



**THE OPTION FOR DOCUMENTATION:
or the forces that move us to the field of documentary theater**

A OPÇÃO POR DOCUMENTAR:
ou as forças que nos movem ao campo do teatro documentário

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Abstract: This paper problematizes the intentionality of documenting oneself as the driving force behind the processes in documentary theater, without, however, limiting this basis as defining or classificatory. For this purpose, elements of film history and theory are resumed to expand concepts and examples of staging illustrate the discussion.

Keywords: documentary theater; theater theory; documentary; autobiography.

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Resumo: O artigo se propõe a problematizar a intencionalidade de se documentar como a força motriz que traz base para processos em teatro documentário, sem limitar, no entanto, esse fundamento como definidor ou classificatório. Para isso, elementos da história e teoria do cinema são trazidos à baila para ampliação de conceitos e exemplos de encenações documentais surgem para ilustrar a discussão.

Palavras-chaves: teatro documentário; teoria do teatro; documentário; autobiografia.



1 Verb

At first it seems to be a quite simple and evident reasoning that documentary, whether scenic or audiovisual, is born from the desire to document. Such statement, however, implies understanding this act beyond the meaning attributed to the word in the dictionary, although we must start from it.

In Portuguese, *to document* [documentar] refers to the action of gathering documents to prove something¹. In everyday life, for example, we gather the appropriate documents (permit, deed, identity card, individual registration) when we want to prove that we own a property, somewhat establishing an association between the act of documenting and the search for legal validation and legitimacy.

Still regarding daily practices, it is common for some mothers to gather photos, newspaper clippings, letters, school reports and drawings in an attempt to reconstruct and preserve their child's lost childhood. Far from legal issues and regardless of possible psychoanalytic readings, documenting in this case is seen as an action to preserve family memory.

Regardless of differences in the personal motivation of those who document, the act itself—gathering documents to bring memory to light or to prove something—is a constant.

In the realms of artistic languages, the first documentaries in cinema were born from wanting to preserve customs and traditions of cultures in the process of disappearing, still without a clearly anthropological bias, quite different from the denouncing documentaries that made director Michael Moore popular at early 21st century².

What seems to be a mere semantic issue reveals a subtle difference for the analysis developed here: the reasons for why one wants to document may vary, but the nature of the choice to document is a more objective premise and common to all who wish to make documentaries.

Rather than conducting a discussion in which we linearly seek to differentiate what is meant by documenting, we have chosen in this article to locate it in a contemporary perspective, resuming, where necessary, what was meant by documenting at early 20th century, for example.

The personal issues involved in the realization of certain creators' projects, although mentioned and discussed, are not the focus of the present analysis. Our problematization will focus on documenting in art, especially theater, which becomes the differential for those who set out to realize documentary projects³.

1 Here, two other terms—document and evidence—emerge to dispel that first notion of the simplistic nature of the question posed, as will be seen below.

2 American filmmaker who directed documentaries critical of big corporations, armed violence, the invasion of Iraq and the hypocrisy of politicians. In *Bowling for Columbine* (2002), a documentary film about the US population's obsession with firearms, he paints this obsession as the primary cause for the Columbine Massacre in 1999, which took place in a school in the state of Colorado.

3 Once again, we emphasize that the trend not to assign boundaries between fiction and documentary is a characteristic



2 Adjective

When one opts artistically to document, gathering documents and their subsequent appears as the characteristic praxis. Such maxim is so strong that one considers the gathering, use and explanation of documents for the scene as another ubiquitous principle when making a documentary. Viewing the document as a trace of the truth implies a documenting action linked to searching for records of the factual truth. Consequently, if years ago the documentation process could have had some link with the idea of sharing an absolute truth about a relevant topic, today it is up to each artist or each collective involved with documentary art to question the relevance of standardize perceptions about an exposed fact.

At the same time, problematizing and even refuting the notion of documentary as an unquestionable evidence of reality leads to a fundamental question for this field of studies: what differs the documentary from a work of fiction?

Despite encompassing productions of different languages, the specific field for what we call documentary refers specifically to artistic discourses characterized by a particular aesthetic project, in this case, different from that of fiction. Authors such as Nichols (Nichols, 2005) and Da-rin (Da-Rin, 2008) emphasize the importance of this aesthetic project, related to the intention to document, for the consolidation of documentary cinema, an aspect that can be developed by the performing arts.

Understanding that the need to construct an artistic discourse triggers the documentary endeavor, regardless of artistic language, erases the common confusion between documentary, journalistic report and historical studies, fields that have many points of approximation.

We easily identify similarities between the work of historians and that of documentary makers, as both seek to interpret what has happened and to construct a discourse about this past. As much as some 21st-century historians already employ a more literary style in their texts, the objective differs between the two professions. At its core, documentary makers concern themselves with the aesthetic construction of the documentary, even if accompanied by a resulting and desired construction of historical knowledge. Manipulating the language becomes a field of investigation and a way of understanding the world.

In the case of journalism, the main confusion relates to audiovisual production. International channels such as National Geographic usually classify audiovisual reports as documentaries, even when the intention is to inform the general public about some subject.

of contemporary production. Our aim is not to oppose fiction and documentary, but rather to understand what is meant when this term is used; in other words if they choose to link their artistic production to this tradition.



In the process of creating a great audiovisual report, the subject to be addressed has already been streamlined and the interviews and images appear to ratify what is being said. Journalistic research focuses on sharing information.

Even when the documentary is concerned with denouncing something, its construction prioritizes aesthetic issues and not the broad communicational reach that journalism aspires to. Reader/spectator understanding of the subject addressed by a clear and objective communication is the journalist's horizon. Although certain documentaries are made based on research, in which data to be shared are collected, they do not privilege the informative character. Once again, we emphasize that proposing a documentary experience based on sensitive work with cinematographic and theatrical language, or the one that one chooses to explore, is at the heart of the work.

In other propositions within the audiovisual language, besides the error about the great report, simply recording a fact is often labeled as a documentary. By considering the first investigations by the Lumière brothers as the birth of documentary production (as they often are) just because they directly filmed the referent of reality without cuts, movements or edits, one would be reducing documentary to a supposed recording of everyday life. These pioneers of cinema were interested in exhibiting technological achievements, exploiting "the uncanny capacity of film images and photographs to bear the physical imprint of what they record with photomechanical precision thanks to the passage of light energy through lenses and onto a photographic emulsion" (Nichols, 2005, p. 118). Absent was the prospect of waging a formal struggle in search of what one wants to communicate. Without artistic intentionality, there would be no point in an aesthetic project.

Contributing to this thesis is the historical fact that in the early days of cinema, screenings were often "held in fairs, circuses, illusion theaters, amusement parks and everywhere there was a variety show" (Cesarino Costa, 1995, p. 14). The films were linked to casual attractions, in spaces where the magical character of the projected images' illusionistic nature was exploited (Soler, 2010). This production was however proof of what Franco (1993) calls the documentary vocation of cinema that dialectically opposes and, at the same time, complements its fictional vocation.

From the coinage of the term documentary in Grierson's critique of the film *Moana*, a closer look fell on other films that, like it, showed the intention of recording facts, people and/or places, based on a poetic experimentation, culminating in the appearance of the narrative voice and, above all, of a particular rhetoric.

In the performing arts, Piscator in *Despite All!*, when the term documentary did not yet exist⁴, already intended to document it and did not confuse it with the mere record of reality.

⁴ Importantly, if the word documentary appeared in a certain context, it is because the materialization of its characteristics already pre-existed. By naming something, one gives awareness for this something to effectively be the object of a more accurate perception, an object of study.



With the director, the act of documenting acquires an investigative connotation, as it presupposes that the documentary maker has a gaze⁵, understood here as a standpoint, trying to perceive in reality data that in themselves are metaphors to a broader understanding.

For Piscator the staging of *Despite All!* had to revisit the German Revolution of 1918-1919 that culminated in the Kaiser overthrown and a democratic republic established, but which led to the assassination of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, founders of the Spartacist League, aligned with libertarian communism, to say that despite the astonishing defeat, “the social revolution shall progress” (Piscator, 1968, p. 79).

The desire to resume a certain historical moment from a given standpoint, present in this specific staging, links the act of documenting to the need to construct the past by creating a narrative that *memorializes* what has been documented. Documentary almost emerges as a document in search of immortalizing what is being narrated.

3 Adverb

Implicit in the choice to document is the desire to construct a narrative that seeks in the past, even if immediate, the understanding of the present and the presence of the future. We are before a will that activates the remembering for constructing the memory of what is being documented. More assertively, documenting resembles somewhat the very mechanism of memory.

Remembering, understood here as a necessary action to “make memory,” is guided by the reconstruction of what happened, in a movement of valuing certain affairs over others, giving space for the refusal or forgetfulness of what will not be detailed in the possible narrative built on memory.

Both the act of remembering and the act of forgetting are loaded with intentions, configuring the valuation or not of certain themes according to, obviously, specific interests. Memory, thus, is not what has passed, but the rewriting and consequent meaning given to the past.

Amidst “memories and forgetfulness”, the documentary narrative of what is intended to be made explicit, according to certain interests, rewrites the past, building a possible memorial of what is documented.

Importantly, this rewriting is not limited to an individual’s feelings. In the game of remembering and forgetting, the individual is influenced by the socio/economic/political context in which they live. French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs observed that the remembered experiences of individuals have their origins in interactions within collective entities; that is, they are not separate from those of social groups, and there may be pacts of forgetting socially accepted and

⁵ In this context, the term *gaze* is associated with the subject’s stance on something, a vision that extrapolates the eye itself.



encouraged according to the interests of these or other groups (Halbwachs, 2009). We remember or are reminded of what is interesting to maintain the *status quo* and this affects the very construction of the discourses of History. As an African saying goes as long as lions do not have their own hunters, hunting stories will continue to glorify hunters. Remembering what is interesting for many to forget becomes an act of resistance.

Documentary makers play an important role in giving voice to silenced memories and rewriting a past that has not yet been constituted as such. It is not a question of assigning a duty, but of leading to a note that must be reflected on the scope of the thematic choices. If the act of documenting is intrinsically linked to the construction of memory, one must question what one wants to make present from the past.

Regardless of the fact that certain themes are forgotten in relation to others, broadly speaking the post-industrial revolution social dynamics is marked by the ode to the generalized forgetfulness promoted by accelerated time and the dynamization of relations, in turn driven by the continuous thirst for consuming what will readily be discarded to promote a new consumption.

According to Berman, based on Marx, in the capitalist system, to increase profit everything that is built by the bourgeoisie will soon be torn down by the bourgeoisie itself (Berman, 1987). All venerable ideas are discarded, and others, newly generated, will soon be discarded, in a constant dilution. We are faced with self-development at any cost, which volatilizes achievements and subordinates them to the pressures and needs of the market. As Marx stated, in a society that prioritizes the commodity “the devaluation of the world of men is in direct proportion to the increasing value of the world of things” (Marx, 2005, p. 110). Everything is made to be replaced by increasingly more profitable ways. Everything is produced to be pulverized soon and even “sober citizens would tear the world apart if it paid well” (Marx, 2005, p. 110). The new commodity becomes more interesting than the old.

According to Marx, the bourgeoisie is the first class “that is based not on what their ancestors did, but on what they themselves actually do. They thus prove that through concentrated action they can change the world, even if it means the complete destruction of what was previously built” (Marx, 2005, p. 111). Forgetfulness becomes socially accepted and disseminated.

Devaluing the view concerned with the past, without any kind of nostalgia, in the name of an ode to novelty, often “dressed up” as progress or technological advance, marks a break with tradition, with the legacy left to us by those who came before.

By critiquing the present state of social amnesia, the act of documenting becomes an opposing force to generalized forgetfulness, acquiring a character of resistance to some values disseminated by the primacy of market relations over human relations.

Without specifically mentioning documentary in art, Katia Canton (2009) views the work with memory as an act of resistance common to numerous artistic productions, especially from 1990



onwards. By observing memory as a theme that permeates contemporary art, the author argues that many artists end up addressing the issue by evoking their own personal memories, a choice that implies “constructing a place of resilience, of demarcations of individuality and impressions that oppose a panorama of long-distance communication and virtual technology that gradually tend to negate privacy issues while hindering real exchanges” (Canton, 2009, p. 21-22).

Canton’s proposition helps to understand the notorious expansion of the documentary field in the various artistic languages when considered as a space for construing the memory of something, someone, a place or a time and, by this principle, for awakening the interest of those who consider their personal stories as the basis material for artistic creation.

The play *Luís Antônio - Gabriela* (2011), in addition to exemplifying the public’s growing interest in the presence of personal memory on stage, demonstrates that the need to symbolic organize the past is related to the desire to document.

Created by the theater company Mungunza de Teatro and described as a scenic documentary by critics, ratified by director Nelson Baskerville, the play had great repercussion in São Paulo and later throughout Brazil in 2011.

It was awarded as best show of 2011 by APCA (São Paulo Association of Art Critics) and competed for numerous other awards, among which we highlight the Shell Award (staging, directing, actor, dramaturgy, costumes, lighting) and the Cooperativa Paulista de Teatro Award (directing, dramaturgy, cast, visual project).

Winning the three awards provided the group and the staging with greater visibility in print, television and digital media. Consequently, discussions on what would be documentary theater emerged, whether in the mass media or in the numerous professional technical courses, in colleges and universities, justifying the significant number of meetings in 2012 on the topic in São Paulo city.

The play is based on an “episode” from the director’s own family memory: the story of his older brother, Luís Antônio, born in 1953 and who lived in Brazil until he was 30 years old. Due to family disagreements, openly gay, he moved to Spain. After three decades, little has been known about the whereabouts of the young man, who assumed the identity of Gabriela in Bilbao. In a strange country, he worked in nightclubs and eventually died in 2006 from HIV complications.

On November 30, 2012, during one of these meetings on documentary theater, driven by the repercussion of *Luís Antônio - Gabriela*, at the event entitled *Novas Dramaturgias em Tempos Digitais*, held by the Itaú Cultural Institute in São Paulo, Baskerville declared that throughout the staging process he ignored that he was going to make a scenic documentary. It was a theater critic who, while watching a rehearsal, attributed the term that was soon accepted by the director and cast.



From the beginning, Baskerville wanted to tell his brother's story using the family material he had available (letters, home videos, photos, birth certificates and catechism). For the director, it would be a "public apology" for the difficulty in understanding his relationship with Luís Antônio. This is made clear on stage by the projection of the director's audiovisual image, in which he states his intention to tell the story theatrically. On the video, the director emphasizes that the play had the makings of a "melodrama," requiring a strong presence of epic elements to keep this "danger" out of the discourse. Regardless of the treatment given by the director, the staging set out to construct the past by selecting and articulating theatrically worked facts, for understanding the present and future preservation by the spectators' memory.

The perceived fact is that even without consciously starting a theater documentary, the material need to document led Baskerville into this field.

Even if this is not the case with the director of *Luís Antônio - Gabriela*, artists often avoid classification due to their idealization of what it means to be an artist, full of stereotypes about the distinction between doing and thinking. However, the necessary reflection on the artistic production of our time involves a conceptualization that does not need to be guided by a dichotomous and exclusionary classification.

The term documentary only ratified the existing intentionality and, according to the reasoning developed below, contributed to direct the viewer's perception.

In proposals where the past is construed as a discourse based on the personal memory of at least one performer, as is the case of *Luís Antônio - Gabriela*, in addition to working from personal archives, creators tend to use the scene as a space for the symbolic organization of lived experiences. One might think that in these cases theatre would function as therapy for at least one of the creators, whose particular memory is brought to the stage. However, strategies can be developed throughout the process if the artist wishes to avoid therapy, even if the therapeutic character⁶ remains. Baskerville, for example, opted for proposing that the collective of actors build from the documents collected (letters, family videos, recorded interviews, photos and the director's own accounts) the scenes that would be able to dramatize part of Luiz Antônio's story, especially regarding his transformation into Gabriela. Only after this sieve would he analyze the production that, therefore, was gazed at and constructed by the Other (group of actors).

Still in the perspective of addressing personal experience aspects for constructing the scenic discourse, Janaina Leite premiered *Conversas Com Meu Pai* in 2014, an autobiographical scenic documentary about her relationship with her father, which was co-directed and written by Alexandre Dal Farra. Such short synopsis simplifies the scenic discourse on stage, since the staging discusses documentary in art and, thus, that memory is a construction and that remembering does not reveal reality itself, but reality as it was signified. Right from the start, in a scene where the whole audience

⁶ The word therapeutic, as well as any other word that is morphologically configured as an adjective, qualifies something. Thus, a therapeutic process does not necessarily take the form of therapy.



is sitting in a circle, Janaina explains, using a theatrical text with strong colloquialism, that she needs to be there to tell a secret, but that she does not know if what will be told really happened. Gradually, incest is indirectly suggested throughout the staging, but the doubt, planted by the non-explicitness of the incestuous act, hovers and remains after the show ends.

Just before it becomes a little clearer what kind of secret will be shared, the actor reveals that her father allegedly sledgehammered to death a cat trapped in a black bag. We then hear an audio recording of the actor asking her sister about the memory of some childhood event regarding a cat. What follows is the narration of another fact that confirms Janaina's father's dislike of cats, but in no way resembling the memory of tremendous violence.

It is textually clear the artist's need to sort herself out, or as she herself says throughout the play, to reach a cure. In this case, the public ritual perhaps functions as a rule for exercising a radical explanation of what has been silenced, hidden as a secret. This example makes that maxim explicit: the act of documenting is confused with the attempt to construct the past, to make memory.

The production deriving from the interest in documenting aspects of the makers' subjectivity, both in theatrical and cinematographic documentaries, is founded on a well-defined historical, cultural and social context and requires a defamiliarization so as not to naturalize the phenomenon. Such problematization will not affect the validity of the nature of the discourse; rather, it will help to reflect on the broader documentary trend present in Western theatrical production and thus contribute to the reflection on the intentionality of documenting in contemporaneity.

4 Adverbial (Re)inflection

Autobiographical stage documentary seems to be in line with the performative character that for many authors marks the contemporary scene.

Hans Thies Lehmann (2007), regardless of the criticisms that may be made of his theoretical perspective, has developed a fruitful study on contemporary theater and has become a recurring reference in today's theatrical production. For the German theorist, one of the hallmarks of postdramatic theater is the presence of proposals focused on approaching an immediate experience with the real. In them, the actor is not guided by a representation, but, like the performer, brings his own presence to the scene (Lehmann, 2007). Evidently, this reasoning encompasses the radical productions in which the actor/performer brings their personal life to the stage as a theme to be explored.

However, the personalism made explicit in contemporary theater discourse often ends up reinforcing individualistic values: by centering the discussion so much on the "I" it leaves no space for the "we."



If the observation made applies today to a good part of cinematographic and theatrical production, which for politeness have not been listed, in the history of art, as well as the other films and plays analyzed here, self-referentiality is not always marked by narcissism. The very construction of self-portraits by visual artists such as the works of Mexican painter Frida Kalo are characterized by self-criticism and arouse interest that is not limited to details of the creator's intimacy. As much as Kalo's suffering marked her personal life, it is aesthetically reworked and takes on a dimension that translates the anguish of women when faced with issues of beauty, for example. Even if the problem only concerned Kalo, its treatment is far from an exhibitionist need.

The desire to organize personal experience and share it in the first person, present in artistic practices from different eras, has been considered by art historians and theorists as pertinent to the autobiographical genre.

Mainly consolidated in literary theory, autobiography manifests itself in different productions such as letters, diaries and certain novels. Such diversity hinders conceptualizing the genre precisely; however, a distinction persists between this type of narrative and fiction. Hence, since autobiographical production is based on the guarantee of a real existence, as the Argentine theorist Paula Sibilía points out in *O show do eu – a intimidade como espetáculo* (2008), it falls within the documentary field.

For Sibilía, the differentiation of fictional genres and autobiography inscribes these practices “in another regime of truth and elicits another horizon of expectations, despite the sophistication of the accumulated rhetorical tricks and despite several centuries of training readers” (Sibilía, 2008, p. 30).

Within this context, we must mention the phenomenon of access to social networks on the Internet, the most exemplary case of which in the second decade of the 21st century is *Facebook*.

Founded on February 4, 2004, by Mark Zuckerberg and his college roommates Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes, Facebook has become a kind of electronic diary in which users create profiles containing photos and lists of personal interests, and can exchange messages privately and publicly with each other and with members of groups of friends.

What could be a way to expand one's circle of friends, find old partners and even be a tool for professional exchange or a new instrument for quick and objective communication, has become a window for those who want to expose themselves.

Social networks such as Facebook and Instagram can thus be considered new devices for autobiographical writing, in which verbal, visual and audio languages are combined in a virtual environment.

While we identify the action of documenting in its primary sense, that of gathering documents to legitimize something, there are also guiding principles of fictional constructions based on real facts.



Most striking is the creation of so-called fictitious profiles, in which the creator invents a name, a story, a persona or impersonates someone who already exists.

People who build profiles on social networks go through experiences reminiscent of the dynamics of their idols in mass media productions. Profiles can be followed, posts receive “likes” and intimate life becomes spectacle. The need fueled by the entertainment industry to be seen at any cost and the interest in revealing one’s personal life, common for show business stars, emerges as a recurring motivation among the site’s users.

Social networks, as a phenomenon, only ratifies the need to position oneself critically in relation to autobiography on the contemporary scene as a characteristic that can end up reinforcing the ode to individualism and denying the experience of otherness.

From this critical perspective, some directors seem to resist autobiography, without, however, leaving aside issues that are present in their personal history, as with Argentine director, performer and writer Lola Arias⁷.

In 2009, Lola premiered *Mi vida después* at the Teatro Sarmiento in Buenos Aires, in which six young people born between 1970 and early 1980s reconstruct part of their parents’ history, in a way recovering and analyzing the historical period in which they were born: the time of the Argentine military dictatorship. They use photos, letters, videotapes, clothes and theatrical procedures, such as putting their parents’ clothes on stage to represent a moment in their lives, almost as a double.

In the staging, the second generation of victims this tragic event, whether they are directly affected—like the performers whose parents disappeared even one whose father was a military torturer—or indirectly—like the one documented who was born in the year the dictatorship ended, but whose childhood was marked by stories about it—are invited to tell part of their personal history on stage, creating a polyphony of voices that converge, diverge and or complement each other.

The different ages and, therefore, the different relations with the dictatorship dispel the homogeneous tone. Strategically, the fact that it is not one but many private experiences being told, elevates the discourse to a historical breadth and draws attention away from just one individual trajectory. Diversity ratifies difference and problematizes the various perspectives on the same historical moment.

In *Mi vida después*, the first-person accounts given by the actors/documented on stage, publicly revealing the intimacy of their family histories, even if through theatrical games, take on

⁷ The artist’s connection with documentary productions is not limited to a single work. Perhaps her most internationally recognized works are those in collaboration with Stefan Kaegi: *Chácara Paraíso* (2007), involving Brazilian police officers, and *Airport Kids* (2008), featuring children between 7 and 13 years old who have no fixed residence and move from country to country and, consequently, from school to school. Another important production they both developed was the curatorship of *Ciudades Paralelas*, a festival of urban interventions marked by a documentary nature that took place between 2010 and 2012, in the cities of Berlin, Buenos Aires, Warsaw and Zurich.



a public nature as they show the contradictory relations experienced by the children of the then Argentine youth who lived the military dictatorship, without meeting the voyeuristic needs created by the culture industry and assimilated by an audience already used to reality television shows.

The act of documenting in the staging process was far removed from collecting private data to reveal the intimacy of those documented. The accounts met the need to bring voices to the scene in order to compose an artistic discourse outside that of official history. In fact, this attitude justifies director Lola Arias' choice, unlike the autobiographical productions mentioned so far, not to reveal her own story, neither as an actor nor as a director or playwright. Arias' personality is not directly on stage, but the fact that she is Argentinian and was born in 1974 means that she was represented by the performers.

Similar interest in documenting past issues of one's own country can be seen in *Sin título, técnica mista* by the Peruvian theater group Yuchatkani, founded in 1971 and based in Lima's Magdalena del mar neighborhood. The play, which recounts Peru's recent history from 1879 to 2000, premiered in 2004 under the auspices of the *Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación*.

This contextualization highlights the Peruvian group's intention with the performance to organize their country's history symbolically and publicly, at a time when the idea of reconciliation could be mistaken for forgetfulness.

Instead of focusing on personal stories, the actors recount moments from the past that are common to all those who belong to the Peruvian social, economic and cultural universe. As such, director Miguel Rubio proposed that they occupy small mobile sets, transformed into paintings that were moved around the stage (a shed), in a profusion of simultaneous scenes, aesthetically highlighting the polyphonic nature of social memory. Spectators, on the other hand, followed all the action in this sort of attic of a history museum, surrounded by documents of various kinds, presented through theatrical games or by simply displaying them visually in the space (Telles, 2011).

How the assembly process of *Sin título, técnica mista* chooses to document highlights the group's concern with constructing a discourse marked by recovering the country's memory, based on research conducted by its own members and without ties to any governmental institution. This path of aesthetic research and ethical political commitment is not limited to a single performance. Since its foundation, the Yuyachkani Cultural Group has sought to strengthen the relations between Peruvian theater and Peru's history, and it is no coincidence that in the indigenous Quechua language, *yuyachkani* means *I am thinking, I am remembering*.

Recognizing oneself as an artist (a political being), understanding that acquiring technical knowledge presupposes an ethical commitment to your country's history, understanding theater as an art capable of evoking the subjectivities of memory to create and elaborate-think pedagogical practices that trigger in the experience a sensitive knowledge are constitutive points of Yuyachkani's Pedagogical Laboratory (Telles, 2011, p. 148-149).



Even if the option to document precedes the choice of its theme, the path taken will be the process of building knowledge about the target of documentation, using as basic study material the documents found. But what at first reveals itself as the target documentation may become only an initial impulse, for a change of interest or even reality may point to another possible path along the way.

Regardless of whether or not the process is permeable to alterations, the search for documents, in procedural terms, generates a research method close to that of the human sciences, especially history, journalism and anthropology, a statement observed in the first documentary experiences in Cinema and in Theater.

Piscator did an intense historical investigation, collecting documents to build the narrative of *Despite All*. The nature of his research is somewhat distant from the anthropological and has great similarities with the journalistic one, in the construction of a report, or even that conducted by historians to elaborate a scientific discourse. The German director searched for documents in various sources to ratify what would be recited theatrically. In the contentious field of documentary, Piscator's documentary perspective, as well as that of other playwrights and directors, focuses on the idea of defending a thesis; therefore, requiring the evidential character achieved then by the presence of documents on stage.

In the recent proposal that culminated in *Luis Antônio – Gabriela*, at each meeting, at each rehearsal, new questions about the performer's life—whose name gives the stage its title—led to the search for other characters so that new accounts could be raised. Throughout the process, other interviews were conducted based on the needs perceived with the creation of scenes.

Creating a set of questions generated for each new interview is procedurally reminiscent of creating a report from the perspective of investigative journalism. Interestingly, this investigative nature did not aesthetically characterize the staging.

The act of documenting, in addition to being the guiding intentionality of a documentary theater process, presents itself in different ways, revealing the plurality of theatrical perspectives that coexist within the documentary tradition.



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