to the formation and manifestation of some of them, namely, the *batuque*, *funaná*, and *tabanca*, which under the Portuguese colonial power were relegated to a politics of invisibility. Considered by colonial institutions closer to an African legacy, their performative dimensions and their lyrics of resistance were not suited to the behavioral conventions approved by the local creole elite and the colonial power, motivating not only moral censorship, but often persecution and prohibition. Some of Freitas' work incorporate traces of movements and musical compositions of such Cape Verdean legacy.

In addition, we demonstrate the relevance of Mindelo's Carnival, an event that involves the entire community, from all classes and ages, from the most disadvantaged fringes in peripheral neighborhoods, to the city center bourgeois middle class dwellers. It is a festivity that breaks with everyday life, temporarily allowing experiences of collective revelry and, in the so-called spontaneous carnival, unbounded creativity triggering social and political criticism. It was precisely this spontaneous carnival that Marlene referenced for its moments of astonishment, sharp criticism, and creative exuberance, demonstrating its maximum creative potential, by subverting the established order, conveying the burlesque, the absurd and the satire. This spontaneous carnival shows how openness and freedom allow for an experimentation of otherness that becomes a true political gesture, the "being another while being oneself," which is one of Marlene's choreographic drives.

In Part III, we approach three of Freitas' dance works, departing in each case from an image atlas. Firstly, we analyze her groundbreaking solo work *Guintche* (2010), secondly her first internationally renowned group piece *Paradise – private collection* (2012), and thirdly, the group piece *Bacchae – prelude to a purge* (2017), after which Marlene received the Silver Lyon by Venice Biennale in 2018, an award for the breakthrough choreographer of her generation.

Guintche departs from Freitas' experience of attending Archie Shepp jazz concert, which produced affects and memories that Marlene registered in a drawing. In addition, *Guintche* is also a Cape Verdean Creole word that can have several meanings: it is the name of a bird that builds its nest with whatever finds at hand; it is the name for a prostitute, or

someone who has a partner today and tomorrow another; and it also means someone who lives his/her life in the present without coherent choices, and not thinking about the future. The dance solo *Guintche* is in fact the embodiment of incoherent oppositions and immeasurable excesses, with an exultant kinetic force that challenges not only the duration of her performance, but also a rational comprehension of the overall dance piece.

The piece unravels in two different moments: in the first half, *Guintche*'s figure dwells in an indomitable split movement within itself. The lower limbs rooted to the floor follow her kinetic rolling hips movement, with a rhythm reminiscent of Cape Verdean dances, while her upper limbs and facial expressions engage progressively in a permanent and unstable metamorphosis, revealing diverse and uncanny expressions, that fuse human and nonhuman animals' facial expressions, hands, and arms gestuality. In the second moment, at a slower pace, the figure wanderers through the space performing circus entertainment scenes that never reach a state of completion, underlying a "guintche" mode of being expressed through incoherence, indeterminacy, and undecidability.

To *Guintche*'s imponderability contributes the figure's interweaving between the human and nonhuman animal. Evoking not only simians and bird-like gestures, *Guintche* also summons clownish and puppet postures, bringing together face-images that recall once fear then parody, irony and despair, provocation and indifference, cannibalism and eroticism, the masquerade, and the grotesque. In this sense, Marlene's work opens the opacity of the body, in particular the *face*, which becomes a *surface* for the creation and transmission of a multiplicity of *personas*, dislocating the subject through a sequence of pantomimic. This multiplicity unfolds from the figural work itself, that has indeterminacy, transmutability, and impermanence at its core, hence, disorganizing the stability of the subject and rendering impossible *Guintche*'s univocal hermeneutics.

Grounding each work in an atlas of visual, sonic, textual and filmic references, *Guintche* was influenced, namely, by Francisco Goya's *Los Caprichos* [*The Caprices*] (1797-98) and *Los Disparates* [*The Follies*] (1815-23), Franz Xaver Messerschmidt's sculptures *The Character Heads* (1770-1783), modern taxonomies of human physiognomy (with its concomitant cartographies of gender, race, the pathological and the criminal), Francis Bacon's paintings, Cindy Sherman's transfiguring self-portraits, the performances in Jean Rouch's documentary *Les maîtres fous* (1955), just to name a few.

Like Goya's critique of his own time, satirizing institutions and depicting humans through their inhumanity and bestiality, *Guintche*'s figure also performs an intricate criticality, countering Western modern hegemonic discourses predicated on rationality and objectivity. It dances the hybrid, the unstable, the impossible and the incoherent, opening the human towards queer and multi-species ontologies. Moreover, it dislocates several dichotomies considered valid by modernity's discursive program: the separation between subject and object, the rational and irrational, civilized and primitive, unravelling also modern racial premises and gender binaries. Causing a paradoxical convolution of bewilderment and fascination in the spectator (in its majority Western, white and middle-class), it disrupts and confuses its expectations by uncannily animating, hence, bringing to life, what modern imagined as their negative, namely, the non-modern, considered not fully human, but also animality, madness, hybridity, among others.

Hence, *Guintche*'s performance, instead of conferring stable racial and gender determinations, proposes contradictory significations that foreground the epistemological crisis of meaning in the cross-cultural exchange between European whiteness and its other. Interweaving performativity, race, gender, eroticism, imperialism, and contemporary criticality, in *Guintche* Marlene destabilizes Western European theatres by subtly projecting figures and movements of (racialized and colonized) otherness, inviting the spectator to confront the expressiveness of some Western modern self-inflicted repressions. Hence, what continues to hold the spectators' gaze and captivate their minds before Marlene's performances, namely, in *Guintche*, are the disquieting moments of contamination between reification and recognition, when subjecthood and objecthood merge, in the ambivalence between the spectator's fetishism and its self-recognition. *Guintche*, hence, sets the stage for contaminated desires and uncanny feelings, sending the colonial gaze back to the spectator, who is then pressed to reconsider his/her politics of the visible and of recognition.

In *Paradise – private collection* (2012), Marlene departs from an eclectic and heterogeneous assembly of theoretical, artistic, musical, and religious references of Paradise and its opposite, the Hell, Purgatory, and the Last Judgment, by artists and poets along Western art history and Christian biblical mythological accounts, to choreograph her fictional and imaginary Paradise. Conceived as a choreographic concert, this paradise can be seen as a territory of freedom where contradictory elements coexist and are activated by opposing dynamics of repression and desire, producing a fertile imagery of unforeseen figures, body-

images and gestuality that collapse the spectators' expectations of a coherent, linear, and logical comprehension of the whole.

Hence, Freitas' Paradise combines pictorial references, namely, from Torcello's Bizantine mosaic of the *Last Judgment* (11th century), Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* (1490-1510), Lucas Cranach and Van Eyck's paintings of the *Garden of Eden* (1530), to Dante Alighieri's poem *Divine Comedy* [*Divina Commedia*] (1308-20), including echoes from Messiaen's ecclesiastical musical landscapes. As a result, in such dissonat assemblage, the spectator fails to recognize each reference, but instead, is moved by the intensity and forces that these elements together transmit, as Marlene clearly states:

> O paraíso é uma brecha, é o infinito, é o nosso imaginário, está para além de qualquer fronteira, qualquer porta, qualquer jardim, qualquer vegetal, qualquer ideia. O paraíso ou o inferno, para mim, são duas faces de uma mesma moeda, é a mesma coisa. [Este] paraíso foi criado de modo que pudéssemos sentir que inventávamos o nosso paraíso, que não estávamos ao serviço de referências e de outras ideias de paraíso, (...) uma dança ao serviço do nosso imaginário. Dessa forma, trazendo o paraíso para o palco, mesmo sendo uma coleção privada, o paraíso faz parte de um universo comum, e ao concentrarmo-nos na força e na intensidade, os espetadores no teatro sentem isso. Há qualquer coisa que se transforma quando tratamos as ideias dessa maneira. Qualquer coisa que vive dessa relação com o público, uma relação que não é de reconhecimento, mas é de acontecimento (Freitas, 2013b).[213]

Creating dance as a relationality of forces that happen by incorporation and affect, hence, not rationalizable, we risk comparing these forces to what Aby Warburg coined as the posthumous life (*Nachleben*) of a certain pagan and Dionysian experience. In fact, a tremendous energy condensed in gestures, music and in the body-images infiltrates the audience, instigating vibrations of an emotional and instinctive order, that are hardly processed in rational terms.

In this disjointed Paradise, out of time and out of place, instead of the evoking the biblical tales of Paradise and the theological eschatology of the Last Judgment (although influenced by its pictorial tonalities and the gestuality of its figures), it rather conveys a

[213] "Paradise is a breach, it is infinity, it is our imagination, it is beyond any border, any door, any garden, any vegetable, any idea. Heaven or hell, for me, are two sides of the same coin, it's the same thing. [This] paradise was created so that we could feel that we were inventing our paradise, that we were not at the service of references and other ideas of paradise, (...) a dance at the service of our imagination. In this way, bringing paradise to the stage, even though it is a private collection, paradise is part of a common universe, and by focusing on strength and intensity, the spectators in the theater will feel it. There is something that changes when we treat ideas this way. Anything that lives from this relationship with the public, a relationship that is not one of recognition, but of an event." (Freitas, 2013b, my transl.) in https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GX2eeg1pTjY, accessed May 2017.

fictional utopian and imaginary world, influenced by Hieronymus Bosch's triptych *The Garden of Earthly Delights*; by the literary-political universe of Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), an island in a *no-place*; by Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* (1871), where time not only stops, but it goes in reverse, evading the laws of possibility; by Luis Buñuel's *Le Chien Andalou* (1929) surrealism; by the hypnotic dream-visions in the film *L' Enfer* (1964) de Clouzot; by the universe of critical fabulation in The Beatles' film *Yellow Submarine* (1968), or even, by Mindelo's spontaneous carnival with its unbounded inventiveness and freedom, its *batucada* and *funaná* rhythms.

All these references combine through strategies of overdetermination, entangled with layers of condensation and dislocation close to the dream-work operations, where opposing binaries coexist and dissonant materials articulate or collide, such as, the paradisiacal and the diabolic, human and bestiality, eroticism and violence, beauty and ugliness, the sacred and the profane, rationality and the irrational, and again, Western and non-Western cultural legacies. Thus, Marlene's *Paradise - private collection* proposes a poetics of relationality that defies, once again, stable, and univocal Western onto-epistemological and aesthetic categories. It negotiates deviation, assumptions of resemblance and formless transgression (because this Paradise's figures, movements and gestuality will never stop resembling other things), the heretical margins of Christian doctrine, and of Western modern assumptions of an enclosed and defined pure culture (demonstrating how Torcello's Byzantine mosaic combines Eastern with Western references).

The dance piece *Bacchae – prelude to a purge* (2017) departs from a challenge to choreograph upon a Greek tragedy, for which Marlene chose Euripides' *Bacchae*, proposing not a theatrical piece, but a choreographic reading of Euripides' tragedy. This piece confirms Marlene's methodology, which departs from a clear idea, then to the recollection and assemblage of an eclectic reference atlas upon which the choreographer proposes a fictional realm built through strategies of overdetermination, simultaneous contradictions, hybridity, animism, animality, and other tools heir to some of the Freudian dream-work operations. The dance piece happens with and through the event itself in the clash of forces, tensions and intensities between the stage and the audience, escaping representation, linear narratives, and univocal interpretations.

Departing from the Nietzschean idea of music and myth as the origin of the Greek tragedy, of music as the non-representational artform whose dissonance opens access to the

human's own dissonance, and due to the relevance of music for Cape Verdean culture itself, in Freitas' *Bacchae* music is also the grounding choreographic *motto*. The dance piece is structured around the imagery of an orchestra, with its music stands (that are animated and metamorphosed into a multiplicity of transitional figures), the percussion and the trumpets (according to Marlene, the musical instrument that evokes the human breath, but also the blow, the wind, and madness), and the human figures, be them dancers or musicians placed af the stage the proscenium, emphasizing a close connection with the public. In fact, that relates to the other choreographic *motto*: the pictorial depiction in Ancient Greek vases, how the figures were represented (frequently seated), how their gaze engages or or not with the beholder, and how for the Greeks to exist meant to see and to be seen, even if through a mask, since mask and face in Greek share the same word: *prosopon*.

Other references informed this choreographic reading of the *Bacchae*: from contemporary tragedies of sinking boats in the Mediterranean, to the ecological crisis (the costumes of Freitas' *Bacchae* evoke the proliferation of plastic), to various representations of *Pietás*, mothers who kill their children, to mothers who bring them to life, highlighting the polarities between death to life, birth and loss, exposing the irrationality, animality and visceral aspects of human nature, close to the Dionysian drives. Combining, once again, heterogeneous musical and sound materials, this *Bacchae* begins with a Cape Verdean funeral march, and proceed by including a variety of genres, from Cape Verdean *tabanca* music to Brazilian *bossa nova*, Brazilian funk, Pier Paolo Pasolini's poem, Grace Jones' *Walking in the Rain* (1981), Henry Purcell's baroque opera *Dido and Aeneas* (1688), a monologue by Madame Butterfly in the 1993 David Cronenberg's film *M. Butterfly*, and the *Boléro* (1928) by Maurice Ravel. Hence, Marlene induces the spectators in a relationality with the tragic not through representations, but through an unconscious relation with and through a sonic performative.

Condemning at his time the over-rationalism of the nineteenth century, Nietzsche unraveled how Greek tragedy, through music and myth, found a balance between the Dionysian capacity of articulating the chaos and suffering intrinsic to human existence and the Apollonian principles of individuality, rationality, and clarity. Similarly, Marlene's *Bacchae*, upon the intoxicating force of music and dance, proposes a choreography of forces that rests upon musical dissonance and figural transgression, as a purge to the perpetuation of binary and hegemonic onto-epistemological regimes, to the over-rationalized systematization of life,

and to a series of contemporary tragedies, urging for conditions of possibility that may allow the coexistence of ever more dissonances.

Hence, in Marlene's choreographies, the desire to know, to grasp, to hold or understand is never completely fulfilled, and her figures on stage in their play of transgression and transfigurability will always keep the veil of opacity that perpetually incites the spectators' embodied energetic forces and imagination. Hence, appealing to visual and bodily memory, to emotion, to the *unthought*, and to fiction realms as openness and impurity, Marlene's dance work exists with and through emotion and desire, hence, intensities. This desire and intensities are not distant from the energetic and the unchained intoxicating force that is life, as Nietzsche demonstrates, the aesthetics as a mode of life that one could learn from the artist's ability to *unlearn*. It is, perhaps, in this desire that always remains *open* and never reaches a state of fulfilment—a desire that evokes the unbounded potentiality of conscious and unconscious imaginary fiction for the production of ever new dissonance, drawn to modes of in-betweenness—where lies Freitas' dance works ethical and political dimension.

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