

THEATRE BETWEEN MANAUS AND PARINTINS: STAGES AND MEMORIES

TEATRO ENTRE MANAUS E PARINTINS: PALCOS E MEMÓRIAS

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ABSTRACT

This work investigates the production and reception of performing arts in Amazonas between the 1980s and the present day. The research originated from the cataloging of theatrical plays and sketches that, although fundamental to regional identity, were restricted to private collections. The objective is to examine the organization and re-signification of the documentary collection of Amazonian theatrical practices, analyzing how digital preservation and university extension, through projects such as Literature on Stage and LAMCEPIN (Amazonian Literature on Stage in the city of Parintins), combat cultural amnesia and assist in the training of teachers in Parintins. The temporal delimitation continues the studies of Costa and Azancoth (2010), expanding the focus to the interior of the state. Methodologically, this is a qualitative research based on documentary analysis and interviews (with preserved identities). The theoretical framework is based on Boal (2009), Colombo (1991), Derrida (2001), Freire (1996), and Tardif (2008). It concludes that integrating the collection into extension activities democratizes access to knowledge and strengthens the link between the university and the Amazonian community.

Keywords: Performing Arts in Amazonas. Cultural Memory. University Extension. Teacher Training. Digital Preservation.

RESUMO

Este trabalho investiga a produção e a recepção das artes cênicas no Amazonas entre a década de 1980 e a atualidade. A pesquisa originou-se da catalogação de peças e esquetes teatrais que, embora fundamentais para a identidade regional, estavam restritas a acervos particulares. O objetivo é examinar a organização e a ressignificação do acervo documental das práticas teatrais amazonenses, analisando como a preservação digital e a extensão universitária, via projetos como Literatura no Palco e LAMCEPIN (Literatura Amazônica em Cena na cidade de Parintins) combatem o esquecimento cultural e auxiliam na formação de professores em Parintins. A delimitação temporal dá continuidade aos estudos de Costa e Azancoth (2010), expandindo o foco para o interior do estado. Metodologicamente, trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa baseada em análise documental e entrevistas (com identidades preservadas). A fundamentação teórica ancora-se em Boal (2009), Colombo (1991), Derrida (2001), Freire (1996) e Tardif (2008). Conclui-se que a integração do acervo às ações de

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extensão democratiza o acesso ao conhecimento e fortalece o vínculo entre a universidade e a comunidade amazônica.

Palavras-chave: Artes Cênicas no Amazonas. Memória Cultural. Extensão Universitária. Formação de Professores. Preservação Digital.

RESUMEN

Este trabajo investiga la producción y recepción de las artes escénicas en Amazonas entre la década de 1980 y la actualidad. La investigación se originó a partir de la catalogación de obras de teatro y sketches que, si bien eran fundamentales para la identidad regional, se encontraban restringidos a colecciones privadas. El objetivo es examinar la organización y resignificación del acervo documental de prácticas teatrales amazónicas, analizando cómo la preservación digital y la extensión universitaria, a través de proyectos como Literatura en Escena y LAMCEPIN (Literatura Amazónica en Escena en la ciudad de Parintins), combaten la amnesia cultural y contribuyen a la formación docente en Parintins. La delimitación temporal continúa los estudios de Costa y Azancoth (2010), ampliando el enfoque al interior del estado. Metodológicamente, se trata de una investigación cualitativa basada en el análisis documental y entrevistas (con identidades preservadas). El marco teórico se basa en Boal (2009), Colombo (1991), Derrida (2001), Freire (1996) y Tardif (2008). Se concluye que la integración de la colección en las actividades de extensión democratiza el acceso al conocimiento y fortalece el vínculo entre la universidad y la comunidad amazónica.

Palabras clave: Artes Escénicas en Amazonas. Memoria Cultural. Extensión Universitaria. Formación Docente. Preservación Digital.

1 INTRODUCTION

The preservation of cultural memory in contemporary times faces the paradox of data hypertrophy and the fragility of supports. If, on the one hand, cloud storage technologies promise an informational omnipresence that transcends physical deterioration, on the other hand, the fragmentary nature of electronic culture imposes the risk of cognitive "myopia", as defined by Colombo (1991), where the accumulation of records does not necessarily translate into organic knowledge. In the field of performing arts in the Amazon, this scenario is aggravated by historical gaps in institutionalization and by the silencing of peripheral productions, making the archive a battlefield between the "death drive", the definitive erasure, and the "desire for the archive" as an act of political resistance (Derrida, 2001).

This article discusses the organization and resignification of the documentary collection of theatrical practices in Amazonas, with a special focus on the transition between the critical dramaturgy of Manaus and the theater-education developed in Parintins. The research began with the mapping done by Jorge Bandeira in *the Anuário do Teatro Amazonense* and continues to analyze the production of Márcio Souza, whose work in the 1980s used satirical laughter to expose the power structures and cultural isolation of the region. In this context, the first theater group was founded in the city of Parintins, called Grupo RETA (Reactivation of Amateur Theater).

Currently, the Literature course at the Center for Higher Studies of Parintins (CESP-UEA) plays a fundamental role in presenting a theater model with a democratic and emancipatory focus. Extension projects such as Literature on Stage, implemented in PIBID (2012-2016) and LAMCEPIN (Amazonian Literature on Stage in the City of Parintins) take the university's theater directly to the classrooms of public schools. The objective is not only the technical cataloguing of scripts, but the promotion of literary rereading as a pedagogical tool.

By involving academics and students of basic education in a creative process where regional literature is reinterpreted and staged, the project subverts the condition of cultural subalternity often imposed on the Amazon. The present work analyzes, therefore, how the union between digital safeguarding and extension practice transforms the anonymity of fairs and improvised stages into educational protagonism, ensuring that the history of Parintinense theater does not succumb to "archival evil", but remains as a vibrant reality in teacher training and local identity.

2 FROM THE STATIC OF THE ARCHIVE TO THE DYNAMICS OF THE SCENE: PROJECTS LITERATURE ON STAGE AND LAMCEPIN AS RESISTANCE TO THE EVIL OF THE ARCHIVE

Today's electronic memory surpasses physical media such as CDs and DVDs, standing out for its cloud storage and fast data transfer. The digital collection is stored on remote servers or high-performance flash memories, allowing immediate access from any connected device and minimizing the risk of forgetfulness or physical deterioration. Jacques Derrida (2001) points out that the archive brings together two principles: history and law.

It is true that the concept of archive contains within itself this memory of the name *arkhê*. But it also preserves itself under the shelter of this memory that it harbors: it is the same as saying that it forgets it. There is nothing accidental or surprising about this. In fact, contrary to what is generally imagined, such a concept is not easy to file. (Derrida, 2001, p.12)

In the first case, the archive is seen as the origin of everything; in the second, as order, the highest authority. In Greece, the *Arkheion* were the magistrates, responsible for official documents and the first custodians of the archives. The Archons' work was not restricted to keeping them in a safe place, but also to interpreting them. For Derrida (2001), this is the origin of archives. Inspired by Freud, the philosopher addresses a contradiction inherent to these records: they would be both a drive for destruction and conservation, since all memory involves death, symbolized by forgetting, and remembrance revitalizes what was dead. According to the author:

[...] there would certainly be no desire for an archive without radical finitude, without the possibility of oblivion [...] this is the most serious thing beyond or below this simple limit that they call finitude, there would be no evil of archive without the threat of this death drive, aggression or destruction (2001, p. 32).

In this passage, Derrida (2001) provokes a reflection on the ontology of the archive: it only exists because human memory is flawed and finite. The "death drive" refers to the silent force that works for oblivion and for the erasure of traces. In the context of theatrical practices in Amazonas, this threat is real and visible in the loss of manuscripts, the deterioration of costumes, and the silencing of groups that have not had their records institutionalized. Therefore, the digitalization effort is configured as an act of resistance to this radical finitude. By digitally archiving synopses and practices, it seeks to "overcome" the death drive, transforming the ephemeral theatrical event into something revisitable, ensuring that the history of Parintinense theater does not succumb to "archival evil".

File disruption stems from an archive evil. We have an archive disease (*en mal d'archm*). Listening to the French language and in it, the attribute "en mal de", to be with a file malfunction, can mean something other than suffering from an illness, a disturbance or that which the name "mal" could name. [...]. It is to address it with a compulsive, repetitive and nostalgic desire, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a pain of the homeland, a longing for home, a nostalgia for returning to the most archaic place of the absolute beginning. (Derrida, 2001, p.118).

We live in an era of digital "archival evil", where we record every second of our lives on social networks, driven precisely by this irrepressible desire not to let anything get lost, even though we know that the accumulation of data is not the same as the preservation of experience. While digitization prevents physical loss, e-culture poses the challenge of fragmentation. If oral memory is doomed to disappear, electronic memory can hypertrophy, constantly seeking to "clean" itself, deleting information so that new ones can be inserted. Colombo (1991), when referring to the electronic memorization system, calls it "myopic" knowledge, limited by the conventions of "key symbols: the user experiences the world as a succession of fragments, the set of which is never captured by him" (Colombo, 1991, p. 41). Oral memory, although fleeting, was organic and integrated into life while electronic memory is vast, but often sterile and external to the subject.

To overcome the staticness of the documentary record, the extension practices at the Center for Higher Studies of Parintins (CESP-UEA) seek to transform the archive into a living practice. This trajectory was initially consolidated with the Literature on Stage project (2012–2014), developed within the scope of PIBID, which introduced theatrical practices in public schools in Parintins. Currently, the LAMCEPIN project (Amazonian Literature on Stage in the City of Parintins) continues this legacy, mediating the tension between the "archival evil" and the "desire for the archive" (Derrida, 2001). By proposing that literature be not only stored, but actively reinterpreted and staged, LAMCEPIN subverts the immobility of the historical record. This process transforms digital memory into organic and pedagogical knowledge, which is reflected in the expressive local academic production: several monographic works by students of Letters at CESP-UEA are direct fruits of these experiences. Thus, rereading acts as the link between documentary data and contemporary creation, ensuring that regional literature remains as a living practice that is renewed with each new representation and academic investigation.

3 MEMORY AND RESISTANCE IN THE BACKYARD THEATER IN AMAZONAS

Amazonas experienced a period of cultural effervescence during the heyday of rubber, marked by the sumptuousness of the Teatro Amazonas and international tours that catered to a restricted audience. Parallel to this institutional scenario, the local production of artists

and writers often operated anonymously. Without access to the big stages, figures such as Edney Azancoth transformed the domestic space into a center of creation through the "backyard theater". According to the author, this practice involved the protagonism of children, who "prepared the script for the show, rehearsed, made costumes with tissue paper and crepe and went around the neighborhood inviting the spectators" (1993, p. 11). Such theatrical work flourished in a capital that, in the 1960s, still had reduced urban limits and lived under the aegis of the Military Dictatorship.

Darkness was total in the streets of Manaus. The cinemas, bars, amusement house had their own power generator. People who left their homes at night carried huge hand-held lanterns, so as not to topple over with the old iron gates or leafy mango trees that lined the streets. (Azancoth, 1993, p, 11.)

Azancoth (1993) describes a vivid painting of a Manaus that many today cannot imagine. The contrast between urban precariousness and cultural resistance directly influenced the city's theatrical production and consumption at the time. In this context, leisure was not just an amusement, but an act of resistance. The theater required extra technique and investment, which made it difficult for small groups without government support.

At the Guarany cinema, when the audience lights were turned off to begin the assignment, all the lanterns were lit by the spectators accompanied by a festival of screams and whistles [...]. A short distance from the cinema, in the neighborhood of Aparecido, a group of children, almost all of the same age, improvised their own entertainment; the backyard theater [...]. The lighting of the show was done by lamps that emitted black smoke resulting from burning kerosene (Azancoth, 1993, p. 11).

When analyzing the work of Azancoth (1993), it is perceived that the genesis of theater in Manaus is deeply linked to an 'aesthetics of smoke', geographically distant from cultural centers, lacking a theatrical culture. The backyard theater in the Aparecida neighborhood, lit with kerosene, represents the resistance of creative childhood in the face of urban precariousness. This contrast between the 'festival of screams' of Cine Guarany and the search for its own entertainment in the backyards founded what Azancoth would professionalize years later: a theater that, although born in the darkness of the streets of Manaus, sought clarity of technique and philosophical rigor.

It was by watching tetro in a circus that I learned to like tetro and one of the shows I always remember. "The Lady of the Camellias," reminds me of the circus montage with sets and costumes reconstituting the nineteenth century [...]. Over the years, circus visits to Manaus have decreased. [...] The impoverished population was increasingly absent from paid shows, preferring cinemas whose entrance remained low, allowing

any child to attend, with pennies taken hidden from the parents' pockets. (Azancoth (1993, 14).

According to Azancoth (1993), the theatrical sensibility in Manaus resulted from the contrast between circus luxury and the popularization of cinema. When recalling the circus staging of 'The Lady of the Camellias', the author shows that the aesthetic rigor that would mark his teaching and artistic career was rooted in the detailed scenography of the itinerant canvases. Simultaneously, his analysis of ticket prices points to a social concern that permeates his trajectory, as the recognition that art must find ways to reach the public, even in the face of the impoverishment of the population.

Edney Azancoth's trajectory in the cultural scene of Manaus is the portrait of an intellectual who saw on stage not only an entertainment space, but a field of rigorous study of human performance. Graduated in Philosophy from the University of Paraná, Azancoth brought to Amazonas a differentiated vision, where the actor's work was guided by discipline and absolute delivery. For him, "the stage should be the actor's battlefield" (Azancoth, 2009, p. 18, 2009), a place of resistance against all types of social oppression.

In this scenario, Amazonas stood out for informal theatrical presentations, many without registration. Thus, the importance of giving visibility to the theatrical texts produced in the 80s is emphasized, rescuing the memory of these manifestations in Manaus and the Lower Amazon, in the face of the lack of knowledge of local literary history by the community itself.

4 MÁRCIO SOUZA'S CRITICAL THEATER

In the 1980s, Márcio Souza consolidated himself as a central figure in Amazonian dramaturgy. His play *In Praise of Laziness* (1980) inaugurated a phase of experimental theater in Manaus, marked by an 'atmosphere of theater of the absurd and farcical comedy' that denounced the consequences of the Military Dictatorship (Souza, 2010, p. 73). In 1982, the author took to the stage *The Resistible Rise of the Boto-Tucuxi*, maintaining the satirical content by presenting a fiercely critical comedy about "the political populism that preceded the democratic collapse in Brazil" (Souza, 2010, p. 74). Both works use laughter and sarcasm as tools for social and political denunciation in the Amazonian context.

In addition to the political aspect, Márcio Souza's dramaturgy also focuses on ancestry and myth. An example of this is the play *The Wonderful Story of the Tarot-Bequê Frog*, a text from 1975 that returned to the stage in 2006. In this work, Souza investigates the imaginary of the Tucano ethnic group, establishing an analysis by relating elements of the Greek tradition, such as the myth of Orpheus, to indigenous cosmology. In the narrative, the frog transformed into a man seeks to rescue his beloved, Moça-Juriti, in the 'maloca of the dead'. The play proposes a philosophical reflection on the human condition, suggesting that man is not superior to the beings of the animal or plant kingdoms, culminating in the repentance of Tarot-Bequê for his human transformation.

The visual and documentary memory of this period was preserved in the work *Um Teatro na Amazônia* (2010). Márcio Souza's photographic book portrays the main stagings carried out in Manaus between 1969 and 2010, evidencing the longevity and the capacity for renewal of classics such as *A Paixão de Ajuricaba*. This play, for example, "returned to the Teatro Amazonas in 2003, twenty-nine years after its original staging of 1974" (Azancoth; Costa, 2009). This collection of images and records reaffirms the importance of Márcio Souza not only as a playwright, but as a great scholar of Amazonian history and culture.

However, the trajectory to consolidate this archive and keep theatrical production alive was marked by episodes of censorship and isolation. Souza (1984) describes the difficulty of producing culture in a city that, at the time, was hostile to the social transformations proposed by experimental theater:

On the day that SESC put padlocks on the door of the small theater that served as the headquarters of our group, putting an end to an experience of more than ten years, the so-called members of the theater class of Manaus gathered in a pizzeria to celebrate. This happened in September 1980, and to this day we are wondering the reasons for such a mismatch. [...] we worked for ten years in the hostile terrain of Manaus, in one of the most isolated cities in Brazil, without any cultural tradition, reduced to blindly running after the tram of history (Souza, 1984, p. 9-10).

Souza's (1984) report evidences what he calls "mismatch": the paradoxical celebration of the closure of a cultural space by one's peers. This political and institutional hostility, symbolized by the "padlocks on the door", illustrates the imminent risk of erasure of theatrical memory when it does not have the support of the State or the recognition of the community. The author's speech reinforces the need for preservation projects and current extension practices, such as LAMCEPIN. If in the 1980s the theater in Manaus fought against isolation and forced silencing, the transposition of these works to the school and university environment today in Parintins works as a historical reparation. By "running after the tram of history", the contemporary researcher not only recovers the fragments of these past

experiences, but resignifies them, preventing the "lock" of oblivion from closing definitively on the literary and theatrical production of the Amazon.

5 CARTOGRAPHY OF THE INVISIBLE: THE MAPPING OF THEATRICAL PRACTICES IN MANAUS

The recognized historical difficulty in accessing locally produced dramatic texts led Professor Jorge Bandeira to compile the "Anuário de Teatro Amazonense". Professor Jorge Bandeira has extensive theatrical experience as a director, actor and critic. He organized the Amazonense Theater Yearbook, seeking a partnership for updates. In 2013, it granted the researcher the 25th update of the Yearbook. This exhaustive survey mapped the performing arts scene in Manaus between the years 1975 and 2013, ranging from major festivals and official exhibitions to informal activities held in public schools, resulting in an expressive *corpus* of 337 stagings. The consolidation of this document relied on a fundamental network of collaborators, among whom are central names in the history of Amazonian theater, such as Nereide Santiago, Dori Carvalho, Wagner Melo, Chico Cardoso and Ismael Farias, among others.

From this documentary mapping, it becomes possible to draw a cartography of the most emblematic productions of the period, evidencing the aesthetic diversity of the Amazonian scene in the 1980s. Highlights include the works of a political nature by Márcio Souza, such as *The Praise of Laziness* (1980) and *The Resistible Rise of the Boto-Tucuxi* (1982), in addition to the productions of the GRITO Group, under the coordination of Bequinho, which took to the stage titles such as *Pluff, the Ghostly* (1980) and *Putz, the Girl Who Sought the Sun* (1981). The production of this period also reveals the strength of female dramaturgy and local direction in plays such as *O Leiteiro e a Menina* (1982), by Nereide Santiago, and *O Despertar da Primavera* (1985), by Socorro Langbeck and Beckinha, under the direction of Wagner Melo.

The connection between Amazonian theater and universal dramaturgy is also evidenced in the Yearbook through avant-garde adaptations, such as *Picnic on the Front* (1983), by Fernando Arrabal, and *Say Yes, Say No* (1985), by Bertolt Brecht, both directed by Wagner Melo, in addition to *Blood Wedding* (1984), by García Lorca, directed by Gerson Albano by Grupo Independente. The survey also includes a dialogue with the regional imaginary and classic literature in works such as *Aquela Outra Face da Tribo* (1983), by Aurélio Michiles, *O Pequeno Príncipe* (1984), adapted by Beckinha, and contemporary productions such as *A Carroça de' Pandora do Largo de Sabá Tião* (2007), by Jorge Bandeira.

Despite the relevance of this mapping, it is emphasized that obtaining the original texts of these productions remains a critical challenge for researchers. Most of these works have not been published in print form, and even those that have made it to press are rarely available in bookstores or public collections. This documentary gap justifies the urgency of initiatives that seek not only to catalog, but to digitize and resignify these texts, preventing the history of Amazonian theater from being lost in the ephemerality and some memories of those who watched past stagings.

6 THEATRICAL PRACTICES IN PARINTINS: THE DEMOCRATIC THEATER-EDUCATION

Brazil, in its continental dimension, is home to a cultural plurality that is often eclipsed by deep social disparities, directly reflected in the educational system. In the corners of Amazonas, the scarcity of literary collections means that the textbook is often the only study tool, resulting in a gap in the training of readers of literary texts. Faced with the difficulty in making the classroom space more dynamic, dramatic reading and theater emerge as significant possibilities for mediation and cultural dissemination. In Parintins, this trajectory took shape with the "Literature on Stage" project, implemented in public schools since 2010, and was consolidated through the performance of the Literature Course of the Center for Higher Studies of Parintins (CESP-UEA).

The methodology adopted by the Letters course comprises theater-education in addition to an imposing show aimed at a passive audience; It is a democratic and emancipatory theater, where the student is an active subject of creation. Based on Tardif's (2008) perspective, the teaching work should "play the piano of emotions", integrating affect and cognition.

In teaching, some students seem nice, others don't; with some groups the thing flows, with others, everything is blocked, etc. To a large extent, the teaching work rests on emotions, affections, on the ability not only to think about students, but also to perceive and feel their emotions, their fears, their joys, their own traumas. The experienced teacher knows how to play the piano of the group's emotions, provokes enthusiasm, knows how to involve them in the task (Tardif, 2008, p. 258).

In the context of Parintins, theater acts as a catalyst for the ability to feel, transforming the educator into an artist-teacher capable of involving students in the collective construction of knowledge. Thus, the blockage of pure technique is replaced by the fluidity of the teaching-learning process, in line with what Freire (1996) proposes: the search for a reflective pedagogy, mediated by thinking subjects and producers of knowledge.

some fundamental knowledge to the educational-critical or progressive practice and that, for this very reason, should be mandatory content for the programmatic organization of teacher training. Contents whose understanding, as clear and as lucid as possible, must be elaborated in the formative practice. It is necessary, above all, and this is already one of these indispensable knowledges, that the former, from the very beginning of his formative experience, assuming himself as a subject of the production of knowledge, is definitively convinced that teaching is not transferring knowledge, but creating the possibilities for its production or construction (Freire, 1996, p.12).

In theater-education, Freire's pedagogy (1996) ceases to be an abstract concept to become a physical action. When he states that "teaching is not transferring knowledge", he is, in fact, calling on the teacher to abandon the role of authoritarian director to become a creator of contexts. In the training of a producer of critical knowledge, the stage (or the classroom) functions as the laboratory where this knowledge is elaborated in practice. This construction is not purely intellectual; it necessarily passes through the hands of the teacher who, as Tardif (2008) suggests, knows how to "play the piano of emotions". According to Tardif (2008), teaching knowledge results from sensitivity and experience. In theater-education, playing this piano means having the pedagogical "tact" to realize that critical knowledge is born of an affective mobilization. Critical thinking is not produced in emptiness or fear, but in trust. When the educator balances technique, politics and affection, he stops just transmitting content and promotes a real event in the classroom.

Historically, theatrical practices in Parintins emerged from the 1960s, driven by student and religious movements. However, it was in the 80s that local cultural resistance gained momentum with the foundation of the RETA Group (Reactivation of Amateur Theater). Originating at the Senador Álvaro Maia State School, RETA marked the apogee of a theater made by and for the community, presenting plays such as *O Concertador de Brinquedos* and *Conde Dracula* in schools and public spaces. This movement, marked by improvisation and collectivity, where costumes and sets were handcrafted by the team, faced the difficulties of the time, such as the use of mimeographs and political hostility, to take the theater outdoors on commemorative dates.

RETA was born within the Senador Álvaro Maia School (in 1980). [...]. The young people [students of this school] liked to do plays, [...]. This group reaches its apogee with the theatrical play *Concertador de brinquedo* was presented in schools through workshops for the realization of theater, where the Ruy Araújo School was a starting point for the realization of plays such as *Count Dracula* where many funny things happened, but we always worked together in the realization of the plays [...]. The RETA Group had only one birth and it has not yet died. Die with us and history remains. RETA was a team where it had the help of teachers and students. I was just one of

those who contributed to the success of GRUPO RETA, making it a reference in Amazonas. (Interview with one of the founders of the RETA group, 2014).

The phrase of the founding member, "The RETA Group had only one birth has not yet died. It dies with us and history remains", summarizes the concept of intangible heritage. It shows that a theater group is not limited to plays, but transforms those who participate. For those young people of 1980, the stage was a space of voice and citizenship, and this flame remains lit in the affective memory and pedagogical practices that they disseminated over the decades. Today, this seed finds fertile soil in the extension project LAMCEPIN (Amazonian Literature on Stage in the City of Parintins). There is a poetic and political line that unites the past and the present.

Amazonas still faces deep prejudices in relation to its own culture, often reproduced by the Amazonians themselves, influenced by a Eurocentric vision that dictates the dichotomy between center and periphery. According to Santos (2010), the "conflicts between hegemonic neoliberal globalization and counter-hegemonic globalization" (p. 93) accentuate the problem of subordination. By transposing this discussion to the Amazonian scenario, one observes a society that often places itself in a condition of cultural inferiority, valuing the external repertoire or analyzing its own idiosyncrasies from a European perspective. This process of self-devaluation positions us as subaltern subjects, marginalized in relation to the canon and devoid of a legitimate space for enunciation.

The history of Amazonian theater is marked by cycles that end prematurely due to the scarcity of incentive and promotion policies. Just as Azancoth (1993) performed the "backyard theater" and Márcio Souza (1984) witnessed the end of the TESC cycle in Manaus, the scenario in Parintins was not different. The RETA GROUP, composed of young students supported by their families, also interrupted its activities due to the lack of financial return. With no prospects of professionalization or remuneration to guarantee their livelihood, the members were compelled to prioritize entering the labor market, which resulted in the dissolution of the group and the search for other sources of survival.

In the late 80s and early 90s, when he entered university, time became scarce. At that time, I started teaching at Colégio do Carmo as a teacher in a special regime, which, in practice, was a challenge, as I could spend six months without receiving a salary. During this period, other members [of the RETA group] followed different paths. The class was separated because each one sought a different purpose for their lives; After all, no one would survive only from theater. However, the theater remains alive in our soul, because it is part of us and we are the theater (Excerpt from an interview with another founding member of the RETA Group, in 2014).

However, the transition from this amateur theater to university extension practices allowed the institutionalization of theatrical production, culminating in remarkable moments of urban occupation. A fundamental milestone of this resistance was the I Parintense Amateur Theater Exhibition, held on November 8, 2013. On that occasion, the stage of the historic Cine Teatro da Paz, in the city of Parintins, was occupied by reinterpretations such as *Iracema*, *O Puratin e a Jiboia Grande*, *O Lamento do Gavião Real* and *A Saga da Mandioca Sateré-Mawé: Aqui tem chibé? THERE IS!* Such stagings evidenced the technical and creative capacity of the students of Letters, from CESP-UEA to act, to produce scenery transforming the lack of resources into artistic power.

The consolidation of this process occurred the following year with the II Parintense Amateur Theater Festival, held in October 2014, on the premises of CESP-UEA. The event presented a diversified repertoire, in partnership with PIBID Letras through the Literature on Stage project, which reaffirmed the role of the Literature student not only as a reader, but as a director and cultural mediator. Among the works staged, the following stood out: *Macunaíma*, *O Puratin and Jiboia Grande*. such as the indigenous theater *A Paixão de Ajuricaba*, *As tragédias e dramas sociais em Luzia-Homem* and *O Bom Crioulo*, among other presentations.

This production, directed mostly by academics, materializes the transition from the "student-spectator" to the "student-artist", a central concept of Boal (2009). By directing plays, students star in aesthetic processes and give voice to narratives that reflect the Amazonian reality. Such a movement reflects the "total experience" defended by Paulo Freire (1996), in which the act of learning becomes an ethical and aesthetic commitment to reality itself. By refusing passivity, these students carry out a political practice that claims the authorship of their own thought.

When we live the authenticity required by the practice of teaching-learning, we participate in a total, directive, political, ideological, gnosiological, pedagogical, aesthetic and ethical experience, in which beauty must go hand in hand with decency and seriousness (Freire, 1996, p.13).

It turns out that the Amazonian students did not limit themselves to presenting plays; they also promoted a political action that rejects passivity and claims intellectual authorship. For Boal (2009) the theater is the rehearsal of the revolution and, for Freire (1986) education is the practice of freedom. In this context, Freire's "beauty" appears when he legitimizes his own worldview, making the stage a space of resistance. It is in this fusion between pedagogical seriousness and aesthetic protagonism that knowledge ceases to be a transferred content to become an authentic construction, where the ethics of assuming

oneself as the subject of history meets the aesthetics of seeing oneself as the creator of one's own image.

After a nine-year hiatus, Parintins' academic theatre scene experienced a vigorous renaissance. In 2024, the III Amateur Theater and Film Festival, held in conjunction with the III *Ludi Insulae*, marked a significant expansion by integrating classical theater into extension practices. Between June 8 and August 2, 2024, the university promoted a true cultural season, occupying not only CESP-UEA, but also the city's squares.

The duality between the universal and the local was established by the staging of *Plautus' The Menecmos*, in dialogue with the revival of *The Lament of the Hawkman*. The latter, an authorial piece by the researcher written in 2013, remains a living record of contemporary Amazonian dramaturgy. The impact of this production and the effectiveness of the project in its pedagogical and cultural mission are evidenced in the report of a LAMCEPIN scholarship holder:

Participating in this theatrical work was enriching for my experience in various areas of theater and literature. In rehearsals, we had the chance to work together with the other members of the cast and crew to hone our skills and develop our performance, but the best part was the acting on stage, seeing people's reactions and their comments about how they didn't know that story and that they found it interesting, because our project [LAMCEPIM] above all serves as a vehicle for the dissemination of Amazonian literature, and seeing this goal being achieved is gratifying. (report of a scholarship holder of the LAMCEPIN project).

In 2025, student protagonism was consolidated at the IV Parintinense Amateur Theater Exhibition, organized by the LAMCEPIN project team. The staging of the indigenous play *The History of Guaraná* reaffirmed the course's commitment to local cosmology. This movement updates Boal's (2009) thesis by involving scholarship holders in the organization and execution of ancestral themes; thus, the LAMCEPIN project not only teaches literature, but promotes a resignification of identity perception, in which the academic assumes the responsibility of experiencing his own history before his community.

The teacher who thinks right lets it be known to the students that one of the beauties of our way of being in the world and with the world, as historical beings, is the ability to know the world by intervening in the world. But, historical as we are, our knowledge of the world has historicity (Freire, 1996, p.14).

This "beauty" of which Freire (1996) speaks resides precisely in the emancipation of perception, in which the academic, by assuming the protagonism of the scene and of research, ceases to be a receptacle of foreign theories to become a subject who produces

situated knowledge. To recognize the historicity of our knowledge, as the author points out, is to understand that contemporary Amazonian dramaturgy is a legitimate and powerful form of "thinking right", in which theatrical technique submits to the ethical need to give body and voice to the community itself. Thus, theatre-education consolidates itself as a space where aesthetic intervention is, simultaneously, an exercise of collective self-knowledge and affirmation of our way of "being in the world".

7 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The investigation into the trajectory of the performing arts in Amazonas reveals that the preservation of cultural memory transcends mere documentary custody; it requires the pulsating revitalization of artistic making. This work demonstrated that the dialogue between Manaus and Parintins is not only geographical, but a bridge between different forms of cultural insurgency. While the experiences of Edney Azancoth, Márcio Souza and GRUPO RETA stood as direct political resistance against silencing, contemporary practices in Parintins, mediated by the Literature on Stage and LAMCEPIN projects, reconfigure this struggle from a pedagogical and identity perspective.

The union between documentary cataloguing and university extension presents itself as an effective antidote to the "archival evil" (Derrida, 2001). By transposing regional literature to the stage, the university democratizes access to culture and establishes an educational praxis aligned with Freire's thought (1986). From this perspective, the educator acts as an emancipatory agent, promoting critical thinking and allowing university and public school students to play a leading role in local cultural history, transforming the static record into social awareness.

In this scenario, Boal's (2009) aesthetics remains latent. Theater in Amazonian schools, even immersed in the anonymity of the peripheries and riverside communities, continues to pulsate on improvised stages: wooden stages, courtyards or public squares. This practice reaffirms the premise that everyone can do theater and that the stage is, above all, a rehearsal space for reality and social transformation.

It is concluded that the Amazonian theater, from the backyards of the capital to the squares of the interior, remains a vital tool of emancipation. He not only narrates, but affirms the Amazonian cosmology, ensuring that art remains the territory of freedom where the Amazonian subject recognizes, celebrates and safeguards his own identity.

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