

## **Staging Port Cities: Place and Nation in the Theatre of Yuyachkani, Bando de Teatro Olodum and Catalinas Sur.**

Nicholson Sanz, Michelle

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**Staging Port Cities: Place and Nation in the Theatre of  
Yuyachkani, Bando de Teatro Olodum and Catalinas Sur**

**Michelle Nicholson Sanz**

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Queen Mary, University of London**

**October 2015**

## Statement of Originality

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Details of collaboration and publications:

Some parts of section 2.3 ('Re-routing Afro-Brazilian Identity towards the African Diaspora [*Áfricas*, Bando de Teatro Olodum, 2007]') have been published as part of the article: 'On my mind's world map, I see an Africa: Bando de Teatro Olodum's Re-routing of Afro-Brazilian Identity', *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 19 (2014), Special Issue: 'New Practice, New Methods, New Voices', 287–95.

## Abstract

This doctoral thesis examines theatre as a site for counteracting hegemonic representations of the nation. My focus is on three contemporary Latin American theatre companies and the ways in which they stage the sense of place of the port cities where they are based. By examining these groups' explorations of the political and social imaginaries related to these ports, I aim to determine how theatre can challenge essentialised discourses of national identity.

An examination of the Peruvian theatre group Yuyachkani allows me to look at the place of indigenous peoples in Lima. Through a discussion of *Catalinas Sur*, based in Buenos Aires, I highlight the cultural identities newly produced and those erased as a consequence of mid-nineteenth-century European immigration to the city. The focus on *Bando de Teatro Olodum* facilitates a consideration of struggles against racial discrimination towards Afro-Brazilians in Salvador, Bahia.

I propose close readings of specific productions devised by these troupes that concentrate on three main topics. The first of these is migration, examining how foreigners have infused difference in these ports. The second theme looks at conceptions of time and the third considers notions of space. In all three cases the focus allows for a questioning of dominant discourses on modernity, order and progress. Such rhetoric has been equally predominant in Peru, Brazil and Argentina and has justified exclusivist accounts of the nation since the early histories of these republics. Through recourse to performance analysis, I examine theatre's capacity to shift the focal point of interest towards the borders of mainstream society. My claim is that this perspective allows room for presences that have been historically rendered mute and also helps to draw attention to modes of social and political organisation that differ from those naturalised by national elites.



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## 0. Introduction

In September 2015, dignitaries of the twenty-eight countries that make up the European Union were holding emergency meetings to discuss the latest migration crisis in Europe. Fleeing from conflicts in the Middle East and Africa, a total of 1,009,000 refugees have applied for asylum in the EU between January 2014 and July 2015. Their journeys have been far from easy. Since the start of 2015, almost 500,000 people have died trying to cross the Mediterranean into Europe.<sup>1</sup> The crisis has sparked reactions that evidence fears of large migration movements, the arrival of foreigners into national borders, and the socioeconomic effects of treating them either as welcomed or unwelcomed guests.

On one side of the spectrum of reactions, German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced that her government welcomes refugees and will incorporate them into the local labour force, reminding other countries that this response is a humanitarian duty enforced by international human rights treaties. On the other side of the spectrum, the UK has opted out of the possibility of using a quota system that would share the number of refugees among all ‘first-world’ countries involved in the crisis. The declarations made by the UK’s Conservative Party Prime Minister, David Cameron, that refugees are ‘a swarm of people’ provoked much criticism from UK opposition leaders and French authorities.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Hungarian conservative Prime Minister Viktor Orban has declared that Hungarians ‘have a right to decide that we do not want a large number of Muslim people in our country’.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> BBC News, ‘Migrant Crisis: Migration to Europe Explained in Graphics’, 24 September, 2015, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34131911>> [accessed 25 September 2015].

<sup>2</sup> Segalov, Michael, ‘Calais Migrant Crisis: Deputy Mayor of Calais labels Cameron’s use of ‘swarm’ as ‘racist’ and ‘ignorant’’, The Independent, 1 August 2015, <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/calais-migrant-crisis-deputy-mayor-of-calais-labels-camerons-use-of-swarm-as-racist-and-ignorant-10431050.html>> [accessed 25 September 2015].

<sup>3</sup> Aljazeera, ‘Hungarian PM: We don't want more Muslim’, 4 September 2015, <<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/09/refugees-hungary-train-station-150903064140564.html>> [accessed 25 September 2015]. The proportion of foreigners that have claimed asylum in each of these countries varies. In the first half of 2015, Hungary received 665 asylum seekers per 100,000 of the country’s population; Germany, 190; and the UK, 23 applications for every 100,000 UK residents. See BBC News.

This crisis and the political reactions it has triggered are of course not unique in modern world history. The Jewish diaspora after the Second World War or the Irish Great Famine Emigration are but two other examples of large, traumatic migration processes with long-lasting effects. The crisis facing Europe in 2015 brings to the front a range of pressing questions on national sovereignty and human rights. Who has the right to belong to a nation or a place? What moral and legal obligations do countries and citizens have towards foreigners? How can place attachment be expressed and materialised? Most significant for this thesis, what tools can theatre and performance offer in order to explore tensions around place and the role of the ‘Other’ within the nation? How can artistic explorations question narratives of ‘essential traits’ and ‘natural’ social and racial hierarchies that justify exclusionary claims to place belonging?

This doctoral thesis engages with the two latter questions while focusing on a specific type of place. Port cities. Specifically, it examines how theatrical explorations of the histories and socio-political imaginaries of Lima, Buenos Aires and Salvador de Bahia can challenge fixed and narrow definitions of national belonging. Ports are places of transition. They open up towards both transoceanic exchanges and the hinterland. Their porosity often allows them to harbour people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds and to accommodate overseas social and cultural imprints.

My selection of these port cities is informed by the fact that I believe that they allow for productive analyses of the ways in which theatre and performance can explore cultural hybridity as a means to question national hierarchies. The colonial and republican histories of these ports have led them to assimilate races and cultural traditions that originally arrived from other places in the Americas, Europe and West Africa. As I shall be explaining in the next section of this introduction (0.1), such cultural mixings have often been the result of traumatic processes that evidence deep-seated fractures in the social fabrics of these ports and the wider countries where they lie.

Catalinas Sur, Yuyachkani and Bando de Teatro Olodum are theatre companies that reside in Buenos Aires, Lima and Salvador respectively. They serve as important reference points in South America. In an international theatrical landscape dominated by the global northern hemisphere, their work is not as well known in the English-

speaking world as it deserves to be. This study aims to remedy that. It focuses on their work because they engage directly with the histories and cultural memories of each of their ports of residence and the roles that these cities have played within their nations. In so doing, the companies have produced narratives that question the sanctioned histories of Argentina, Peru and Brazil while heightening the diverse racial and social composition of these countries.

In the following section of this introduction (0.1), I shall give a concise overview of the migration influxes that have made these cities places of diversity. I shall also describe the racial and social tensions that have arisen as a consequence of these processes of resettlement. I will then introduce the three theatre groups that are the main subject of this study (0.2). These will be brief outlines, as I will develop these ideas further in the first chapter of this thesis. The introduction will then move on to a survey of the literature around the topics covered in this research (0.3), and an explanation of the methodological and theoretical frameworks that inform it (0.4).

### **0.1 Putting ‘the Others’ in their Place**

At the start of their republican histories, the ruling and social elites of Argentina, Peru and Brazil sought to organise what they deemed as ‘modern nations’. They hoped their countries could trade and interact with other nations on equal terms and their societies could be deemed civil and law-abiding, cosmopolitan and progressive. For them, progress and modernity meant standing up to Northern European standards and culture. Critically, Spain and Portugal, their former empires, were both falling out of modernity as they emerged from colonial dependence. The Spanish and the Portuguese were fighting their own economic and political battles in Europe, amidst the Napoleonic wars (1803-15) and the British expansion of their markets at the end of the industrial revolution. From the perspective of Northern Europe and Britain, the newly formed countries in Latin America were immature and primitive; one of Europe’s Others that were not only spatially but also temporally distant.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For an study of the topic, see Walter Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005).

In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (published in 1837), philosopher Friedrich Hegel summarised this view in the following terms:

The World is divided into *Old* and *New*; the name of *New* having originated in the fact that America and Australia have only lately become known to us. But these parts of the world are not only relatively new, but intrinsically so in respect of their entire physical and psychical constitution. (...) I will not deny the New World the honor of having emerged from the sea at the world's formation contemporaneously with the old: yet the Archipelago between South America and Asia shows a physical immaturity. (...) America has always shown itself physically and psychically powerless, and still shows itself so. For the aborigines, after the landing of the Europeans in America, gradually vanished at the breath of European activity.<sup>5</sup>

There was a double dynamic at play at the moment of the formation of Latin America. On the one hand, the continent looked up to the Old World as its model for nation building while, on the other, Europe was looking down on the New World as intrinsically primitive and immature. This dynamic has played a critical role in the formation of national identities in Argentina, Peru and Brazil, and in the ways in which these countries have constructed their own 'Others' – the peoples who have lie at the margins of such national aspirations.

At the heart of this division between the Old World and the New World was the philosophy and experience of modernity. Emerging around the 1800s, the idea of modernity originally designated a temporal division of history between the present, the Middle Ages and Antiquity. Very succinctly, the idea emphasises history as a single process, a break with the past and a permanent advancement into the future. As a social experience, it asserts the value of progress, development, reason, urban growth and technology, while rejecting the past as backward and 'pre-modern'.<sup>6</sup> At the time of their independence, Latin American countries sought to conform to these standards. However, indigenous peoples and black slaves and their descendants were seen as obstacles for development.

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<sup>5</sup> Translated by J. Sibree (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), p. 81.

<sup>6</sup> Vivian Schelling, 'Introduction: Reflections on the Experience of Modernity in Latin America', in *Through the Kaleidoscope: The Experience of Modernity in Latin America*, ed. by Vivian Schelling (London; New York: Verso, 2000), 1-33 (pp. 4-5). See also Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: SAGE, 2005), pp. 62 ff.



Argentina offers a good case in point here. Throughout Buenos Aires' history, there have been a number of 'Others' against which the city's political and social aristocracies have sought to construct the identity of this port. Most notably, these have been native peoples, Afro-Argentines and migrants from Latin America and the Argentine interior.

### **A. Buenos Aires and Argentina**

From the early years of Argentina's independence (1816) this capital was branded as one of the most European places in South America.<sup>7</sup> In recent times – since around 2007 – claims of 'Europeanness' have been supplemented with city branding policies that position Buenos Aires as an international hub for artistic production and consumption.<sup>8</sup> These identities are based on a series of oppositions that privilege the European ancestry of the city. According to these oppositions, Buenos Aires and Argentina *are not* like other countries in Latin America that have large populations of indigenous and black peoples. Buenos Aires *is not* like the Argentine interior: the capital is modern and predominantly white while the interior is backward and provincial.

The city was not born cosmopolitan. It did not play a significant role in the Spanish empire during colonial times. Rather, it was an impoverished port that grew in economic and political importance thanks to illegal commerce. Its favorable geographical position – on the Atlantic and south of the Equator – made it the centre of a trade circuit between transatlantic territories and the Andes (particularly, the wealthy mines of Potosí). First established in 1536, it was only in 1776 that the city's commercial aptitude was recognised by designating it the capital of the newly formed Viceroyalty of the River Plate.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Beatriz Sarlo, 'The Modern City: Buenos Aires, The Peripheral Metropolis', in *Through the Kaleidoscope. The Experience of Modernity in Latin America*, ed. by Vivian Schelling (London, New York: Verso, 2000), p. 111.

<sup>8</sup> Miguel Kanai and Iliana Ortega-Alcázar, 'The Prospects for Progressive Culture-Led Urban Regeneration in Latin America: Cases from Mexico City and Buenos Aires', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 33 (2009), 483-501 (p. 493). See also Chapter 1, section 1.2, part A: 'Buenos Aires and Catalinas Sur'.

<sup>9</sup> The Spanish empire had restricted commerce in their American colonies to four ports: Lima (Callao), Cartagena, Veracruz and Panama. See Lewis Hanke, *The Imperial City of Potosi. An*

Colonisation had devastating consequences for the indigenous population. It is estimated that by the beginning of the conquest there were around 700,000 natives in the land occupied by present-day Argentina. At the time of the country's independence, in 1810, natives had decreased to around 200,000 – almost less than a third of the total population at the time.<sup>10</sup> Between 1878 and 1885 the state actively sought to subjugate and decimate the aborigines of the Pampas and the Patagonia through the so-called 'Campaign of the Desert'.<sup>11</sup> Recent figures from the latest national census (2010) suggest that there are 955,000 Argentines who self-identify as belonging to, or descendants of, indigenous peoples, making up 2.4% of the national population.<sup>12</sup> The African diaspora also arrived to these lands. Around 100,000 slaves were imported to the River Plate and the territory of present-day Bolivia during the entire slave period.<sup>13</sup> By the late eighteenth century, black slaves and their descendants – *mulatos* (of white and black origins) and *zambos* (of indigenous and black descent) – amounted to approximately half of the population of Northern Argentina. By independence (1810), they constituted around 30% of residents in Buenos Aires.<sup>14</sup> Their numbers declined sharply due mainly to epidemics and their participation in national wars of independence and against neighbouring country Paraguay (1864-70).<sup>15</sup> Despite their

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*Unwritten Chapter in the History of Spanish America* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956), pp. 28ff.

<sup>10</sup> For more information on the Campaign of the Desert, see Chapter 1, section 1.1, part A: 'Argentina: Illusions of Whiteness'. Among other indigenous peoples, these lands were inhabited by the Tehuelche, the Mapuche, the Kolla and the Guaraní. Felipe Pigna, *1810. La otra historia de nuestra revolución fundadora* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2010), p. 163.

<sup>11</sup> For an explanation of this campaign and how Catalinas Sur has depicted it on the stage, see Chapter 2, section 2.1: 'Transnational Routes and the Limits of Hospitality in Buenos Aires'.

<sup>12</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos. República Argentina (INDEC), *Censo nacional de población, hogares y vivienda 2010* (Buenos Aires: INDEC, 2012), p. 277. On the legal status and rights of indigenous Argentines see, among others, Morita Carrasco, *Los derechos de los pueblos indígenas en Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Internacional de Trabajo sobre Asuntos Indígenas, 2000); Analía Meo, Silvina Cimolai and Andrea Pérez, 'Argentina. Mapping Ethnic and Educational Inequalities in an Uncharted Territory', in *The Palgrave Handbook of Race and Ethnic Inequalities in Education*, ed. by Peter Stevens and Gary Dworkin (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) Ebook.

<sup>13</sup> These are only approximate estimates, particularly considering that slaves were traded illegally in Buenos Aires before the port was open to lawful commerce in 1776. Philip P. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison; London: University of Wisconsin Press), p. 46.

<sup>14</sup> Peoples classified as 'black', *zambos* and *mulatos*, constituted the following proportions of the population: 64% in Tucumán, 54% in Santiago del Estero, 52% in Catamarca, 46% in Salta and 44% in Córdoba. Pigna, p. 135.

<sup>15</sup> Pigna, 133ff.

role in these wars, Afro-Argentines were not included in national censuses from 1778. This situation was only addressed in 2010, when the census reported there were 149,493 self-declared afro-descendants (0.4% of the country's population).<sup>16</sup>

The invisibility of Afro-Argentines and the decimation of natives are both tied to the late-nineteenth-century Argentine programme of nation building. This programme sought to attract European immigrants as labour force and a means to achieve the progressive 'whitening' of the local population. By 1919 two and a half million Europeans (mostly from Spain and Italy) had been incorporated into a country that fifty years earlier had two million inhabitants.<sup>17</sup>

The government of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (in office since 2007) has been instrumental in exposing the official concealment of the country's black ancestry. The Argentine office for national statistics, INDEC, explains the interests behind this process:

With [European immigration into Argentina] starts the construction of a national project that is reflected in a vision of history that relegates Afro-descendants to the past. This is why the existence of Afro-descendants during colonial times is recognised in schoolbooks and patriotic celebrations, but their presence is diluted since the formation of our nation and then they disappear from official history.<sup>18</sup>

The predominance of the supposedly white demographic in Argentina needs nuanced consideration. The category of 'white' has varied significantly along the country's history. During the Spanish empire, *peninsulares* – Spanish born in Spain – were at the top of the social, economic and political scales. Next in this hierarchy were *criollos* – born to Spanish parents in colonial territories. The proximity to the colonizing culture,

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<sup>16</sup> INDEC, pp. 295, 298.

<sup>17</sup> Kristin Ruggiero, 'The Legacy of Sarmiento's Civilization and Barbarism in Modern Argentina', in *Sarmiento and his Argentina*, ed. by Joseph T. Criscenti (Boulder, CO.; London: Lynne Rienner, 1993), pp. 1, 5. For more detailed information on European immigration into Buenos Aires, see Chapter 2, section 2.1: 'Transnational Routes and the Limits of Hospitality in Buenos Aires'.

<sup>18</sup> 'Con [la inmigración europea a la Argentina] se inicia la construcción de un proyecto nacional cuyo correlato es una visión de la historia que relega al pasado a tipos sociales relacionados con el origen africano. De allí que se reconozca la existencia de afrodescendientes en la época colonial, como se ve en los libros de texto y en las dramatizaciones de fiestas patrias, mientras que a partir de la organización nacional, estas figuras se diluyen completamente y desaparecen del escenario de la historia'. INDEC, p. 295.

to its behavioral codes and the social status associated to it, played a significant role in this scheme. At the time of independence, *criollos* became the dominant class. The political situation of the country at this time, however, was far from stable. It immersed itself in civil wars for almost all the nineteenth century (1814-80). On one side of the conflict there were those who supported a national organisation centralised around the economic influence of Buenos Aires province and its port. On the other side, *caudillos* (potent landowners) from other provinces sought to diminish Buenos Aires's power, backing a federalist organisation of all the territories that had previously made up the Viceroyalty of the River Plate.

This early conflict at the start of the formation of the Argentine republic has marked the relationship between Buenos Aires and the interior in deep ways.<sup>19</sup> This was evident when, decades later, in the 1930s and 1950s, the conflict sprung up again. By then, Buenos Aires had received internal immigration in such significant numbers that its population increased from 1.5 million in 1914 to 3.5 million in 1935.<sup>20</sup> These newcomers were met with racist reactions from the city's upper classes, who grouped them together under the pejorative racialised name of 'cabecitas negras' (little blackheads).<sup>21</sup> Such class and racial tensions fuelled the political antagonisms that dominated Argentina from the 1940s and into the 1970s: between supporters of President Juan Domingo Perón – who appointed himself as the leader of the working classes – and his detractors. Frictions led into one of the most traumatic episodes of Argentine twentieth-century history – the military dictatorship of the *Junta Militar* (1976 and 1983).

Social animosity based on race was further complicated in Argentina with the arrival of low-skilled workers from neighbouring nations (Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru and Brazil) between the 1920s and the 1940s. Moreover, the economic crises of the late 1990s and the early 2000s widened the gap between the upper- and the lower classes in the

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<sup>19</sup> For more details on the historic dynamics between Buenos Aires and the interior, and how Catalinas Sur has delved into this topic, see Chapter 3, section 3.1: 'Re-versing Time'.

<sup>20</sup> Felipe Pigna, *Los mitos de la historia argentina. De la ley Sáenz Peña a los albores del peronismo* (Buenos Aires: Norma, 2004), p. 285.

<sup>21</sup> Alluding to their *mestizo* origins, Sarlo, pp. 113, 117.

country, and considerably reduced the middle classes of Buenos Aires.<sup>22</sup> This critical period of instability added further complexity to the constructions of a cosmopolitan, European Buenos Aires. Although clear class distinctions were certainly being disputed, the elites still sought to assert their difference – and protect themselves from ‘the Others’ – in gated communities and private neighbourhoods.<sup>23</sup>

## **B. Lima and Peru**

The native inhabitants of the Andes and their descendants have been the main opposing figure towards which Lima has built its identity as a white city. Researchers consider that by 1520, around nine million indigenous people resided in the lands that today make up Peru. By 1570, during the last stages of the Spanish conquest (1532-72), this population had decreased to one million, and by 1620 to 600,000.<sup>24</sup>

During the Spanish empire, Lima was an administrative and political hub due to its stature as the capital of the Viceroyalty of Peru.<sup>25</sup> Interracial unions between the natives, the Spanish and the African peoples brought into the country as forced labour force gave way to a complex colonial caste system. Garcilaso de la Vega, a colonial *mestizo* chronicler (1539-1616), explains the various racial categories compromised in this system:

We were forgetting the best imports into the Indies, namely the Spaniards, and the Negroes who have since been taken there as slaves, for they were previously unknown in my country. These two races have mingled [with the Indians] in various ways to form others which are distinguished by the use of different names. (...) The children of Spaniards by Spanish women born there [in the Indies] are called *criollos* (...) The Negro who arrives there from the Old World is called Negro or Guineo. The child of a Negro by and Indian woman or of an Indian and a Negro woman is called *mulato* (...) Their children are called *cholos*. A word from the Windward Islands: it means a dog, but is not used for a thoroughbred dog, but only for a mongrel cur: the Spaniards use the word in a pejorative and vituperative sense. The children of Spaniards by Indians are called *mestizos* (...) The children of a Spaniard and a mestizo, or vice versa, are

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<sup>22</sup> For details on Latin American immigration into Buenos Aires and the Argentine economic crises of the 1990s and 2000s, see Chapter 1, section 1.1, part A: ‘Argentina: Illusions of Whiteness’.

<sup>23</sup> For more details, see Chapter 1, section 1.1, part A: ‘Argentina: Illusions of Whiteness’.

<sup>24</sup> Cook, N. David, *Demographic Collapse: Indian Peru, 1520-1620* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 108ff.

<sup>25</sup> Originally, this viceroyalty encompassed present-day Peru, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, South-western Brazil and the Panamá isthmus.

called *cuatralvos*, meaning that they have one part of Indian blood and three of Spanish. The children of a mestizo and an Indian, or vice versa, are called *tresalvos*, meaning that they have three parts of Indian blood and one of Spanish. All these names, and others which we omit to avoid tedium, have been devised in Peru to describe the racial groups that have come into existence since the arrival of the Spaniards.<sup>26</sup>

This long list of categories was the social order that made sure that everyone knew ‘their place’. Here too, *peninsulares* were the measure by which all other castes were placed in the social order. The black population arrived through the coastal ports as forced labour. Approximately 95,000 Africans were imported during the period of the slave trade.<sup>27</sup> Miscegenation between races along the centuries has produced an ethnically varied country.

The most recent national survey (2012) reports that, considering ancestry and customs, 26.4% of the country’s population regarded themselves as Quechua or Aymara (the two main Andean cultures); 1.7% native Amazonians; 1.9% Afro-Peruvians; 5.8% whites; and 54.3% *mestizo* (the mixing of white and indigenous races). Moreover, for 18.7% of Peruvians Quechua or Aymara are their mother tongues, while for 80.5% of the population it is Spanish.<sup>28</sup> It is important to note that racial categories (particularly white, *mestizo* and indigenous) are not unequivocal. Not only they have varied along the country’s history, they are also highly dependent on a variety of geographical and social contexts. Just to name one example, people whose mother tongue and ancestry is indigenous become *mestizos* when they migrate into cities and adopt urban culture.<sup>29</sup>

The colonial order that placed indigenous ancestry at the bottom scales of the social hierarchy is still in evidence today. By 2010 almost 56% of the population with an indigenous maternal language lived under the poverty line, in contrast to 29% of native Spanish speakers. This breach becomes even wider when considering extreme poverty

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<sup>26</sup> Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas and General History of Peru*, trans. By Harold V. Livermore, part 1 (Austin; London: University of Texas Press, 1966), pp. 607-8.

<sup>27</sup> Curtin, p. 46.

<sup>28</sup> Quechua is the largest ethnic group in the country. 23.6% of respondents to this study self-define within this category and 16.7% speak Quechua as their mother tongue. Martín Moreno, ‘Patrones de autoidentificación etnorracial de la población indígena en las encuestas de hogares en el Perú’, *Debates en Sociología*, 38 (2013), 39-71 (pp. 51-2).

<sup>29</sup> For a thorough explanation of these nuances and the difficulties of fixing racial categories in the country, see Chapter 1, section 1.1, part B: ‘Peru: Racism without Races’.

(i.e. families unable to meet minimum nutritional needs). 26% of the population with an indigenous maternal language fell in this latter category, in stark disparity with almost 8% of Spanish native speakers.<sup>30</sup>

Since the start of the Peruvian republic (1821), indigenous peoples have been deemed uncivilised and ignorant, and blamed for the country's lack of sustainable economic growth.<sup>31</sup> In 1928, influential Peruvian sociologist José Carlos Mariátegui named this long-standing conception as 'el problema del indio' (the indigenous problem). The term served him to call attention to the ways in which the perceived backwardness of the natives needed to be approached as the consequence of a system of servitude that had favoured landlords and their interests.<sup>32</sup>

The country's landed political and social elites disagreed with Mariátegui. For them, the solution to 'the indigenous problem' needed to be brought from Europe. From 1831 (ten years after independence), the Peruvian state aimed to consolidate a modern nation by incorporating European immigrants into the local labour force and society, hoping also that progressive miscegenation would 'lighten' the country's population. However, these policies were not as successful as in Argentina. At its highest point, by 1857, European immigration in Lima only accounted for 13% of the city's population (13,000 people). They arrived mainly from Italy, England, France, Spain and Germany.<sup>33</sup> On a

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<sup>30</sup> David Sulmont and Juan Carlos Callirgos, '¿El país de todas las sangres? Race and Ethnicity in Contemporary Peru', in *Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race and Color in Latin America*, ed. by Edward Telles and PERLA (Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America) (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 2381, Kindle edition. For additional inequality indicators such as access to medical and household services, employment, income and participation in official State politics, see Rosemary Thorp and Maritza Paredes, *Ethnicity and the Persistence of Inequality. The Case of Peru* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 48ff.

<sup>31</sup> See Chapter 1, section 1.1, part B: 'Peru: Racism without Races'.

<sup>32</sup> *7 ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana* (Caracas: Ayacucho, 1979). For an assessment of Mariátegui's influence in Latin American thought, see for example Marc Becker, *Mariátegui and Latin American Marxist Theory* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1993).

<sup>33</sup> The first laws designed to stimulate European immigration gave economic benefits to those wishing to settle in Loreto (in the Amazon region). It has to be noted that this type of immigration had also its critics. Some sectors of the conservative aristocracy and the clergy had concerns that the religious beliefs and moral integrity of the potential newcomers could affect a country that they hoped would remain catholic. Giovanni Bonfiglio, *La presencia europea en el Perú* (Lima: Congreso de la República, 2001), pp. 22, 33, 91.

national level, between the late nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth century approximately 20,000 Europeans resided in Peru.<sup>34</sup>

Still, new labour force was much needed after the 1854 abolition of slavery in Peru. Since the policies had failed to attract Europeans, the state turned then to Asian immigration. From 1849 and for the next twenty-five years, around 90,000 to 100,000 Chinese people resettled in Peru in order to work on coastal farms.<sup>35</sup> They were joined by a smaller contingent of Japanese workers who, by 1930, totalled almost 21,000 people nationally.<sup>36</sup>

Asian populations settling on the coast helped develop this region but the natives still remained ‘a problem’. The coast strengthened its image as a region more modern than the Andes, where the majority of the native population still resides.<sup>37</sup> This divide between the coast and the Andes was to change in the 1950s, when internal migration due to industrialisation turned Peru into a distinctively urban country, with 75.9% of Peruvians living in urban areas by 2006.<sup>38</sup> Receiving immigrants from rural areas and from the Andes forced Lima to grow into a metropolis and to rethink her image as a white creole city.<sup>39</sup>

In the 1980s, ‘the indigenous problem’ came to a climax when terrorist organisations lunched an internal conflict that lasted two decades. Although the insurgents aimed to redress historic inequalities against peasant and native communities, the main victims of the conflict were precisely these people. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that investigated the conflict, 75% of victims spoke a native language

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<sup>34</sup> Reasons for these failed policies have primarily been placed on the country’s geographical position – journeys were longer and more expensive for those crossing the Atlantic to the Pacific coast of the Americas. Chikako Yamawaki, *Estrategias de vida de los inmigrantes asiáticos en el Perú* (Lima: IEP; JCAS, 2003) p. 47.

<sup>35</sup> Yamawaki, p. 33.

<sup>36</sup> Yamawaki, p. 50.

<sup>37</sup> For details on the racial and economic oppositions between coastal and Andean Peru, see Chapter 1, section 1.1, part B: ‘Peru: Racism without Races’.

<sup>38</sup> INEI, *Censos nacionales 2007. XI de población y VI de vivienda. Perfil sociodemográfico del Perú*, 2nd edn (Lima: INEI, 2008), p. 20.

<sup>39</sup> See Chapter 1, section 1.2, part B: ‘Lima and Yuyachkani’; also Chapter 4, section 4.2: ‘The Arcade’.



(mainly Quechua) as their mother tongue.<sup>40</sup> As a result of this conflict, more than six hundred thousand peoples were forced to migrate and became city dwellers, leaving their homes in order to avoid the unprecedented levels of violence that sparked in the country.<sup>41</sup>

It is no coincidence that the four most affected departments in this armed conflict are located in the Andes and rank amongst the poorest in the country.<sup>42</sup> As Peruvian psychoanalyst Jorge Bruce, writing on discriminatory practices in the country suggests, it is as if Peruvian history, marked by various inequalities and injustices towards indigenous peoples, had ‘frozen [its] Colonial affects’.<sup>43</sup>

### **C. Salvador and Brazil**

Throughout their republican history, the Brazilian gentry have aimed to construct the idea of a country without races, struggling to incorporate indigenous people and Afro-Brazilians in this picture. Estimates suggest that around 5,000,000 natives lived in these territories before contact with the Portuguese. By the start of the nineteenth century, only one million remained, mostly due to epidemics, forced labour and clashes with military expeditions.

In 2010, the national census registered almost 818,000 people who self-identified as indigenous – 0.4% of the country’s population. They reside throughout the Brazilian territory but concentrate particularly in the North (37.4%), the Northeast (25.5%) and the Central West (16%). State policies towards these peoples in the twentieth century have gravitated between paternalism and neglect. In 1940 Getúlio Vargas was the first Brazilian president to ever visit a native community – the Karajá – and to set foot in the central western region of the country. In 1916, the national civil code referred to them

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<sup>40</sup> Comisión de la Verdad y la Reconciliación (CVR), *Informe Final* (Lima: CVR, 2003) <<http://cverdad.org.pe/ifinal>> [accessed 2 February 2015] (pp. 158, 160). See also Chapter 1, section 1.1, part B: ‘Peru: Racism without Races’.

<sup>41</sup> CVR, *Informe Final*, pp. 14, 342-3. There are no official records on the exact amount of displaced peoples resulting from this armed conflict. The figures quoted come from registers of the association of displacement victims, Coordinadora Nacional de Desplazados y Comunidades en Reconstrucción del Perú (CONDECOREP), *Agenda nacional de las y los desplazados* (Lima: CONDECOREP, 2011), p. 16.

<sup>42</sup> CVR, *Informe final*, p. 342.

<sup>43</sup> Jorge Bruce, *Nos habíamos choleado tanto* (Lima: Universidad San Martín de Porres, 2007), p. 29.

as ‘relatively incapable’ in civil matters.<sup>44</sup> Two organisations were created in order to protect natives’ rights and their culture. The FUNAI (National Indian Foundation) was created in 1967 to supplant SPI (Service for the Protection of Indians, founded in 1910). Both institutions have been strongly criticised by activists in favour of indigenous rights for maintaining the natives in paternalistic welfare systems.<sup>45</sup>

In contrast with aborigines, Afro-Brazilians’ numerical significance has posed a much complex challenge for maintaining the ideal of a raceless country. Indeed, Afro-Brazilians are the largest sector of the population. According to the latest (2010) national census, a total of 96.8 million people declared themselves Afro-descendants, making up 50.7% of all the population. This includes both *pretos* (black peoples) and *pardos* (‘browns’, an umbrella term used in censuses to encompass a wide variety of mixed-raced African ancestry).<sup>46</sup> Northeastern Brazil, where Salvador lies, has the highest concentration of Afro-Brazilians. The regions’ population is 38.4% *parda* and 34.8% *preta*, in contrast to the southeast, which has the largest proportion of white residents (48.7%).<sup>47</sup>

Clear social indicators point towards clear racial discriminations against Afro-Brazilians. For example, in 2012 the percentage of deaths by firearms was two and a half times higher for Afro-Brazilians than for white Brazilians.<sup>48</sup> In 2013, black Brazilians with higher education earned only 57.4% of the salary of their white fellow countrymen. Moreover, blacks made up 56% of the unemployed population. A countrywide study carried out in 2010 showed that, using racial self-identification, white interviewees had 7.9 years of education while *pretos* had 6.9, and *pardos* 6.8

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<sup>44</sup> Seth Garfield, *Indigenous Struggle at the Heart of Brazil. State Policy, Frontier Expansion and the Xavante Indians, 1937-1988* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 24.

<sup>45</sup> Tatiana Signorelli Heise, *Remaking Brazil. Contested National Identities in Contemporary Brazilian Cinema* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), p. 42.

<sup>46</sup> Laboratório de Análises Econômicas, Históricas, Sociais e Estatísticas das Relações Raciais (LASER), ‘Mapa da população preta & parda no Brasil’ (based on data supplied by Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, in *Tempo em Curso* 3.10 (2011), p. 4.

<sup>47</sup> Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), *Atlas do Censo Demográfico 2010. Diversidade cultural* (Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 2013), pp. 136-7.

<sup>48</sup> Julio J. Waiselfisz, *Mortes matadas por armas de fogo. Mapa da violencia 2015* (Brasília: Secretaria-Geral da Presidência da República, 2015), p. 80.

schooling years. The study also determined that whites held 33% of high-status, non-manual occupations while *pardos* held 22.5% and *pretos* 20% of these positions.<sup>49</sup>

The African diaspora arrived in Brazil as early as 1549. A total of 3.6 million black peoples arrived before slave trade was abolished in 1850.<sup>50</sup> The country imported ten times more slaves than the USA.<sup>51</sup> After abolition, the landed, commercial and banking elites based in the coffee regions of São Paulo and the Southeast dominated the country. They sought to reinforce their economic predominance and to dilute the numeric majority of Afro-Brazilians by importing European workers. Instead of training black people in order to increase their possibilities to access the new labour market in more advantageous terms, the elites stimulated European immigration with private funds until abolition, when the state took the lead in paying for the passage of immigrants from Europe. Such a state policy was explicitly justified as a form of compensation to former slaveholders. At the same time, the state prohibited the immigration of black peoples in 1890, a ban that was supported again in the 1920s and the 1930s. Over five million European immigrants arrived between 1870 and 1963, mostly from Portugal, Spain, Italy and Germany. The majority (3.7 million) arrived before 1930 and 80% of these foreigners settled in the Southeast and São Paulo.<sup>52</sup> By 1920, half of the country's industrial workforce was foreign-born. Legislation explicitly favoured immigration

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<sup>49</sup> Graziella Moraes Silva and Marcelo Paixão, 'Mixed and Unequal. New Perspectives on Brazilian Ethnoracial Relations', in *Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race and Color in Latin America*, ed. by Edward Telles and PERLA (Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America) (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 3699ff. Kindle edition.

<sup>50</sup> Edward Telles, *Racismo à brasileira: Uma nova perspectiva sociológica* (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Ford, 2003), 42.

<sup>51</sup> Anthony Marx, *Making Race and Nation. A Comparison of South Africa, The United States and Brazil* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 49-52. Slavery in Brazil has been widely documented and from diverse angles. See for example, David Baronov, *The Abolition of Slavery in Brazil. The 'Liberation' of Africans through the Emancipation of Capital* (London: Greenwood Press, 2000); R.K. Kent, 'Palmares: An African State in Brazil', in *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, ed. by Richard Price (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Ana Lucia Araujo, *Public Memory of Slavery: Victims and Perpetrators in the South Atlantic* (New York: Cambria Press, 2010); Rafael Sanzio Araújo dos Anjos, 'Cartografia da diáspora África – Brasil', *Revista da ANPEGE* (Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Geografia), 7.1 (2011), 261-74.

<sup>52</sup> Edwards, pp. 48ff; Marx, p. 162; Telles, pp. 153ff.

from Europe until as late as 1945. It did so on the grounds that a European influx would give the country a substantial ‘injection of civilisation’ and a tool to ‘purify the race’.<sup>53</sup>

The project of whitening the Brazilian gene pool was itself part of eugenic movements influential in Europe as well as North and South America at the time.<sup>54</sup> Following the neo-Lamarckian branch of eugenics – dominant in France –, Brazilian social policies sought to overcome what they saw as ‘genetic deficiencies’ in one generation.

Originating in the view that blacks and native Brazilians were inferior to the Portuguese, who, in turn, were inferior to the German-Saxons, the Brazilian state hoped that immigration would trigger miscegenation and a predominantly white population. In 1912 Brazilian scientist João Baptista Lacerada predicted that by 2012 his country’s population would be 80% white, 17% Indian and 3% mixed (*mestiços*). Eugenics would thus completely eradicate Afro-Brazilians. The above-quoted figures of the country’s latest census clearly show that he could not have been more wrong.<sup>55</sup>

White genes and civilisation were not the only elements that European migrants brought into Brazil. They also introduced anarcho-syndicalist ideals that ignited local fears and discourses against non-assimilation as well as labour and social activism. These anxieties led Brazil to allow immigration from non-European countries such as Eastern Europe and the Middle East (particularly between 1850 and 1950) as well as Japan (between 1910 and the 1940s).<sup>56</sup> They settled mainly in the Southeast, helping increase the region’s wealth. In turn, the Southeastern aristocracies constructed for the Northeast and its capital, Salvador, the image of a poor, underdeveloped, uncivilised region; a burden to the progress of the country.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Marx, p. 162. The literal expressions are quoted from Célia Maria Marinho de Azevedo, *Onda negra, medo branco: O negro no imaginário das elites—século XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1987).

<sup>54</sup> For a comprehensive and careful study on the eugenics movement in Latin America, see Nancy Leys Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Nation and Gender in Latin America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

<sup>55</sup> Telles, p. 153. Figures from the 2010 census revealed that 47.7% of the country’s population is white, 7.6% is *preta* (black), 43.1% is *parda* (brown), 1.1% is of Asian descent (*amarela*), and 0.4% is indigenous. Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), *Características da população e dos domicílios: resultados do universo* (Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 2011), p. 17.

<sup>56</sup> Telles, p. 154.

<sup>57</sup> See Chapter 1, section 1.1, part C: ‘Brazil: Making Race Invisible’.

## 0.2 Positioning the Selected Theatre Companies

### A. Latin American Popular Theatre

Different times and contexts saw the foundation of Yuyachkani (1971), Catalinas Sur (1983) and Bando de Teatro Olodum (1990). These groups, however, are heirs to the same theatrical tradition: the Latin American *teatro popular* (popular theatre) or *nuevo teatro* (new theatre) that emerged in the continent from the 1950s. The genre comprises a wide variety of theatre praxes, companies and countries that shared basic common goals and ideologies.<sup>58</sup> These involved using theatre as a tool to denounce inequalities against marginalised sectors of society – peasants, workers, and the lower classes – as well as to promote social change. Productions often sought to revise their countries' national histories in order to expose the origins of racial and social disparities.<sup>59</sup>

The emergence of such a theatre trend was highly shaped by the historical and political situation that Latin America was undergoing at the time. The diplomatic and military tensions of the Cold War (1947-51) had divided the world into two blocs, Western capitalist nations supporting the USA and Eastern socialist allies of the Soviet Union. The Cuban Revolution (1953) took Fidel Castro and socialism to power in Cuba and ignited similar revolutionary aspirations in Latin America under the heroic figure of Che Guevara. Such an ideologically charged context was further exacerbated in the late 1970s, with Operation Condor – the USA's manoeuvre to intervene in the continent backing right-wing dictatorships against supporters of left of centre parties including peasants, students, union leaders and intellectuals.

Latin American theatre practitioners responded to this changing context by making theatre productions that sought to liberate what they saw as their countries' oppressed peoples; i.e., the sectors of the population that had been marginalised by national elites looking after their own economic interests. Cornerstones of this trend have been Augusto Boal (Teatro de Arena, 1956; Centro de Teatro do Oprimido, 1986, Brazil),

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<sup>58</sup> It covers such diverse countries as Brazil, Chile, Peru, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Colombia, Paraguay, Mexico, Uruguay, among others. For a thorough overview of this trend, see Juan Villegas, *Historia del teatro y de las teatralidades en América Latina* (Irvine, CA: Gestos, 2011).

<sup>59</sup> Villegas, pp. 162, 167.

Enrique Buenaventura (Teatro Experimental de Cali, 1955, Colombia), Santiago García (La Candelaria, 1972, Colombia), Sergio Corrieri (Grupo de Teatro Escambray, 1968, Cuba), and Yuyachkani.<sup>60</sup>

## **B. Yuyachkani, 1970**

This theatre group take its name from a Quechua word that means ‘I am thinking, I am remembering’. The name encapsulates two of the main goals of the group: to engage with Peru’s social memory and to call attention to the ways in which Andean culture has been marginalised in the country.

The Andean countryside has been with Yuyachkani since their foundation in 1971. The area’s myths and social conflicts as well as its aesthetic have informed most of the troupe’s repertoire.<sup>61</sup> Rubio explains that this is related to what has been Yuyachkani’s main motivation since the beginning: ‘the need to consider Peru in its diversity, to go beyond the simplified view that permeates the country still today, considering that what is valuable is what comes from Europe or the USA.’ Yuyachkani thus started their first explorations of local realities by working closely with the Peruvian Union of Peasants (Confederación Campesina del Perú). During the mid seventies, they became the Union’s cultural branch and their early productions were clearly vocal about the group’s communist affiliation.<sup>62</sup>

During those early days, no members of Yuyachkani were either Andean or peasant. They were middle-class people born in Lima. Over time, however, the group has incorporated new actors and is currently composed by members of various backgrounds. Director Miguel Rubio was born in Lima to a family of middle-class Andean immigrants. The cast includes sisters Teresa and Rebecca Ralli, born in Lima with grandparents that relocated from Greece; sisters Ana and Deborah Correa, born in

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<sup>60</sup> Villegas, pp. 180ff. For a careful examination of the work of Enrique Buenaventura, see Beatriz Rizk, *Creación colectiva. El legado de Enrique Buenaventura* (Buenos Aires: Atuel, 2008). On the history of Latin American theatre, see Miguel Rubio, *Raíces y semillas. Maestros y caminos del teatro en América Latina* (Lima: Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani, 2011).

<sup>61</sup> For more details on the reasons behind Yuyachkani’s interest in the Andes, see Chapter 3, section 3.2: ‘Time to Abide’, subsection ‘Looking at your house anew: Making theatre on unstable grounds’.

<sup>62</sup> Rubio, Interview by Michelle Nicholson-Sanz on Yuyachkani (Lima, March 2012).

Lima with grandparents originally from the northern coast and the central Andes in Peru; Amiel Cayo, born in Puno (southern Andes); and Augusto Casafranca, born in Cusco (southern Andes).

Over time, Yuyachkani's early highly ideologised theatre practice gave way to more nuanced works. Still dealing with pressing national political topics such as internal migration, racism and the country's internal war, the troupe rejected all evident display of any political creed. Since the mid-nineties, they started to explore and use the cast's personal experiences and lives in their productions. As Rubio puts it, '[we aimed to] build a metaphor of the country's concerns out of our own condition as actors and artists'.<sup>63</sup> This yielded productions that bordered on an oneiric register, unfolding with no clear narrative and no linear plot.<sup>64</sup>

Their work has received international acclaim. Most notoriously, they have been awarded a senior fellowship by the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, New York University in 2013; an honorary fellowship by CELCIT Spain (the Latin American Centre of Theatre Creation and Research) in 2010; the Dionisio Award for exceptional contributions to contemporary theatre, granted by the Latino Theatre Festival of Los Angeles (FITLA), USA in 2004; the Gallo de La Habana Award in recognition of Yuyachkani's contribution to theatre in Latin America and the Caribbean, granted by Casa de las Américas, Cuba in 2001; and the Human Rights National Award, in recognition of the troupe's work on human rights in Peru, granted by Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos, Peru in 2000.<sup>65</sup>

### **C. Catalinas Sur, 1983**

Uruguayan-born director Adhemar Bianchi founded Catalinas Sur when the country was returning to democracy in the early 1980s. The group pioneered the concept of community theatre in Argentina. As they understand it, community theatre groups are made up of amateur residents in a specific neighbourhood. Groups of no less than

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<sup>63</sup> Rubio, Interview by Michelle Nicholson-Sanz.

<sup>64</sup> Particularly, *No me toquen ese valse* (1990) and *Hasta cuándo corazón* (1994), shows that deal with the country's political and economic instability during the 1990s. For an examination of *Hasta cuándo corazón*, see Chapter 3, section 3.2: 'Time to Abide'.

<sup>65</sup> Yuyachkani, 'Historia', <<http://www.yuyachkani.org/historia.html>> [accessed July 2015].

twenty members aim to explore the social memory of their place of residence as a means of achieving social cohesion.<sup>66</sup>

Bianchi describes the work done by Catalinas Sur as revolving around five axes: memory, identity, public space, territoriality and a poetics of celebration. Their aim has been to explore the history and cultural styles of the territory they inhabit – La Boca – as a means to pose questions on the neighbourhood's and the group's identity. Infused with a parodic style, their shows are intended as social commentaries of the history of La Boca and its wider place within Argentina.<sup>67</sup>

Catalinas large productions feature around three hundred non-professional actors, including children as young as one year of age. Anyone is welcome to join the group, as long as they commit to rehearsals. These can take place as often as four days a week during periods when the group is devising a show.

Along the years Catalinas have devised modes of production that help them develop this kind of work. The neighbours from La Boca who initially come to the group take various workshops (in acting, directing, mask making, singing, learning to play different musical instruments, acrobatics as well as the making and handling of puppets). These workshops then serve as springboards for those who want to join Catalinas Sur as regular members, collaborating in running the organisation as well as devising the shows and performing in them.<sup>68</sup>

The group have received various national awards for their trajectory and for specific productions. They have also toured across Argentina, Uruguay, Cuba, Brazil, Spain and the USA.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Red de Teatro Comunitario, 'Qué es el teatro comunitario', <<http://teatrocomunitario.com.ar/que-es-el-teatro-comunitario-2>> [accessed 16 July 2015].

<sup>67</sup> Bianchi.

<sup>68</sup> For more details, see Chapter 1, section 1.2, part A: 'Buenos Aires and Catalinas Sur'.

<sup>69</sup> Some of the national awards they have received are Sociedad Argentina de Actores, 2000; Clarín Espectáculos, 2002; Teatro del Mundo, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2006, 2007, 2010. Catalinas Sur, <<http://www.catalinasur.com.ar>> [accessed 2 July 2015].



#### D. Bando de Teatro Olodum, 1990

O Bando, as the group is often called, was founded thanks to the initiative of current director Márcio Meirelles. Since then, the troupe has gone on to devise a series of nineteen theatre productions, all exploring Afro-Bahian identity, the history of the black diaspora in Salvador as well as current social problems and racism in Bahia.<sup>70</sup>

The company's cast of thirty-three black actors live or have lived in poor neighbourhoods with large populations of Afro-Brazilians in Salvador.<sup>71</sup> Aged between sixteen and fifty, most of them started in the group with very little experience in theatre, gaining skills over the years through their work in O Bando.

The group follows the tradition of Brazilian black theatre; that is, theatre groups that work on topics related to the history and culture of black people in Brazil and the social conflicts that affect them. This is a genre that dates back to the 1970s. Although there were some black actors on the Bahian stage already in the late nineteenth century, it was only in 1969 that a theatre troupe made up of black actors was founded in Salvador. Tenha (Teatro Negro da Bahia – Black Theatre of Bahia) aimed to voice the social inequalities against Afro-Bahians but they soon dissolved as local critics of the time branded their initiative as racist. In a country where racial democracy was the prevailing discourse,<sup>72</sup> the enterprise of raising awareness about racial difference and discrimination was in itself viewed as divisive and antagonistically racist. Tenha had been inspired by São Paulo's TEN (Teatro Experimental do Negro – Black Experimental Theatre), a critically influential group founded in 1944 as the country's first black company to use the theatre as a tool for social activism in favour of black Brazilians.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> The troupe's repertoire include: *Essa é nossa praia* (1991, 2004); *Onovomundo* (1991); *A volta por cima* (1992); *Ó pai, Ó!* (1992, 2001, 2007); *Woyzék* (1993); *Medeamaterial* (1993); *Bai bai Pelô* (1994); *Zumbi* (1995); *Zumbi está vivo e continua lutando* (1995); *Erê pra toda vida* (1996); *Ópera de três mirrêis* (1996); *Cabaré da RRRRRaça* (1997, 2014); *Ópera de 3 reais* (1998); *Sonho de uma noite de verão* (1999); *Já fui!* (1999); *Material Fatzler* (2001); *Relato de uma guerra que (não) acabou* (2002); *Áfricas* (2007); and *Dô* (2012). Bando de Teatro Olodum, <<http://bandodeteatoolodum.com.br>> [accessed 2 July 2015].

<sup>71</sup> They predominantly reside in the neighbourhood of Subúrbio Ferroviário.

<sup>72</sup> See Chapter 1, section 1.1, part C: 'Brazil: Making Race Invisible'.

<sup>73</sup> TEN are a milestone in the history of Brazilian theatre as initiators of a black theatre in the country. The group disintegrated in 1968, when their founding leader, black actor Abdias

Black theatre groups started to come to prominence in Bahia by the mid-seventies. Two were created between 1975 (Testa) and 1976 (Palmares Inãron). Four other groups were created in the next two decades, including Bando de Teatro Olodum in 1990. This trend was further strengthened in the new millennium, with groups originating in some of Salvador's *favelas* as well as the launch of festivals entirely dedicated to black theatre and performance.<sup>74</sup>

O Bando have toured to London (playing at LIFT, London International Festival of Theatre), Angola and Germany.

### 0.3 Research Context

This project seeks to make a contribution to debates on intercultural and Latin American theatre as well as on the performance of place. One of my main focal areas is the blended nature of the dramaturgical languages created by these three theatre groups. As I will show in the main body of this thesis, these companies utilise diverse performative traditions that are local to each of the cities considered, but originally arrived there either through immigration or European colonisation. My project highlights the ways in which the groups' use of such traditions defy notions of 'the local' in favour of viewpoints which consider transnationalism and the inevitable contagion among cultures that it brings about. By focusing on port cities, I aim to emphasise the network of relations behind these hybrid dramaturgical languages.

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Nascimento, sought exile from Brazil's military dictatorship (1964) in the USA. Evani Tavares Lima, 'Teatro negro, existência por resistência: problemáticas de um teatro brasileiro', *Repertório*, 17 (2011), 82-8, pp. 83ff.

<sup>74</sup> During the eighties and nineties the groups founded were Grupo de Teatro do Calabar (1980), Grupo de Teatro Ilê Aiyê (1981), Bando de Teatro Olodum (1990) and Companhia de Teatro Popular do Sesi (1991). Since 2000, the most prominent of the new generation groups include Coletivo Abdias Nascimento (CAN, 2000), Associação Cultural Herdeiros de Angola (2003), and Cia Gente de Teatro da Bahia (2007). Among the festivals, two stand out: The 'Fórum Nacional de Performance Negra' (National Forum of Black Performance, 2005, 2006 and 2008; with its last edition registering forty black theatre and dance groups) and the 'Festival A Cena tá Preta' (Dinner is Ready/Black; started in 2003 by O Bando, it has had five editions, the last of which was in 2014). Márcio Meirelles, 'Linha do tempo do teatro negro na Bahia' <<http://bandodeteatro.blogspot.ch/2010/11/linha-do-tempo-do-teatro-negro-na-bahia.html>> [accessed 1 July 2015]. See also Christine Douxami, 'Teatro negro: A realidades de um sonho sem sono', *Afro-Ásia*, 26 (2001), 313-63.

By bringing attention to place, language and identities in this way, I hope to contribute to debates around intercultural theatre. Discussions on the topic are usually entrapped between allegations of cultural colonialism (a dominant culture appropriating foreign cultural signs)<sup>75</sup> or of utopianism (a search for a ‘universal’, pre-cultural language).<sup>76</sup> In contrast, I aim to foreground intercultural practices that materialise a cultural blend already present and operational in these port cities.

By studying together the work of O Bando with that of Yuyachkani and Catalinas Sur, I am considering different types of interculturalism. Employing Helen Gilbert and Jacqueline Lo’s detailed classification of cross-cultural theatre, this kind of practice would fit into the category of syncretic theatre; that is, a practice within postcolonial contexts which ‘integrates performance elements of different cultures into a form that aims to retain the cultural integrity of the specific materials used while forging new texts and theatre practices’.<sup>77</sup>

The work of O Bando requires further precision. In this case, I am concerned with interculturalism as a result of a diasporic experience. I refer to diaspora here in its strictest form – as a process with three distinctive features: (i) dispersion (whether voluntary or forced, and often across borders); (ii) homeland orientation (either to an imagined or an existing land); and (iii) boundary maintenance (fostering group solidarity, even when it may be challenged).<sup>78</sup> For a large sector of the present-day Afro-Bahian community, Africa has become more of an imagined space of symbolic ties than a concrete and nuanced source of origins.<sup>79</sup> As sociologist Santana Pinho maintains, mobilising African bonds has enabled racially conscious Afro-Bahians to construct a common discourse and a racial identity. Bando de Teatro Olodum has also engaged with the figure of Africa as a means of political activism, and it has done so through theatre.

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<sup>75</sup> Rustom Bharucha, *Theatre and the World. Performance and the Politics of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1993).

<sup>76</sup> Eugenio Barba, *A Dictionary of Theater Anthropology. The Secret Art of the Performer* (London; New York: Routledge, 1991).

<sup>77</sup> ‘Towards a Topography of Cross-Cultural Theatre Practice’, *The Drama Review*, 46 (2002), 31-53 (p. 36).

<sup>78</sup> Rogers Brubaker, ‘The ‘diaspora’ diaspora’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28 (2005) 1-19 (pp. 5-7).

<sup>79</sup> Patricia de Santana Pinho, *Mama Africa: Reinventing Blackness in Bahia* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010).

Arguably, both as a concept and a lived experience, diaspora constitutes a space where applied theatre intersects with postcolonial and intercultural performance and theatre. While not all diasporas are enmeshed in postcolonial contexts, more often than not they are, and in ways that expose the enduring effects of colonialism and empire. And the sense of stretched belongings characteristic of diasporic communities frequently places them at the peripheries of the nation-state. Artists from the diasporas have explored these usually painful dis/locations and imagined alternative futures. Through their work they have articulated the intercultural negotiations they undergo every day, often aiming to bring about social and political changes to their marginal status in the process. In this sense, an emphasis on diaspora allows applied theatre to examine ‘how historically disenfranchised peoples have developed inventive tactics for transforming even the most sinister experiences of dislocation into vibrant and revolutionary forms of political and cultural life’.<sup>80</sup>

Notwithstanding, as Sandra Richards points out, the collaboration between diaspora and theatre studies has been surprisingly sparse (2010). Perhaps Joseph Roach’s seminal book *Cities of the Dead* (1996) remains the most extensive study on the area to date. His tracing of the repertoire of ‘expressive movements as mnemonic reserves’ shared by communities in London and New Orleans reveal the embodiment by means of performance of Paul Gilroy’s “Black Atlantic” – the circum-Atlantic area shared by Europe, Africa, and the Americas. More recently, writings on theatre and diaspora include Helen Gilbert and Jacqueline Lo’s timely ‘Diaspora and performance’, and Sandra Richards’ “‘Function at the junction’? African diaspora studies and theatre studies’, both published in 2010 as part of edited volumes on the subject of diaspora at large.

Comparatively, the engagement of theatre and performance studies with migration, interculturalism and postcolonialism has been wide-ranging and is well-known. It includes: Bharucha (1993); Balme (1999); Pavis (1996); Tompkins (2007); Gilbert and

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<sup>80</sup> David Chariandy, ‘Postcolonial diasporas’, *Postcolonial Text*, 2 (2006)  
<<http://www.postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/article/viewArticle/440/8369>> [accessed 20 July 2015].

Lo (2009); Knowles (2010); Cox (2014).<sup>81</sup> Revealingly, the second edition of *Theatre Histories* (Phillip Zarrilli, Bruce McConachie Gary Williams and Carol Fisher Sorgenfrei, 2010) includes sections on interculturalism and globalisation in the theatre, but none on performance or theatre practices in the diasporas. The book aims to give an overview of the history of theatre from a non-Western perspective yet it neglects the Spanish-speaking world. This thesis aims to redress such gaps in the literature, offering a collaboration between theatre and diaspora studies that can help achieve the goals set by Rustom Bharucha:

[By] stretching the methodologies of applied theatre beyond Euro-American traditions and the increasingly hegemonic use of English as a link-language, we are compelled to engage with other languages and world-views.<sup>82</sup>

#### **0.4 Methodological and theoretical frameworks**

An overall theoretical framework that draws on Foucault's concept of the heterotopia informs my project. Heterotopias are sites that relate to every other surrounding real space in ways that subvert or challenge their meaning.<sup>83</sup> This concept helps me to make the two central claims of my thesis: that the historic immigration processes that took place in these port cities make them places of alterity that question the unifying 'imagined community' of the nation. And, secondly, that the work undertaken by the theatre groups is heterotopic in nature. I claim that by staging the otherness that has been developed in these cities, these companies question and subvert the elitist views that have aimed to leave otherness at the margins of the nation.

In order to develop these claims, I also use the concept of utopia. This idea allows me to examine the racial, economic and political formations that elites in Argentina, Peru and Brazil have privileged since the early nineteenth century. I understand the notion of utopia as an imagined ideal social formation. In employing this concept, I seek to emphasize that these national utopias are social constructions. They are ideas that emerged within the context of modernity and have been reproduced through discourse, social interaction, 'official history' and economic and political systems. Moreover,

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<sup>81</sup> Tompkins, Joanne. *Unsettling Space: Contestations in Contemporary Australian Theatre* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

<sup>82</sup> Rustom Bharucha, 'Keynote lecture: Theatre applications: Locations, event, futurity', *RiDE: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 16 (2011) 365-82 (p. 378).

<sup>83</sup> Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', *trans.* by Jay Miscowiec, *Diacritics*, 16 (1986), 22-7.

considering these processes as national utopias allows for a comparison with the heterotopic discourses generated by Yuyachkani, Catalinas Sur and Bando de Teatro Olodum. Such a contrast shows the ways in which these national elites' idealised visions are not fully achieved projects but ones teeming with social fractures and tensions.

My analysis is also informed by an understanding of place as event; *i.e.*, as the gathering of people, objects, memories, affects and ideologies in particular configurations of space and time.<sup>84</sup> According to this interpretation, 'places not only *are*, they *happen*'.<sup>85</sup> Understanding places as events enables me to examine the ways in which Lima, Buenos Aires and Salvador have been historically constructed and for what purposes.

Moreover, this definition of place also enables to understand populations and their claims to place belonging as unsettled: always subject to changes and negotiations. The same geographical location acquires different meanings for different peoples and these meanings need to be voiced and debated. As Doreen Massey claims:

[If we conceptualise space as] a simultaneity of stories-so-far, then places are collections of those stories, articulations within the wider power-geometries of space. Their character will be a product of these intersections within that wider setting, and of what is made of them. And, too, of the non-meetings-up, the disconnections and the relations not established, the exclusions. All this contributes to the specificity of place. To travel between places is to move between collections of trajectories and to reinsert yourself in the ones to which you relate.<sup>86</sup>

I claim that the work of Yuyachkani, Catalinas Sur and Olodum have the effect of expanding the 'stories-so-far' that make up Lima, Buenos Aires and Salvador by adding the stories of those who are Others within their wider national contexts. Through this act they open up imaginative spaces that constitute what Homi Bhabha calls 'counter-narratives of the nation'.<sup>87</sup> In this sense, these theatre praxes are instances in which

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<sup>84</sup> Arturo Escobar, 'Culture Sits in Places: Reflections on Globalism and Subaltern Strategies of Localization', *Political Geography*, 20 (2001), 139-74, (p. 143).

<sup>85</sup> Edward Casey, 'How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time', in *Senses of Place*, ed. by Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso (Santa Fe, N.M.: School of American Research Press, 1996), pp. 13-52 (p. 27).

<sup>86</sup> Massey, p. 130.

<sup>87</sup> *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 149.

performance, as Erika Fischer-Lichte suggests, can be a sort of laboratory where ‘new forms of social coexistence are tried and tested’.<sup>88</sup>

## 0.5 Structure

Chapter one, ‘Place: Utopias and Heterotopias’, is divided in two sections. The first one, ‘National Utopias’, explains the kind of social and political communities that elites in Argentina, Peru and Brazil envisaged since the foundation of these republics. This description aims to show how such utopian visions have produced and reinforced current social exclusions. Emphasis is placed on explaining the extent to which modernity and ideals of Western progress determined the aspirations of these countries’ elites.

In the next section of Chapter one, ‘If These Ports Could Talk’, I outline the histories and social processes that have led Buenos Aires, Lima and Salvador to become places of cultural hybridity. I also give an overview of the current theatre scenes in each of these cities and explain where the work undertaken by the selected theatre groups fit into each of these cultural landscapes.

Chapter two, ‘Journeys’, offers an examination of how these theatre companies have explored the topic of migration. First, I analyse the ways in which Catalinas Sur stage the settlement of nineteenth-century European and twentieth-century Latin American foreigners in Buenos Aires. I then consider Yuyachkani’s exploration of internal migration in Lima. Finally, I investigate how Olodum reflect on the role of the African diaspora in Salvador.

The next two chapters focus on how these troupes have investigated the topics of time and space in their respective cities. These themes have been at the heart of modernity. As Doreen Massey claims, the idea of modern progress has turned space into time.<sup>89</sup> By giving priority to the West’s narrative, it has positioned places along a single timeline. Accordingly, places that coexist in time but do not fit modern standards are not deemed merely different but primitive and backward. Through such a dismissal, modern

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<sup>88</sup> ‘Interweaving Cultures in Performance: Different States of Being In-Between’, *New Theatre Quarterly*, 25:4 (2009), 391-401 (p. 400).

<sup>89</sup> Massey, pp. 66ff.

discourses have failed to explain and address the inequalities faced by those who fall outside Western patterns of development.

Chapter three, 'Time', looks at the ways in which Yuyachkani utilise Lima's colonial past in order to perform the violent times endured in the city during the Peruvian internal war. This section then examines how Catalinas Sur re-tell the story of Buenos Aires' celebrations of the Argentine centennial of independence. The chapter concludes with an analysis of how Olodum explore Afro-Bahian understandings of duration and time.

Finally, chapter four, 'Space', examines theatrical representations of spaces that have been particularly relevant for the formation of alterity in these nations: the arcade in Peru (a site that has become iconic of internal immigration in Lima); the social club in Argentina (a privileged place for social and political exchanges in Buenos Aires); and the *quilombo* (communities of runaway slaves that date back to colonial times and campaign for land ownership in present-day Brazil).

Through my broader argument across all the chapters, I hope to show how the theatre productions I am analysing constitute a counter-narrative of dominant discourses on modernity, order and progress in Peru, Argentina, and Brazil.



## Chapter 1

### Place: Utopias and Heterotopias

#### **1.1 National Utopias**

##### **A. Argentina: Illusions of Whiteness**

‘We Argentines descend from ships’. This well-known Argentine saying refers to how deeply rooted the country’s cultural heritage and its demographics are in the migration wave from Europe that took place in the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries. The motto also expresses the well-known pride most Argentines take in the nation’s European origins. Today, the European imprint can be certainly perceived in Buenos Aires but less so in greater Buenos Aires and in other major Argentine cities. The imprint lessens even in various metropolitan neighbourhoods such as La Boca and Belgrano (with large Latin American communities) and Bajo Flores (identified with Korean migrants).

In this section I want to reconsider the myth of Argentina as the European enclave within Latin America. My aim is to give an outlook of the country’s current social and economic stratification by swiftly tracing it back to its history from the tense love affair with European immigrants during the years of the country’s early Republic (1816) through to current constructions of class and race. What I hope to show is the ways in which the utopian social composition imagined by the country’s ‘founding fathers’ was filled with tensions and contradictions that still haunt Argentine society.

The land that today makes up Argentina did not have much prominence under Spanish colonial rule. It did not offer the wealthy mines that were found in what later became Peru and Bolivia. It did possess, however, vast extensions of land but no large indigenous civilisations to work it. Instead, as explained in the introduction, Buenos Aires functioned primarily as an illegal commercial post.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Introduction, section 0.1, part A, ‘Buenos Aires and Argentina’.

Independence, however, dramatically changed this economic structure.<sup>2</sup> At the time the country was freeing itself from Spanish rule, Buenos Aires' total exports were made up from 20% of pastoral goods and 80% of silver. There were only a few agricultural farms on the outskirts of towns and livestock rearing was small and underdeveloped. The British, with larger capital and shipping resources, assumed the commercial role previously sustained by Spaniards. This context – aggravated by power struggles after independence – forced local entrepreneurs to redirect their attention to cattle and the extensive, well-irrigated land. From 1815, *estancias* (country estates) became the new economic pillar of the local elite. Nonetheless, the expansion of *estancias* had to overcome one major obstacle – the resistance of the Indians inhabiting the plains southwest of the Rio Salado. The Argentine state provided the *estancieros* (landowners) with both legal stability and security. The first would come in 1822, with a system of emphyteusis that authorised individuals and corporations to rent public land for a period of twenty years at fixed, low prices. With no limit to the extension of land claimed and freedom to sell renting rights and to sublet, the system promoted latifundism to such an extent that by the 1830s only 500 individuals had the rights to about 21 million acres of public land. These families became the country's landed oligarchy. Juan Manuel Rosas (Governor of Buenos Aires in office for the first time between 1835 and 1852) changed the emphyteusis system by allowing land to be sold and even giving it away to his supporters. The already prosperous previous tenants under emphyteusis acquired most of this land.

Rosas also improved security. In 1833 he led the 'Campaign of the Desert', designed to hold back the Indians and to expand the southern border. This enterprise would be further strengthened some forty years later, with the so-called 'Conquest of the Desert' (1870s-84), which established dominion over the Patagonia region and exterminated thousands of natives.

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<sup>2</sup> For a summary of Argentina's socio-economic formation during the nineteenth century, see John Lynch, 'The River Plate Republics from Independence to the Paraguayan War', in *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, ed. by Leslie Bethell, 11 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985-95), iii, *From Independence to c. 1870* (1985), pp. 615-76. See also Tulio Halperin Donghi, *De la revolución de independencia a la confederación rosista* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1985); Tulio Halperin Donghi, *Politics, Economics and Society in Argentina in the Revolutionary Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

At this stage, Argentine society was rigidly stratified and based on land. *Estancieros* made up the upper class and controlled the state and local administration, the parliament and the army. The remainder of the population made up the lower class. Larger in numbers, these were peasants working in *estancias*, small farmers or tenants, wage laborers, *gauchos* and vagrants. *Gauchos* were free nomad horsemen of mixed-race – most likely some combination of white, Indian and black races)– who were slowly forced to become farmworkers.

To some extent, commerce blurred some boundaries between the two classes as it was economically and socially esteemed. This meant the rise of an incipient bourgeoisie. But local businessmen faced strong competition from their foreign (mainly British) counterparts, thus not allowing a middle class to flourish. Similarly, successful imports of manufactures made national industry almost inexistent. Slavery endured in Argentina well after independence was formally declared in 1816. The government openly accepted slaves entering the country from the illegal trade until the late 1830s (when the country signed an anti-slave treaty with the British). By 1810, almost 30% of Buenos Aires' population was black or mulatto, and most of them were slaves. Slavery was finally formally abolished when the country's Constitution was approved, in 1853.

The Constitution also favoured European immigration through tax exemptions and the allocation of arable land. It was not too long until a sector of the aristocracy realised that a vast, well-irrigated territory with plenty of pasture and a lucrative cattle-raising business would need an additional labour force.

By 1816, almost five hundred people inhabited one million square miles of land. By 1869 (a mere 53 years later), the population had increased to the staggering figure of 1,736,923. This was due to a fall in the mortality rate but also, since the mid-nineteenth century, as a result of immigration from Europe. Indeed, after 1862 the Argentine immigration policies attracted almost 15,000 new settlers into the country each year after the late 1850s. Newcomers had almost no entry restrictions and from 1876 they enjoyed subsidised travel, free stay in Buenos Aires on arrival and potential access to land and seeds.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Tanja Bastia and Matthias vom Hau, 'Migration, Race and Nationhood in Argentina', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 40 (2014), 475-92 (p. 478).

Labour demands were not the only grounds for such successful immigration policies. These measures were also, critically, part of a quest for whiteness – ‘the construction of Argentina as a white nation of European descendants’.<sup>4</sup> School text books in the late nineteenth century emphasised the ways in which European immigrants would contribute to modernising and ‘civilising’ the country. Rhetoric surrounding parliamentary and media debates on immigration were also heavily racialised and favoured the arrival of northern Europeans, deemed to be committed workers and law-abiding citizens. Significantly, the northern corners of the continent were perceived as more modern than Spain, which at the time was often signalled by Argentines as the source of all colonial evils – from backwardness to laziness and corruption.<sup>5</sup> Racial scientific trends infused this pro-European discourse with ‘objectivity’. Immigration would imprint modernity and progress into Argentine society through the mixing of the local and foreign so that the native lower classes would gradually improve their social habits and biological traits.<sup>6</sup> This dichotomy between civilisation and barbarism – the city (particularly Buenos Aires), civilised through contact with Europe, and the countryside, underdeveloped and peopled by barbaric *gauchos* and Indians – was strongly defended in the well-known classic *Facundo*, a book first published in 1845 by the intellectual Faustino Sarmiento who would later become the country’s president (1968-74).

The immigration enterprise was a colossal numerical success. In nearly twenty years (between 1895 and 1914), the country’s population had almost doubled (from 4 to 7.9 million people). The local aristocracy’s discontent was generated, however, when it became clear that their efforts had lured large masses of foreigners who were not considered truly ‘white’ as they were mostly Italian and Spanish nationals, and some of them were anarchists raising inflammatory speeches against the Argentine state. Thus, while immigration was still high during the period between the 1870s and 1920s, two images of the foreigner coexisted in intellectual and parliamentary debates as well as the

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<sup>4</sup> Bastia and vom Hau, p. 476.

<sup>5</sup> See Samuel L. Baily, ‘Sarmiento and Immigration: Changing Views on the Role of Immigration in the Development of Argentina’, in *Sarmiento and His Argentina*, ed. by Joseph T. Criscenti (Boulder, CO.; London: Lynne Rienner, 1993), 131-42 (pp.138ff.); Walter Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 8ff.

<sup>6</sup> Eduardo Zimmermann, ‘Racial Ideas and Social Reform: Argentina, 1890-1916’ in *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 72 (1992), 23-46.

media – the civilising force and the subversive agitator. So much so that different laws were enforced restricting either their residence permit or their entrance.<sup>7</sup>

By the turn of the twentieth century, Argentina's whiteness was undisputed. Contrastingly, the vast influx of immigrants produced strong criticism and calls for ways to nationalise foreigners and 'homogenise' the country.<sup>8</sup> Cultural nationalism became influential, advocating a reappraisal of the *gaucho* and the interior as sources of 'authentic' traditions, and insisting on prioritising Argentine history and literature in schools.<sup>9</sup> Upheld by young intellectuals based in Buenos Aires who came from wealthy provincial families, this movement aimed to subvert Sarmiento's dichotomy by portraying Buenos Aires' cosmopolitanism as false and superficial and the *pampas* as the invisible, autochthonous 'Argentine essence'.

Transatlantic immigration generally decreased after World War I, during the aftermaths of the Great Depression and the post World War II years. Eastern European Jews were the exception, albeit to the disappointment of local elites for whom they were 'not white enough'.<sup>10</sup> The main reason for the decline of transatlantic migrants was twofold: guest-worker programmes in North-Western Europe attracted people escaping the postwar economic and political situation in Europe, and the entry of low-skilled workers from the country's interior and neighbouring nations (Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru and Brazil) from the 1920s and into the 1940s. Although this new influx of strangers never amounted to more than 3% of the total population, particularly since the 1980s it has been perceived by some sections of the media, the political class and the general

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<sup>7</sup> For an exhaustive description of the deliberations in parliament, see Ana Paula Penchaszadeh, 'Reflexiones sobre los bordes de la nación argentina. Extranjeros y habitantes en los pliegos de la Ley de Residencia', paper presented at the Sociedad Argentina de Análisis Político, 2 November 2012 <<http://www.saap.org.ar/esp/docs-congresos/congresos-saap/VII/programa/paneles/a/a5/penchaszadeh.pdf>> [accessed 26 February 2015]. For a wider overview that compares Argentine immigration policies in the late nineteenth- and the twentieth centuries, see Bastia and vom Hau.

<sup>8</sup> In 1888 Domingo Sarmiento, perhaps the strongest promoter of Europeans as a modernising tool, raised his concern that massive immigration had brought Buenos Aires and Argentina into chaos. See Baily, p. 140.

<sup>9</sup> Jean H. Delaney, "'El ser argentino": Cultural Nationalism and Romantic Concepts of Nationhood in Early Twentieth-Century Argentina' *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 34 (2002), 625-58.

<sup>10</sup> Bastia and vom Hau, p. 480.

population as a serious threat for the Argentine white-nation utopia – a project that had been one of the main founding pillars of the republic.<sup>11</sup>

This long-sustained ideal of a white Argentina was to be significantly revised during the following two decades, with Juan Domingo Perón in the presidency (1946-55).

Although Perón's administration still favoured immigration from Europe as a means to modernise Argentina while hindering the entrance of Latin Americans, he fostered internal migration and the social and economic inclusion of these often dark-skinned Argentines. Peronists incorporated this new urban labour force into their ranks under the label *cabecitas negras*, appropriating this racially charged term first coined by opponents of Perón. Albeit a critical turn for the hegemonic idea of a white nation, to a large extent Peronism still maintained this myth through a rhetoric that focused more on class than race. Argentina was thus depicted as a country of workers and a *crisol de razas*, a melting pot characterised by its Spanish (rather than native or black) origins.<sup>12</sup>

The following decades, from 1955 until 1983, saw the country deeply polarised between followers and opponents of Peronism, which led to a period of instability, violence and unrest. A series of civil and military governments succeeded one another and ended either through military coups or due to military pressures. The narrative of a white Argentina was reinforced during this time. European migration was still encouraged although it met with little success. Migration from other parts of Latin America, however, was actively deterred.<sup>13</sup>

This migratory policy did not change much until after 1983, with the recovery of democracy. Latin American immigration had not surpassed 3.5% of the national population. However, a sector of politicians and the media raised alarms about an 'invasion' of workers from Peru, Paraguay, Bolivia and other South American

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<sup>11</sup> Sebastián Bruno, 'Cifras imaginarias de la inmigración limítrofe en la Argentina', in *Migración y Mercosur: Una relación inconclusa*, ed. by Susan Novick (Buenos Aires: Catálogos, 2010), pp. 95-110 (p. 96). See also Bastia and vom Hau; Alejandro Grimson and Gabriel Kessler, *Argentina and the Southern Cone. Neoliberalism and National Imaginations* (New York; London: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>12</sup> Bastia and vom Hau, pp. 482-3.

<sup>13</sup> Arguably one of the most infamous measures to prevent migration from neighbouring countries was the General Law of Migration, passed in 1981. Implemented during the military mandate, this law was targeted specifically towards Latin Americans and gave authorities the capacity to expel and control these unwanted migrants. Bastia and vom Hau, p. 483.

countries, accusing the new settlers of the following: increased crime and unemployment, urban insecurity, and the spread of diseases and infections such as cholera. Parliamentarians and journalists made similar allegations against late nineteenth-century European immigrants at the time. However, one central feature made the 1980s rhetoric rather different. In twentieth-century Argentina, assimilation after arrival was not an issue in relation with Latin American migrants. Rather, concerns focused on how to prevent any more of these arrivals and on hindering the permanent settlement of those who had already entered the country.<sup>14</sup>

Only at the turn of the twenty-first century, did the country start to follow global trends on multiculturalism. The government put in place policies for the inclusion of the sector of Argentines that had been marginalised in the country as a result of the pervasive myth of a white Argentina. Some of these policies include: the granting of special minority rights to indigenous communities; the inclusion of the category of Afro-Argentine in the 2010 national census;<sup>15</sup> Néstor Kirchner's administration passing of an migration law in 2003 acknowledging migration as a human right and allowing certain benefits even for illegal immigrants;<sup>16</sup> and the ratification in 2007 of the International Convention of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.<sup>17</sup>

Despite these significant changes, the dominant idea of a white Argentina still proves difficult to challenge. School textbooks do approach the issue of diversity but mainly as the historical transformation of Spaniards and Italians into Argentines while migrants from Latin America are largely left out from depictions of the nation.<sup>18</sup> At the start of

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<sup>14</sup> Bastia and vom Hau, p. 484.

<sup>15</sup> For more details on the Afro-Argentine population, see Introduction, section 0.1, part A, 'Buenos Aires and Argentina'.

<sup>16</sup> *Ley 25871*, 'Ley de política migratoria argentina'. The law grants legal and illegal migrants access to health and education. They are also entitled to due process if facing detention or expulsion, and to family reunification. Most significantly, a favourable citizenship frame has been designed especially for Mercosur citizens (from Brazil, Paraguay, Peru, Bolivia, Uruguay, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador and Venezuela). Organización de los Estados Americanos (OEA), 'Argentina. Sinopsis del marco normativo vigente sobre migración' <[http://www.migracionoea.org/paises/sinopsis\\_ar.asp](http://www.migracionoea.org/paises/sinopsis_ar.asp)> [accessed 1 March 2015].

<sup>17</sup> Bastia and vom Hau, p. 486. See also Chisu Teresa Ko, 'From Whiteness to Diversity: Crossing the Racial Threshold in Bicentennial Argentina', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (2013) 1-16.

<sup>18</sup> Bastia and vom Hau, p. 485.

this century, television advertisements featured Asian- and Afro-Argentines but depict them through gross stereotypes.<sup>19</sup>

At the start of this new millennium Argentina has started to think of itself as multicultural. But this major transformation did not arise overnight. The global tendency towards reconsidering pluralism and the rights of minorities played a large role in this re-imagining, as it did the country's leading role in solidifying ties with other Latin American countries during the Kirchners' consecutive administrations (2003 to date). But arguably one of the most significant factors in this process has been the decline of the Argentine middle class since the 2001 economic crisis. Xenophobia is still ripe against citizens from neighboring countries, Asians and *cabecitas negras* (working-class darker locals).<sup>20</sup>

However, the 2001 crisis and the increasing poverty indexes since the 1990s have been a clear 'wake-up call' for Argentine society. Indeed, before the military dominated the political arena in 1976, the country had the lowest poverty level in the continent. In 1984, one year after regaining democracy, structural poverty reached a staggering 22%. A large middle class was precisely what distinguished Argentina from the rest of the continent. The neoliberal regimes of the 1990s accelerated this process, with 42.5% of Argentines living below the poverty line in May 1990 and 54% in October 2002. Between 1980 and 1990 the average income of wage earners dropped 40%. Equally, if during the 1980s more than 70% of the population were middleclass, in the 1990s class self-identification was a difficult topic. The shame of poverty that characterized this period expressed itself in loud mobilisations that have been a feature of this society since the 1990s.<sup>21</sup> This loss of the middle class brought the country closer to the socio-political situation that affects most of the region – a small elite governing a large poverty-stricken mass.

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<sup>19</sup> For a detailed description of how Asian immigrants feature in Argentine advertising, see Ko.

<sup>20</sup> Ko, p. 4; Grimson, pp. 117ff.

<sup>21</sup> Grimson, pp. 81–115.



## B. Peru: Racism Without Races

When the final report of the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was released in a public ceremony in 2003, the country was in shock. It had taken the Commission two years to achieve its mandate – ‘to investigate assassinations, torture, disappearances, displacement, employment of terrorist methods and other violations’ that were committed between 1980 and 2000 by all parties engaged in the civil conflict between the state and two terrorist organisations, Shining Path and the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement [MRTA].<sup>22</sup> Two particular findings of the TRC left the nation deeply overwhelmed: the staggering number and the ethnic origins of the casualties of this conflict. A total of 69,280 people had died or disappeared. As the TRC Report observed, the conflict had left behind a toll of casualties larger than that of all the internal and external wars in which Peru had been involved during its 182 years as an independent Republic.<sup>23</sup> Within the wider Latin American context, only the Guatemalan conflict (1960-1996), with 200,000 fatalities, generated a greater number of deaths.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, according to the Report, 75% of victims of the Peruvian conflict spoke a native language (mainly Quechua) as their mother tongue.<sup>25</sup> In the midst of the war, in 1993, only 16% of Peruvians spoke a native language as their first language.<sup>26</sup> Salomón Lerner, the Commission’s President, claimed in his speech for the public delivery of the report:

This is, as we Peruvians know, a part of the population that has been historically ignored by the State and by urban dwellers. The latter is a sector of society that does enjoy the benefits of our political community. (...) [T]hese two decades of destruction and death would not have been possible without the profound contempt towards the most dispossessed in the country – a contempt held equally by the Shinning Path and the agents of the State. This contempt tinges every moment of Peruvians’ everyday life.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> United States Institute of Peace, ‘Truth Commission: Peru’

<<http://www.usip.org/publications/truth-commission-peru-01>> [accessed 7 February 2015].

<sup>23</sup> Comisión de la Verdad y la Reconciliación [CVR], *Informe Final* (Lima: CVR, 2003)

<<http://cverdad.org.pe/ifinal>> [accessed 10 March 2015], pp. 315-6.

<sup>24</sup> United States Institute of Peace, ‘Truth Commission: Guatemala’,

<<http://www.usip.org/publications/truth-commission-guatemala>> [accessed 10 February 2014].

<sup>25</sup> CVR, *Informe final*, pp. 158, 160.

<sup>26</sup> CVR, *Informe final*, pp. 315-6.

<sup>27</sup> ‘Se trata, como sabemos los peruanos, de un sector de la población históricamente ignorado por el Estado y por la sociedad urbana, aquélla que sí disfruta de los beneficios de nuestra comunidad política. [E]stas dos décadas de destrucción y muerte no habrían sido posibles sin el

Withal, the TRC did not find enough grounds to conclude that this had been an ethnic conflict.<sup>28</sup> The bloodiest internal war in the country's republican history had left a much larger impact on native populations, yet the conflict had not been mobilised on ethnic grounds. Inspired by Leninist, Maoist and Marxist ideologies, the terrorist movements that rose against the Peruvian state had championed class struggles as their key motivating factor.<sup>29</sup>

In this section I want to outline Peru's current ethnic composition and briefly trace the historical reasons that are at the base of the inequalities suffered by indigenous Peruvians. As I hope to show, although the category of race and the practice of racism run deep throughout the history of Peruvian society, the boundaries of races and ethnicities are difficult to delineate with any consistency.

Since the public presentation of the Peruvian TRC's Report, ethnicity and ethnic discrimination have received renewed attention both from the academy and the State.<sup>30</sup> This shift of focus has also been influenced by a global trend to recognise ethnic minorities and by the Peruvian State's need to measure disenfranchised groups for the implementation of social policies and mechanisms for positive discrimination.<sup>31</sup>

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profundo desprecio a la población más desposeída del país, evidenciado por miembros del PCP-Sendero Luminoso y agentes del Estado por igual, ese desprecio que se encuentra entretejido en cada momento de la vida cotidiana de los peruanos'. Salomón Lerner, 'Discurso de presentación del informe final de la Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación', 28 August 2003, <<http://centromemoria.gov.co/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/discurso-Lerner.pdf>> [accessed 10 March 2015], p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Lerner, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> For details on this conflict and an analysis of *Adiós Ayacucho*, one of Yuyachkani's productions that deal directly with this subject, see Chapter 2, section 2.2, part 'Peru's civil war'.

<sup>30</sup> A study published in 2011 estimated that in the previous ten years, thirty-four academic studies on Peru had regarded ethnicity as a key factor in socio-economic analysis. Néstor Valdivia, *El uso de categorías étnico/raciales en censos y encuestas en el Perú: Balance y aportes para una discusión* (Lima: Grade, 2011), p. 123.

<sup>31</sup> Particularly significant has been the country's ratification in 1993 of the International Labour Organisation Convention No. 169 on Indigenous Peoples, which aims to recognise and protect a range of cultural and land rights of native communities. For this and subsequent international legal initiatives that have informed the Peruvian State's interest in recognising indigenous and Afro-descendent communities, see Valdivia, pp. 19ff.

This has been a major change since the category of race had not been measured in national censuses since 1940. Instead, polls employed what the State considered more ‘objective’ criteria, such as language. This was part of a project to modernise the country and promote national unity carried out particularly during the second half of the twentieth century, by the military left-wing government of General Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968-75).<sup>32</sup> Aiming to override the pejorative connotations of the word *indio* (Indian) and to transform the social hierarchies identified with the local oligarchy, state discourses backed an enduring policy that favoured the use of the category of ‘peasant’ rather than ‘Indian’.

Despite the revived interest in measuring and discussing ethnicity in the country, the size of the Peruvian indigenous population is far from clear. Various studies reveal different figures depending on the markers they privilege in order to define indigeneity. Thus, according to a 2001 survey that considers the head of household’s maternal language, indigenous people amount to 19.2% of the country’s total population. The same survey estimates this population at 47.7% when taking into account the maternal language of the head of household’s parents. This figure rises to 74.8% in a 2002 study that instead uses the head of household’s place of birth as an ethnic marker. In 2006, the percentage drops to 38.4% when another survey considered the head of household’s self-identification with racial and ethnic categories.<sup>33</sup> Within the wider context of Latin America, the Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL) estimated in 2006 that the Peruvian native population is the second largest in the region in absolute numbers (7.6 million, a figure only surpassed by Mexico), and in relative numbers this is the third largest population (27%, exceeded by Bolivia and Guatemala).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> David Sulmont, ‘Race, Ethnicity and Politics in Three Peruvian Localities: An Analysis of the 2005 CRISE Perceptions Survey in Peru’, *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, 6:1 (2011), 47-78 (p. 53).

<sup>33</sup> Sulmont, p. 54. Even the same study produces very different results when adopting different indicators (be they racial, cultural or linguistic). See for example the outcomes of the Peruvian PERLA survey conducted in November 2010: David Sulmont and Juan Carlos Callirgos, ‘¿El país de todas las sangres? Race and Ethnicity in Contemporary Peru’, in *Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race and Color in Latin America*, ed. by Edward Telles and PERLA (Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America) (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 2537-3130, Kindle edition.

<sup>34</sup> Sulmont and Callirgos, 2370.

According to figures from the latest national survey (2012), the sector of the population who identify themselves with Andean cultures and ancestry amounts to 26.4%, and that comprising people whose mother tongue is a native Andean language is 18.7%. This disparity illustrates the extent to which ethnicity (in general, but particularly so in the Peruvian case) is context-specific. Due to discrimination, people with indigenous roots often avoid using native cultural signs such as language and clothes when they resettle in cities. A twofold effect is produced through contact with whiter Peruvians and urban ‘Western’ social patterns.<sup>35</sup> On the one hand, when considering interactions with the relatively well-off and well-educated *mestizo* population, immigrants become more aware of their own ethnic difference – their being ‘indios’. Simultaneously, they may regard themselves as *mestizos* when positioned along other indigenous persons who may have migrated into cities. Albeit a race-laden label, *mestizo* is deemed a more ‘neutral’ one,<sup>36</sup> denoting closer proximity to whiteness and urban life.

Peruvian anthropologist Marisol de la Cadena has advanced the idea of ‘cultural racism’ in order to explain the fluid nature of race and ethnicity in the Peruvian context (and more widely in Latin America). The concept refers to a cultural, rather than a biological, understanding of race. It denotes the social experience of ‘classifying’ people according to their socio-economic status and culture. Although some phenotypical features such as skin colour may be considered, culture and context are at the core of this structure. Thus, cultural racism explains how people can ‘whiten’ (*i.e.* be considered as racially and culturally whiter than they otherwise would be deemed) by bettering their education and economic condition. Indigenous culture is at the bottom of this flexible pyramid – both economic and socially; while at the top lie the most prosperous, well-educated and ‘Occidental’ Peruvians. This explains the pervasiveness of the practice of ‘raceless racism’ in the country.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Rosemary Thorp and Maritza Paredes, *Ethnicity and the Persistence of Inequality. The Case of Peru* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 15ff. For a complete study on the ambivalence of the category of ‘mestizo’ in Peru, see Marisol de la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos: The Politics of Race and Culture in Cuzco, Peru, 1919-1991* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000) Kindle edition.

<sup>36</sup> Sulmont, p. 55.

<sup>37</sup> See Cadena.

Some scholars maintain that ‘cultural racism’ also accounts for the inefficacy of ethnicity as a mobilising cause for collective action in the country.<sup>38</sup> In the above-mentioned 2012 national household survey, for example, only 16.5% of interviewees claimed to belong or considered themselves as part of an indigenous people.<sup>39</sup> This is in spite of the fact that 28.1% of respondents identified themselves with a native culture – either Andean or Amazonian. Significant events of indigenous collective action have taken place in the country, particularly in the 1950s, ‘60s and ‘80s in relation to land rights. However, social theorists have called attention to the low level of ethnically related political mobilisation in Peru as compared to other countries in the region with large indigenous populations.<sup>40</sup> Instead, class and the corresponding category of ‘peasant’ have bounded organised activism.

Two main explanations have been suggested for the inadequacy of ethnicity as a binding communal force. One of these emphasises the social stigma of self-identifying in ethnic terms in a society fraught with discrimination – the heavy burden of cultural racism. The second interpretation, in turn, focuses on historic events that have weakened autonomous indigenous political organisation. The most salient of these events have been the country’s late twentieth-century civil conflict and state policies carried out during the 1960s and ‘70s aiming to modernise the countryside. The former resulted in the murder of a number of indigenous people who were leaders of their communities and opposed either to the armed forces or the insurgents. The latter, in turn, included an agrarian reform that mandated that peasants became owners through a co-operative system (*cooperativas*) overseen by the State; as well as the elimination of the category of *indio* from official discourse.<sup>41</sup>

The past decade, however, has seen an upsurge of social protests led by indigenous leaders. Such demonstrations have gained momentum thanks to the implementation in 2011 of the Law to Prior Consultation of Indigenous and Native Peoples. Aiming to discuss with native communities any legislative or administrative policy that directly affects them, the law has not been implemented evenly throughout the country. Since

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<sup>38</sup> For overviews of this debate, see Cadena; Sulmont and Callirgos.

<sup>39</sup> Martín Moreno, ‘Patrones de autoidentificación etnoracial de la población indígena en las encuestas de hogares en el Perú’, *Debates en Sociología*, 38 (2013), 39-71 (p. 52).

<sup>40</sup> Countries such as Guatemala, Mexico, Bolivia and Ecuador.

<sup>41</sup> For a summary of these debates, see Sulmont, pp.49-50.

coming into operation, all the consultations carried out within this legal framework have targeted Amazonian peoples (mostly regarding oil concessions). Andean communities, in contrast, have not yet been affected by this law as the government has regarded these as peasants rather than indigenous people. This unequal outcome seems to be grounded in the significance of mining investments – concentrated particularly in the Andes – for the country’s economy. In the tension of interests between natives and investment, the present administration has maintained a steadfast understanding that indigenous peoples hinder business and progress.<sup>42</sup>

Regardless of the fluidity of the racial pyramid in Peru and the inadequacy of ethnic identity as a catalyst for collective action, race still deeply shapes everyday-life interactions. A study conducted with high school and university students in Lima in 2002 concluded that:

[Race] is a category that makes a great deal of sense to Peruvian youth. While culture and socio-economic status matter, young people are aware of skin color and facial features and many perceive an imagined ‘racial hierarchy’ in Peru running approximately from black to white.<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore, according to a 2010 national household survey (ENAH0), 75% of interviewees were of the opinion that Peruvian society is very or somewhat racist.<sup>44</sup> Skin colour and racial features matter. Yet, as de la Cadena suggests, they also depend on socio-economic factors.

Despite the challenges and limitations of any precise outline of the country’s ethnic demographics, there is an undisputable inequality gap between native and non-native Peruvians. In 2002, 83.5% of indigenous people aged 15 years or older were literate,

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<sup>42</sup> The Law of Prior Consultation (‘Ley de Consulta Previa’) was adopted in recognition of the International Labour Organisation Convention No. 169. Beatriz Jiménez, ‘Consulta previa en minería no avanza por no reconocer a pueblos andinos’, *La Republica*, 10 January 2015 <<http://www.larepublica.pe/10-01-2015/consulta-previa-en-mineria-no-avanza-por-no-reconocer-a-pueblos-andinos>> [accessed 20 March 2015]. For a detailed study on the implementation of this law and how it has affected the country’s landowning structure, see Custodio Arias, ‘De vuelta a la concentración de tierras en el Perú’ *Investigaciones Sociales* 28 (2012) pp. 49-58.

<sup>43</sup> Joanna Drzewieniecki, ‘Peruvian Youth and Racism: The Category of Race Remains Strong’, Paper presented at the Meeting of the Latin American Studies Association, Las Vegas, 7-9 October 2004, pp. 1-34 (p. 20) <[https://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/dlc/bitstream/handle/10535/1886/Peruvian\\_Youth\\_and\\_Racism.pdf?sequence=1](https://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/dlc/bitstream/handle/10535/1886/Peruvian_Youth_and_Racism.pdf?sequence=1)> [accessed 1 April 2015].

<sup>44</sup> Sulmont.

compared to 99.3% of whites and 96.6% of *mestizos*. In turn, running water was accessible for 57.4% of indigenous households, while 82.4% of *mestizo* and 95% of white families had access to this service.<sup>45</sup>

These figures need to be assessed against a wider national background. The country, in general, has low levels of social protection and a fragile economy. A recent study on the matter concluded that around 60% of Peruvians do not have at least one of the basic social safeguards stipulated by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2012 covered.<sup>46</sup> This lack of provision for social welfare continues despite the country's economic growth during the last two decades. An average annual rate of growth of 7% positions Peru among the four countries with the highest economic growth in Latin America (a region that in average grew at a rate of 3.3% per year between 2000 and 2011). Economic prosperity has been decisively influenced by the rising international price of minerals that are regular Peruvian exports – particularly gold and copper, the latter of which experienced a nearly fivefold increase in this period. Additionally, poverty has been reduced from 54.7% in 2001 to 15.8% in 2012.

Nevertheless, this late economic expansion is rather unstable. The fall of mineral prices in 2013 brought forward the question of the local economy's dependability on international markets and external factors. Moreover, due to income instability and the lack of adequate State social protection, 30% of families that moved above poverty levels between 2010 and 2011 run the risk of returning to poverty in 2012.<sup>47</sup>

While the Peruvian State does not provide a robust social welfare, evidence of the marginal status of native peoples in particular is rather compelling. Their scant participation in education, earnings and formal politics are all indicators of social stasis. In terms of instruction, a 2005 study found an interrelation between ethnicity and

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<sup>45</sup> Thorp and Paredes, pp. 71, 53.

<sup>46</sup> These safeguards are four fundamental national floors of social protection provided in the WTO's Recommendation no. 202: Access to essential health care, including maternity care; basic access to nutrition, education and care for children; basic support for people in active age unable to earn enough income due to unemployment, illness, maternity and disability; and basic pensions for older people. See *Hacia un desarrollo inclusivo. El caso del Perú*, ed. by Ricardo Infante and Juan Chacaltana (Santiago de Chile: Naciones Unidas. Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, 2014), p. 36.

<sup>47</sup> Infante and Chacaltana, pp. 19-20, 272.

schooling. Using a colour palette, the study determined that on average, schooling years are lower for those who appear indigenous.<sup>48</sup> Considering earnings, a later research looking at urban Peru between 2005 and 2009 established that the average income of indigenous people is approximately half of that of non-indigenous Peruvians.<sup>49</sup> Parliamentary representation is also minimal. While the 1975-80 legislature had only three congress representatives with indigenous surnames, during 2006-11 this figure rose to thirteen and in the current legislative period (2012-16), it has risen further to fourteen in a congress with 130 seats.<sup>50</sup>

Such an uneven picture is far from new. At its roots lie socio-economic structures that date back to colonial times. The Viceroyalty of Peru relied heavily on two main sources of income, both supplied through Andean aboriginal labour: the ‘Indian tribute’ and mining.<sup>51</sup> The former was a head-tax levied on native adult men in economically active age without mental or physical impairments to work. Remaining in place until 1895 – well after the country’s independence in 1821–, the tax accounted for a third of the viceroyalty’s total revenues in 1811, when it was first abolished. On the other hand, silver represented 85% of all exports in the late eighteenth century. Critically, the country only retained 40% of its entire production (including minerals and agricultural goods). The rest was shipped to Spain.<sup>52</sup>

The pivotal contribution of indigenous labour to the economy of colonial Spain depended on the fiscal and social control and subordination of the native population. A miniscule white elite dominated the political, social and economic sectors. Indeed, by

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<sup>48</sup> Sulmont, 2895.

<sup>49</sup> Alexandre Kolev and Pablo Suárez Robles, *Ethnic Wage Gaps in Peru: What Drives the Particular Disadvantage of Indigenous Women?* (Turin: International Training Centre of the International Labour Organisation, 2014), p. 7.

<sup>50</sup> For more details on indigenous participation in official politics between 1960 and 2010, see Thorp and Paredes, p. 56. For information on the composition of the current legislature (2011-16), see Congreso de la República del Perú, ‘Pleno’ <<http://www.congreso.gob.pe/pleno>> [accessed 5 April 2015].

<sup>51</sup> Duccio Bonavia and Franklin Pease, *Perú hombre e historia*, 3 vols. (Lima: Edubanco, 1991-93), III: *La República*, Franklin Pease (1993), p. 14.

<sup>52</sup> Timothy Anna, *La caída del gobierno español en el Perú. El dilema de la independencia*, trans. by Gabriela Ramos (Lima: IEP, 2003), p. 87. The Indian tax underwent a series of changes throughout the colonial and early-republican periods, including a number of attempts to abolish it. For a detailed study of the subject during the nineteenth century, see Carlos Contreras, ‘El impuesto de la contribución personal en el Perú del siglo XIX’, *Histórica*, 29 (2005), 67-106. For estimates of silver exports see Anna, pp. 29-30, 41.



1795 only 12% of the country's total population was white, in contrast with 60% of natives.<sup>53</sup> Using figures from a 1790 census of Lima, the epicentre of the Viceroyalty, historian Timothy Anna has estimated that only 1,500 white men made up the country's entire political elite – a mere 2.8% of Lima's total population at the time. Due to the socio-politic and economic role of the Viceroyalty of Peru within the South American colonies of the Spanish empire, most of the Peruvian small gentry did not produce any wealth and instead relied on the Spanish crown for their income and prestige. Almost 42% of them were attached to religious orders and almost 18% served in the military or in a public office.<sup>54</sup>

This colonial order that placed the state at the top of the country's productive structure (its main source of wealth and public revenues) continued after the foundation of the Peruvian republic. Independence wars were particularly onerous for Peru as the country became one of the last strongholds of the Spanish empire. A quarter of a century after the wars, the mining industry was in dramatic decline and public debt had escalated.<sup>55</sup> A series of production cycles ensued throughout the late nineteenth- and early twentieth centuries, particularly nitrate (1830-84), *guano* (excrement of seabirds used as a fertilizer, 1845-70) and rubber (1879-1912, 1942-5). These, however, responded to specific demands of international markets and, although they did generate wealth, they did not favour the expansion of a long-term significant national industry.<sup>56</sup>

Such a productive structure encouraged an uneven regional development. While the coast specialised in export agriculture (sugar and cotton) and generated wealth, the Andes grew a small-scale agriculture that attended only national demand. The coast's dominance was further underpinned in 1895, when an electoral law limited the vote to

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<sup>53</sup> The rest of the population was constituted by *mestizos* (22%), free mixed-raced Afro-Peruvians (almost 3.7%) and black slaves (around 3.6%). Anna, p. 43.

<sup>54</sup> Anna, pp. 45, 47.

<sup>55</sup> The 112.5 tons of silver that Peru had produced between 1800-9 dropped to only 36.4 tons between 1820-9. Carlos Contreras, *El legado económico de la independencia* (Lima: PUCP 2010), p. 18.

<sup>56</sup> Cotton, copper, gold and oil have been other important export commodities. With the exception mainly of sugar and textiles, the country has based its economy on a primarily extractive model. Carlos Contreras, Stephan Gruber and Cristina Mazzeo, *Orígenes históricos de la desigualdad en el Perú* (Lima: PUCP, 2012). See also Heraclio Bonilla, 'Peru and Bolivia from Independence to the War of the Pacific', in *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, 11 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984-2008), III: From Independence to c. 1870, ed. by Leslie Bethell (1985), pp. 539-82.

the literate population, largely based in this region. The Sierra populace – mostly made up of natives whose mother languages are oral – was thus left not only economically but also politically incapacitated.<sup>57</sup> This paved the way for reinforcing the colonial construction of the *indio* (Indian) as primitive, uncivilised, ignorant and stuck in the past. Nineteenth-century liberal intellectuals argued that the perceived backwardness of the Spanish empire was responsible for the ‘decadence’ of the Peruvian natives. Spanish colonialism had contaminated and annihilated an idealized Inca civilization.<sup>58</sup>

As in various Latin American countries, European immigration was the favoured solution for the progressive dissolution of Indian traces. Immigration policies, however, failed to attract a significant number of Europeans. The Peruvian state had to turn to education instead, as a strategy to incorporate natives into the nation and deal with the so-called ‘indigenous problem’. In this way, from the late nineteenth century until the early 1980s, miscegenation (*mestizaje*) became the social and educational agenda of the State. This official discourse – spread particularly through school textbooks – portrayed Peru as a Hispanic Catholic country where most of the population were mixed-raced and had left the underdevelopment of the *indios*.<sup>59</sup>

The endorsement of *mestizaje* as the racial and social way into Peru as a modern nation was renewed during the 1940s and into the 1970s, with a wave of migration into coastal cities. Attracted by the industrial development of the time, Sierra peasants became *mestizos* through their contact with coastal modernity.<sup>60</sup> This first wave of internal migrants into urban centres was further augmented with the civil conflict of the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>61</sup> Migration into coastal cities strengthened the perception of the coast as a more educated, modern and entrepreneurial region.

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<sup>57</sup> Thorp and Paredes, pp. 110, 114.

<sup>58</sup> Sulmont, 2454ff.

<sup>59</sup> Sulmont, 2537ff.

<sup>60</sup> The expansion of Lima as the centre of industrial growth in the country is clear when comparing the number of industries based in the city in 1943 (43%) with their number in 1954 (75%). Thorp and Paredes, p. 113.

<sup>61</sup> For more details on internal migration in Peru and an analysis of how Yuyachkani have explored this topic, see Chapter 2, section 2.2: ‘Witnessing Forced Internal Displacement towards Lima’.

However, immigration from the Andes into the coast and the subsequent *mestizaje* that was brought about did not fully integrate non-white Peruvians into the nation. The State was unable to accommodate and provide for the number of Peruvians arriving in cities. An informal economy thus grew, ranging from self-employment, self-construction of houses and illegal occupations of the urban peripheries. Two separated nations began to grow within the borders of the country – one, mainly ‘white’, economically and socially privileged and compliant of Peru’s legal framework; and another, largely non-white, socially disenfranchised sector constructing an illegal fabric that has flourished in parallel with ‘official’ society.<sup>62</sup>

### **C. Brazil: Making Race Invisible**

When Brazil made the transition from empire to republic in 1889, the country’s white and mulatto elites threw a party for their former Portuguese rulers. The cordial celebration in Rio de Janeiro was a farewell party in honour of Dom Pedro II, the country’s second and last emperor.<sup>63</sup> Lasting only sixty-seven years (1822-1889), the Brazilian Empire had been founded when Dom Pedro I declared the colony’s independence from Portugal. Although born in Portugal, in 1822 Dom Pedro I had chosen to remain in Brazil and cut ties with his European motherland. This was his response to increasing pressures from Brazilian elites – the South American-born oligarchy dissatisfied with Portugal’s efforts to restrict the socio-political status that Brazil had enjoyed since it had become the centre of the Portuguese colonial empire in 1808. In that year, the Portuguese Prince Regent, the future King João VI, had been the first European ruler to set foot in the Americas. Hastily fleeing from Napoleon’s looming invasion of Portugal, the Prince Regent relocated to Brazil with the entire Portuguese court, including the royal family, nobles, servants and state officers. The

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<sup>62</sup> Thorp and Paredes, p. 117. For an overview on informal economies in contemporary Peru and the ways in which Yuyachkani have reimagined this phenomenon, see Chapter 1, section 4.2: ‘The Arcade’.

<sup>63</sup> Anthony Marx, *Making Race and Nation. A Comparison of South Africa, The United States and Brazil* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 158-9.

monarch had thus done what until then had seemed unimaginable – refashioning the colony into a metropolis.<sup>64</sup>

Independence for Brazil was not a bloodless process. Some battles were fought but these were far from the economic and politically costly wars that took place in Hispanic America during the 1810s and 1820s.<sup>65</sup> In fact, as late as 1820 there was no prevalent inclination in Brazil to separate from Portugal. Scholars agree that the formation of the Brazilian republic was a gradual and relatively peaceful process that was triggered largely by two main factors. First, Portugal's decision to move the royal court from Rio de Janeiro back to Lisbon, thus forcing Brazil to return to the subordinate status of colony that it had left behind in 1808. And, secondly, Brazil's overwhelming dependency on slave labour.<sup>66</sup>

As I will outline in this section, the abolition of slavery in 1888 was also a very gradual and seamlessly peaceful process. Abolition and republicanism were so closely tied together that the Brazilian republic was declared only a year after abolition was declared. Former slaveholders supported republicanism as a reaction against the crown's abolition of slavery.<sup>67</sup>

Two of the major events that shaped modern Brazil had taken place in the nineteenth century progressively and without major political or economic crises. What I want to show in this section is that the events that marked the origins of the Brazilian republic facilitated the construction of an image of Brazil as a tolerant, peaceful and non-racist country that simultaneously allowed for the perpetuation of the racial and social elites that had flourished under colonial and imperial rule.

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<sup>64</sup> Leslie Bethell, *The Cambridge History of Latin America*. From Independence to c. 1870, vol. III, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 157ff. See also Thomas Skidmore, Peter Smith and James Green, *Modern Latin America* (7<sup>th</sup> ed. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Todd Edwards, *Brazil. A Global Studies Handbook* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2008).

<sup>65</sup> Independence battles took place particularly in the region of Bahia, where powerful landowners opposed to Portugal's desire to re-colonise Brazil. Bethell, pp. 187ff.

<sup>66</sup> Bethell, p. 195; Marx, pp. 160ff; Edwards, pp. 31ff; Skidmore, Smith and Green, pp. 306ff.

<sup>67</sup> Marx, pp. 160-1.

This narrative about an equitable and harmonious Brazil has been rather prevalent. So much so that state-supported policies to counteract social disparities based on race have been implemented only since the 1990s.<sup>68</sup> Even with these new policies, there are clear disparities against Afro-Brazilians in the country.<sup>69</sup> The first time an Afro-Brazilian actress played the leading role in a national soap opera was in 1996 – Taís Araújo, of mixed African, Portuguese and Austrian descent.<sup>70</sup> The first black member of the country's Supreme Court, Joaquim Barbosa, was elected only in 2003. Ten years later, he went on to become the Court's president.<sup>71</sup>

Although racial inequality has been extensively researched in Brazil since the 1990s, some scholars have attributed such injustices to class, rather than race, or even to 'lower human capital'. According to these explanations, Afro-Brazilians have fewer opportunities because of their lower levels of education or the deprived areas where they may live. None of these factors, however, are specifically related to racial discrimination.<sup>72</sup>

In a book chapter published in 2015, sociologist Edward Telles examines the role of race in the unequal distribution of social rights in Brazil. To do so, he uses the sample of siblings within the country's 1991 census. Often census interviewers and parents classify two siblings as belonging to two different races because of varying skin tones. Since children from the same family are likely to share the same social background (school, family, neighbourhood), focusing on this sample allowed Telles to conclude that race in Brazil does make a difference, independently of class and area of residence. Analysing educational progress, Telles found that within the group of siblings aged 9 to 16, of the same sex but different skin colour, white children were more likely than their darker brothers to be in a grade appropriate to their age (instead of having dropped out

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<sup>68</sup> Edward Telles, 'Demography of Race in Brazil', in *The International Handbook of the Demography of Race and Ethnicity*, ed. by Rogelio Sáenz, David Embrick and Néstor Rodríguez (London: Springer, 2015), pp. 158ff.

<sup>69</sup> For figures that show the extent of these disparities, see Introduction, section 0.1: 'Salvador and Brazil'.

<sup>70</sup> Joel Zito Araújo, *A negação do Brasil. O negro na telenovela brasileira* (Sao Paulo: SENAC, 2000), p. 302. For an analysis of the ways in which Teatro Olodum challenge the negative impact that media racist portrayals of Afro-Brazilians have on schoolchildren, see Chapter 2, section 2.3: 'Re-routing Afro-Brazilian Identity towards the African Diaspora'.

<sup>71</sup> Moraes Silva and Paixão, 3158.

<sup>72</sup> For a summary of this literature, see Telles, p. 165; and Moraes Silva and Paixão, 3637ff.

of school or having repeated grades). At age 10, for example, 47% of white children were in a grade appropriate to their age, compared to only 37% of those classified as non-white.<sup>73</sup>

The refusal to consider race as the primary factor for discrimination against Afro-Brazilians has to be placed within the context of the national imaginary of a harmonious, tolerant Brazilian society. Moreover, such an unwillingness to acknowledge the role of race is not independent from the tight links between Brazil's origins as a republic and its abolition of slavery.

By 1825, three years after Dom Pedro I had declared Brazil an empire, the native population was estimated in only 360,000 natives. The importation of a free labour force from Africa was critical for both the crown and the empire. This forced labour was responsible for sustaining the financial booms that consolidated the country's economy until the closure of the slave trade in 1850. Sugar lies at the start of this succession of single commodity exports. Revenues from this commodity propelled forward the Northeastern littoral and drove Brazil to become the world's largest producer of sugar in the world by the mid 1600s. Production continued into the nineteenth century, accounting for 30% of exports during 1821-30, but by the 1900s this had decline to merely 5%. A cattle industry developed around the production of sugar from the mid-sixteenth century, which launched the political and economic influence of cattle barons in the Northeastern's interior. Their power diminished when gold was discovered in the Southeastern state of Minas Gerais in 1690. This triggered a gold rush that was boosted with the discovery of diamonds in the same region in 1729. The mineral boom lasted for most of the century, attracting internal migration from the coast to the Centre-South and Southeast. Then the 1800s saw the upsurge of coffee production that continued until the 1930s, further solidifying the role of São Paulo in the country's economy.<sup>74</sup> Around these successive cycles, an oligarchy developed made

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<sup>73</sup> Telles, pp. 165-6. For another study on the primacy of race and skin colour in the country, see Moraes Silva and Paixão, 3540ff.

<sup>74</sup> Other important exports include rubber (since the early nineteenth century and mainly in the Amazon). Less significant were the production of cotton, tobacco and cacao. See Edwards, pp. 79ff; Skidmore, Smith and Green, pp. 314ff; Bethell, pp. 160ff.

up mostly of landowners – cattle barons, sugar planters and mill-owners –, but with a presence also of mine-owners, merchants and state officers.<sup>75</sup>

Considering the wealth and geopolitical power that the free labour force of Africans and their descendants brought to the country, the Brazilian elites' refusal to abolish slavery does not perhaps come as a surprise. Abolition was a relatively peaceful but extremely delayed process. Thirty-eight years passed from the closure of the Brazilian slave trade (1850) through to final abolition (1888). Britain and other countries had abolished slave trading from the beginning of the nineteenth century, but illegal commerce continued for a further sixty years. This initial abolition in fact ignited trade – about a quarter of Africans enslaved between 1500 and 1870 crossed the Atlantic after 1807. In Brazil, the arrival of the last slave ship in 1850 also sparked an upsurge, this time of internal slave commerce aimed to distribute forced labour from regions that had become less productive (particularly the Northeast) to the, by then, more dynamic Southeast. Emancipation in the country was also slow. First, a law was passed in 1871 freeing children born to slave mothers. Then, in 1885 another law enforced the freeing of slaves over sixty – at an age when those who had actually survived were beyond their most productive working years. Finally, the so-called Golden Law was passed in 1888, liberating the remaining slaves.<sup>76</sup>

Emancipation was carried out without any compensation to former owners or slaves. Most critically, there was no support for the newly liberated Afro-Brazilians. They continued to work in poor conditions but with low wages. Land redistribution was proposed but rapidly dismissed. Since abolition had been a peaceful process, the country's political and social elites saw no need to reconsider the role of former slaves. Informal segregation was maintained. Comparing the abolition process in Brazil with that in the USA, political science scholar Andrew Marx argues:

With no Civil War ushering in abolition, there was also no Reconstruction. (...) Blacks themselves emerged [in Brazil] (...) lacking any means to advance themselves or to compete, isolated in rural areas or in the newly emerging urban slums, or favelas.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Bethell, p. 162.

<sup>76</sup> Baronov, pp. 146ff; Edwards, pp. 41-3; Marx, pp. 48ff.

<sup>77</sup> Marx, p. 161.

Although the aim of whitening Brazil did not come to fruition, it did give way to the ideology of a racial democracy [*democracia racial*]. Originally attributed to Brazilian anthropologist Gilberto Freyre (1933), this is the view that, unlike other Western nations, Brazil has not been affected by racism because the long history of close contacts among its three main races – European, African and indigenous – produced a tolerant society where race had no place anymore. Miscegenation had fused all racial boundaries together and had engendered a harmonious, democratic community. Race-mixture [*mestiçagem*] thus became a core symbol of national unity, one which conveniently did not reveal what lay behind its own formation – the forced importation of millions of African slaves. Miscegenation had been the result of a state policy, backed by the country’s elites, to whiten Brazil and eliminate all traces of black Brazilians. At least during colonial times and the early years of the republic, mixed-raced Brazilians were the offspring of violent, unconsented sexual unions.<sup>78</sup> Swept under the carpet, these brutal facts remained largely neglected while the ideal of a mixed-race nation in which race had no place because it had lost all precise contours.

The arbitrariness of this vision was exposed in the 1950s. UNESCO had sponsored a study in the country intending to reveal the secrets of the Brazilian ‘racial success’. Little did they know what the study would conclude – that this racial democracy was in fact a myth, for it actually covered large inequalities between white- and Afro-Brazilians in the labour market.<sup>79</sup> The ideal of *mestiçagem* had rendered the black population invisible, thus promoting racial exclusions that had been in place since colonial times. Despite this early evidence, the idea of Brazil’s racial democracy still operates, grounding the views that social differences are based on class rather than race.

This lack of an explicit racist discourse has repeatedly undermined pro-black organisations’ capacity to construct blackness as a specific ethnic identity in the country. In the 1930s a political party congregated Afro-Brazilians. The Frente Negra Brasileira, founded in 1931, however, represented a small black middle-class that demanded greater social mobility and assimilation, while dismissing African traditions. A decade later, theatre became an important tool for social change. Particularly instrumental in this process was the Teatro Experimental do Negro (TEN, Black

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<sup>78</sup> Telles, pp. 24, 27.

<sup>79</sup> Telles, pp. 6-7.



Experimental Theatre). Active between 1944 and 1961 in Rio de Janeiro, this company explored the cultural ties of African and Afro-Brazilian cultures as a means to mobilise black activism and to achieve the inclusion of black identity within officially-sanctioned policies. Withal, the populist regime of Getúlio Vargas (as a dictator in the period 1930-45, and democratically elected in 1951-54) appropriated these cultural expressions as part of its nationalistic programme, marketing them as national symbols and thus watering down their potential for black activism. In the 1970s a political movement with national militancy was founded. The Movimento Negro Unificado (MNU, Unified Black Movement) aimed to promote black pride and raise awareness of racial discrimination and gained support especially from middle-class and intellectual circles but failed to appeal to a larger constituency.<sup>80</sup>

The landmark for race issues in Brazil was the 2001 United Nations Conference against Racism and Discrimination in Durban, South Africa. With many Brazilian social movements attending the conference and denouncing racial intolerance, the Brazilian government had to acknowledge ‘the country’s continuing racial discrimination’.<sup>81</sup> Already since the late 1980s the Brazilian state had begun to create organisations to overcome the historical exclusion of black and indigenous peoples. The first public institution established for the preservation and promotion of Afro-Brazilian culture was created in 1988 – the Fundação Cultural Palmares, attached to the Ministry of Culture. It took almost five years for this institution to recognise and grant land titles to *quilombola* populations; *i.e.* present-day descendants of fugitive slaves who formed *quilombos* (illegal settlements) during the era of slavery in various parts of the country.<sup>82</sup>

Further policies for counteracting centuries of racial inequalities were implemented in the new millennium, with the election of president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in 2003. That year, the government made mandatory the introduction of courses on Afro-Brazilian history and culture in public and private schools nationwide at primary and secondary levels. The law explicitly states that it is aimed to redress the neglect and

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<sup>80</sup> Marx, pp. 255-63.

<sup>81</sup> Moraes Silva and Paixão, 3320.

<sup>82</sup> Fundação Cultural Palmares, ‘Legislação’, <[http://www.palmares.gov.br/?page\\_id=106](http://www.palmares.gov.br/?page_id=106)> [accessed 19 May 2013]. For an examination of the work done by Teatro Oloдум on present-day illegal settlements and slave *quilombos*, see Chapter 4, section 4.3: ‘The *Quilombo*’.

misrepresentations of Afro-Brazilians and to ‘recover the contributions made by black people in the social, economic and political aspects of Brazil’s history’.<sup>83</sup> Initially, racial quotas were put in place in public offices and then introduced in public universities. The most significant legislation passed in this direction has been the so-called *Lei das Cotas* [Quotas Law]. Sanctioned in August 2012, it mandates that federal universities reserve 50% of its vacancies to students coming from publicly-funded schools. Placements must be secured, within this 50%, for candidates who declare themselves afro-descendants or indigenous.<sup>84</sup> These two major shifts in public policy show the state’s efforts in trying to promote racial equality through the implementation of affirmative actions.

Brazil’s racial composition has varied over the years and not only as a result of biological changes in the population. From 1940 to 1991 *pardos* (browns) incremented in numbers primarily because of miscegenation, but also as a consequence of the tendency of the time of *pretos* (blacks) classifying themselves as *pardos* because of the negative social connotations of dark skin.<sup>85</sup> With the strengthening of pro-black movements since the 1990s, this tendency has reversed. Activists demanded that *pretos* and *pardos* were counted as one and the same racial label in censuses, thus encouraging blackness as a unified racial and political category. Various socio-demographic studies backed this claim as they showed that socio-economic data for *pretos* and *pardos* were similar and also different from the same indicators for whites. The 2010 census thus fused both categories, concluding that *pretos* in Brazil were a numeric majority. The country has thus come a long way since the 1976 National House Survey recorded 136 different colour tones as a response to an open-ended question asking interviewees to identify their colour.<sup>86</sup>

Still, racial categories are fluid and ambiguous in the country. A nationwide 2010 survey (Brazil’s PERLA) examined the varied ways in which respondents addressed

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<sup>83</sup> Presidência da República Federativa do Brasil, ‘Ley 10639-2003’ <[http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/leis/2003/110.639.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/2003/110.639.htm)> [accessed 11 May 2015]. For more on this law and how Teatro Olodum has worked with schools to support them achieving the goals of this policy, see Chapter 2, section 2.3: ‘Re-routing Afro-Brazilian Identity towards the African Diaspora’.

<sup>84</sup> União Nacional dos Estudantes, ‘O que você precisa saber sobre a lei de cotas’ <<http://www.une.org.br/2012/09/o-que-voce-precisa-saber-sobre-a-lei-de-cotas>> [accessed 19 May 2015].

<sup>85</sup> Telles, p. 157.

<sup>86</sup> Moraes Silva and Paixão, 3465, 3446.

their racial status, including self-classification through open-ended questions, self-classification through a list of categories, the interviewers' classification considering skin colour and hair texture (kinky hair), and data on ancestry. Depending on which definition is taken into account, figures vary from 6% of respondents who self-identified as *pretos* to around 59.4% who were classified as *pretos* or *pardos* by interviewers. In any case, more than ten years after the initial implementation of affirmative racial actions, scholars examining the impact of this policy reveal that 'quota students' are doing well and in some cases even better than their 'non-quota' counterparts. Some studies point also to growing self-identification of *pretos*. Withal, the PERLA survey gives strong evidence that regardless of socio-economic status, race and skin colour matter in the country and that precisely because of this, discrimination might be higher than what respondents report.<sup>87</sup>

## 1.2 If these Ports Could Talk

### A. Buenos Aires and Catalinas Sur

A walk around La Boca quickly reveals its place within the social and geographical ecosystems formed around this coast of the Atlantic. High pavements – sometimes about two meters high – serve as defences against the waters of the Matanza-Riachuelo river that occasionally flood the area between June and October. Floods are less frequent today, thanks to engineering works put in place since 1995. The meteorological phenomenon locally known as 'la sudestada' (the southeasterly bluster) generates these unstable conditions. Cold southeasterly winds coming from the Atlantic Ocean hit the coast of Buenos Aires (particularly the southern neighbourhoods of La Boca and Barracas), preventing the flow of the Matanza-Riachuelo to continue its course down to the River Plate and, from there, into the Atlantic.<sup>88</sup>

Abandoned factories, warehouses and shipyards are testimony of La Boca's heyday as one of Buenos Aires' first ports. An area of low-lying land, it remained mostly a marsh

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<sup>87</sup> Moraes Silva and Paixão, 3346, 3493. This study gives great detail on discrimination, perceptions of race and racial policies and politics in Brazil. Unfortunately, these details go beyond the scope of this thesis but are certainly important in understanding the ambiguity of race and the centrality of racial inequality in the country.

<sup>88</sup> Servicio Meteorológico Nacional de Argentina, 'Sudestada', <<http://www.smn.gov.ar/?mod=biblioteca&id=71>> [accessed 3 April 2015].

until 1878, when the port was expanded and set up to receive overseas vessels. The steamboat *Italia* was the first regular passenger ship to arrive in 1883, contributing to the expansive waves of immigration as European citizens flooded into Buenos Aires. By the turn of the twentieth century, the city was home to more foreigners than nationals, a trend that would last approximately up until after World War I.<sup>89</sup>

*Conventillos*, old tenement houses made of corrugated iron sheets and wood or bricks, were the first accommodation available for the impoverished Europeans that arrived in Argentina in the nineteenth century. They were overcrowded places with poor hygienic conditions. Today, they serve a similar function for equally poverty-stricken migrants from Latin America; particularly from Paraguay, Bolivia and Peru.<sup>90</sup>

The ships that used to dock in this port neighbourhood in the nineteenth century have left long-standing imprints. One can still see the facades of *conventillos* embellished with multi-coloured patches. This follows the tradition of the nineteenth-century Genoese seamen who settled here and painted their houses with leftover paint from the shipyards. It is said that the most popular football club in La Boca, Boca Juniors, owe their institutional colours to a Swedish ship's flag.<sup>91</sup> In 1907 they acquired their yellow and blue emblematic shades following the suggestion of the club's president. A port worker himself, he proposed they adopted the colours of the first ship to come into port the next morning.

The neighbourhood's name points towards the position of the place within the Atlantic. La Boca (the mouth) alludes to the mouth of the estuary formed by the Matanza-Riachuelo river when it flows into the River Plate. In its upper course the Riachuelo river is called Matanza (slaughter), in remembrance of the killing of hundreds of natives during a battle with the Spanish conquistadors in the sixteenth century.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Beatriz Sarlo, 'The Modern City: Buenos Aires, The Peripheral Metropolis', in *Through the Kaleidoscope. The Experience of Modernity in Latin America*, ed. by Vivian Schelling (London, New York: Verso, 2000), p. 113.

<sup>90</sup> For a more detailed outline of European and Latin American immigration to Buenos Aires as well as the history of *conventillos* and their present-day function, see Chapter 2, section 2.1: 'Transnational Routes and the Limits of Hospitality in Buenos Aires'.

<sup>91</sup> Horacio Rosatti, *Cien años de multitud: Historia de Boca Juniors, una pasión argentina* (Buenos Aires: Galerna, 2009), pp. 50-1.

<sup>92</sup> Enrique Gandía, *Historia de la boca del Riachuelo 1536-1840* (Buenos Aires: Ateneo Popular de La Boca, 1939).

The river is a natural boundary for the southern part of the City of Buenos Aires (CBA). Further south of La Boca, across the river, lies Greater Buenos Aires (GBA), or more specifically, Isla Maciel, a poor, neglected neighbourhood with rusty, decayed *conventillos*. Considered unsafe by locals, Isla Maciel is part of the area called Dock Sud, a rough industrial area dedicated mainly to the oil industry and highly polluted by the oil vessels it receives.

Stark contrasts separate the CBA and GBA. The former is an area of about 200 Km<sup>2</sup> and almost three million inhabitants that fans out in all directions from the Riachuelo river. Since 1994, the city is autonomous both politically and administratively, with authorities first elected in 1996. Previously, it had been a federal district of Argentina, with the mayor appointed by the country's president. GBA, in turn, comprises CBA plus 24 additional districts (*partidos*) and is home to almost thirteen million people. Beyond these, other districts which are part of Metropolitan Buenos Aires form additional rings further separated from the city.<sup>93</sup>

GBA expanded between the 1930s and the 1950s, with the arrival of immigrants from the country's interior. Particularly influential to this trend was the government of president Juan Domingo Perón (1946-55). Migrant workers from the interior were at the electoral and ideological base of his rule. Peronism recruited these workers as their main supporters, thus challenging the repudiation of the country's elites towards the lower classes.<sup>94</sup> *Cabecitas negras* (little blackheads) – the pejorative racialised name for Argentines of *mestizo* origins – became a badge of honour for the working-class population that took the political lead during the 1940s and '50s.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> More precisely, the 2010 census estimates the city's population at 2,890,151 people, and the population of GBA at 12,801,364. Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, 'Ciudad de Buenos Aires', <<http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/laciudad/ciudad>> [accessed 4 April 2015]. For a detailed territorial and historical characterisation of the CBA and GBA, see Verónica Maceira, 'Notas para una caracterización del Área Metropolitana de Buenos Aires', *Boletim Informativo. Observatório das Metrôpoles*, 224 (2012) <[http://www.observatoriodasmetrololes.net/download/notas\\_regi%C3%B3n\\_metropolitana\\_de\\_Buenos%20Aires.pdf](http://www.observatoriodasmetrololes.net/download/notas_regi%C3%B3n_metropolitana_de_Buenos%20Aires.pdf)> [accessed 7 April 2015].

<sup>94</sup> For details of this coup, the military regimes it initiated and an examination of the ways in which Catalinas Sur explores their social impact in Buenos Aires, see Chapter 4, section 4.1: 'The Community Club'.

<sup>95</sup> Sarlo, pp. 113, 117.

Poverty-stricken internal and Latin American migrants gave way to poor, informal neighbourhoods (*villas miseria*) both in the CBA and in GBA. Unemployed immigrants built the first of these settlements in the 1930s. By 1956, 1.9% of the population of Metropolitan Buenos Aires resided in a *villa miseria*. After the 1955 coup against president Juan Domingo Perón, the military regimes that dominated the political scene until the return to sustained democracy in 1983 fostered a social order characterised by the exclusion of internal migrants. Stigmatising them as non-white peripheral residents of Buenos Aires and a threat to public order, the military regimes of the period forcefully removed around 200,000 people from the CBA. This was a policy that drew ‘a close association (...) between race, place of residence and migrant status’.<sup>96</sup>

Spatial segregation of race and class deepened with the economic stalemate of the 1970s and 1980s, as well as the 1990s neoliberalisation of the national economy. The liberalisation of the economy and the acute economic crisis that reached its peak in 2001 motivated drastic social changes in the city. In 2003, unemployment in Metropolitan Buenos Aires reached a record 20.2%. A year before, 42.3% of the total households in the area (which includes the city of Buenos Aires) existed below the poverty line. Crime was also rife. A city historically characterised by its low crime rates, the CBA registered an upsurge of 340% of crimes against property between 1991 and 2001. In 2001, 39.6% of residents of CBA claimed to have been victims of some sort of crime.<sup>97</sup>

Such sustained economic instability and disparity have had a territorial impact. Nationally, the gap between poor and rich widened and the middle classes weakened. Between 1991 and 2002, the gap between the wealthiest 20% of the population and the 20% of the least well-off went from 9.2 times to 14.5 times higher.<sup>98</sup> In the CBA, these contrasts increased too. During this decade, the number of luxury properties increased

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<sup>96</sup> Tanja Bastia and Matthias vom Hau, ‘Migration, Race and Nationhood in Argentina’, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 40 (2014), 475-92 (p. 483).

<sup>97</sup> Marcela Cerrutti and Alejandro Grimson, ‘Buenos Aires, neoliberalismo y después. Cambios socioeconómicos y respuestas populares’, *Cuadernos del IDES*, 5 (2004), 3-63 (pp. 11, 19, 21-2).

<sup>98</sup> Pedro Pérez, ‘La privatización de la expansión metropolitana de Buenos Aires’, *Economía, Sociedad y Territorio*, 21 (2006), 31-54 (p. 36).

more than fourfold, and the amount of people living in *villas miseria* escalated from 39,897 in 1990 to 59,970 in 1995.<sup>99</sup>

This highly uneven distribution of wealth and income produced two different types of citizenship regimes in the 1990s. On the one hand, people who enjoyed a ‘super-citizenship’, with the economic and political power to influence the shape and changes of GBA. And, on the other hand, a ‘sub-citizenship’, made up of the poorest sectors of the population, with no or limited access to formal employment, land, water and electricity.<sup>100</sup>

The more privileged *porteños* (people from Buenos Aires) moved to GBA and started a large trend of gated communities (*urbanizaciones cerradas*). These were the upper-middle classes that had benefited from the country’s neoliberal turn. A significant proportion of these were employed in international banking and commerce. This was part of a movement towards the privatization of the land in GBA, which also included the construction of privileged country clubs and exclusive cemeteries.<sup>101</sup>

It has been estimated that by the end of the twenty-first century, between 300,000 and 500,000 people live in some four hundred gated communities in GBA. These are residential areas that cover between 400 and 1,600 hectares and have all urban services covered (water, electricity, internet, gas, etc.), green spaces, surveillance, shopping malls, offices, schools as well as cultural and health centres.<sup>102</sup>

The poorest and the wealthiest sectors of the population live in close proximity in GBA, albeit separated by the high walls that surround the privileged gated communities. Argentine sociologists Alejandro Grimson and Marcela Cerrutti describe the interdependence between these opposites of Buenos Aires socio-economic hierarchy: ‘Very high- and very low-income groups cohabit in these places. The latter are the ones

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<sup>99</sup> Cerrutti and Grimson, p. 27.

<sup>100</sup> Pérez, p. 36.

<sup>101</sup> Pérez, p. 39.

<sup>102</sup> Pérez, p. 40.

who provide the former with the personal services they need'.<sup>103</sup> With this new privatizing tendency, claim Grimson and Cerrutti, Buenos Aires seems to be moving from an urban model based on the *conventillo* to another based on a ghetto structure. The city appears to have passed from accommodating destitute immigrants in overcrowded tenement houses to accommodating the well off within enclosed perimeters that conveniently separate them from 'the masses'.<sup>104</sup>

A turn towards the recognition of the right of low-income families to land property was stirred when Nestor Kirchner was elected President of Argentina in 2003. Conceiving of the role of the State as an active contributor to public good, his administration placed social housing as one of the country's priorities. Between 2004 and 2008 the government built in Metropolitan Buenos Aires approximately the same amount of social houses than the ones built in the previous twenty-seven years.<sup>105</sup>

Within the City of Buenos Aires, middle and upper classes reside in the northeastern part of the city, while the poorest areas lie largely to the west and the south. Particularly since the late 1990s, luxury real state developments have concentrated on the north side of the city, thus widening the north-south divide.<sup>106</sup>

Lately, a series of municipal policies have been put in place in order to lessen such spatial disparities. As I hope to show in the next section, this has been part of a municipal strategic plan to enhance the role of the city as a global hub of cultural production.

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<sup>103</sup> 'En dichas localidades cohabitan grupos de muy altos y muy bajos ingresos. Estos últimos son los que proveen de los servicios personales necesarios a los primeros'. Cerrutti and Grimson, p. 27.

<sup>104</sup> P. 28.

<sup>105</sup> 39,856 houses were built during the period 1976-2003, in contrast with 37,679 houses during 2004-08. Juan Ignacio Duarte and Ángela Oyhandy, 'Políticas urbanas y expropiación en la Argentina. Los casos de la ciudad y la provincial de Buenos Aires (1976-2007)', in *Expropiación y conflicto social en cinco metrópolis latinoamericanas*, ed. by Antonio Azuela (México D.F.; Cambridge, MA: Universidad Autónoma de México, Lincoln Institute of Land and Policy, 2013), p. 72.

<sup>106</sup> Miguel Kanai and Iliana Ortega-Alcázar, 'The Prospects for Progressive Culture-Led Urban Regeneration in Latin America: Cases from Mexico City and Buenos Aires', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 33 (2009), 483-501 (p. 491).



## **Buenos Aires: An international cultural hub**

In the last eight years, under the two consecutive governments of the Mayor of the City of Buenos Aires, Mauricio Macri (2007-11, 2011-2015), urban administration has taken a pro-business and privatising agenda. Within this context, the city's administration has considered cultural policy as an instrument to generate wealth and the regeneration of areas that have been socially and materially neglected, particularly in southern Buenos Aires. Old government buildings have been renovated in the downtown area; heritage buildings in the southern neighbourhood of San Telmo; and the river docks at Puerto Madero – the second port of Buenos Aires, completed in 1897 and restored and privatised since the early 1990s, today an extension of the city's business district with luxury hotels and shops.<sup>107</sup>

The much more neglected southern neighbourhoods of Barracas and La Boca have also accommodated some regeneration projects. Barracas houses today the Centro Metropolitano de Diseño (CMD, Metropolitan Centre of Design), a program started in 2001 that offers support for small and medium design firms and independent professionals. The Centre has become a recognised public institution although it has not had a significant impact in the area. This is mostly because most of the firms supported have moved on to wealthier parts of the city, showing no long-term commitment to contributing to the economy and cultural activity of Barracas.<sup>108</sup>

In La Boca, the city council inaugurated in 2010 the Usina del Arte, a modern music centre that showcases classical music in a transformed early-twentieth-century power station.<sup>109</sup> Also in La Boca, the private organisation Fundación Proa exhibits contemporary visual art in a turn-of-the-century building by the waterfront that was inaugurated in 2008.<sup>110</sup> Like the CMD in Barracas, both the Usina del Arte and the Fundación Proa have had little impact in La Boca as a whole. On the one hand, they do attract middle- and upper-class people to areas of the city they would not otherwise

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<sup>107</sup> For a thorough examination of the city's cultural policy, including its urban regeneration projects, see Kanai and Ortega-Alcázar.

<sup>108</sup> Kanai and Ortega-Alcázar, p. 494.

<sup>109</sup> Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, 'Usina del Arte. Historia'. <<http://www.usinadelarte.org/historia>> [accessed 5 May 2015].

<sup>110</sup> Fundación Proa <<http://www.proa.org/eng/index.php>> [accessed 5 May 2015].

visit; and they have put these impoverished neighbourhoods within the circuits of consumption of 'high culture' in the city. On the other hand, they have little long-term engagement with the local low-income inhabitants of Barracas and La Boca.<sup>111</sup>

These enclaves of what is perceived as high-end cultural productions within poor areas of the city seem to run against the cultural policies designed for Buenos Aires in the 1980s, soon after the return to democracy. After the military rule (1976-83), the newly democratically elected government of Raúl Alfonsín looked to culture as a means to strengthen democracy and the public space. This policy took a shift in the 1990s. Although culture was still deemed central to the country's democratic life, the neoliberal government of Carlos Menem conceived of cultural production as a means to insert Argentina as one of the leading countries for the production and consumption of art in the 'First World'.<sup>112</sup> As mentioned at the beginning of this section, this mode of marketing the city has been further expanded with Mauricio Macri's municipal administration.<sup>113</sup>

Today, the city's wealth lies in the service sector, which produces 83% of its Gross Geographic Product. Business services are the main economic activity within this sector (among others, real estate and IT companies as well as professional activities such as law and architecture firms). In terms of spending, during the first quarter of 2014 the city allocated most of its budget (62.6%) to social services. Within these, health and education received more attention (22.1% and 25.6%), and culture came fourth in the list with 3.1% of the city's budget allocation. This is, after social welfare (8.7%) and before social housing (1.7%), job promotion (0.8%) and drinking water and sanitation services (0.6%).<sup>114</sup> Clearly, culture is a central focal point for the city administration.

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<sup>111</sup> Adhemar Bianchi, Interview by Michelle Nicholson-Sanz (Buenos Aires, February 2012).

<sup>112</sup> Ana Wortman and Rubens Bayardo, 'Consumos culturales en Argentina', *Alteridades*, 22 (2012), 11-21 (pp. 13, 15).

<sup>113</sup> Kanai and Ortega-Alcázar, p. 493.

<sup>114</sup> Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, 'Mensaje del Proyecto de Ley del Presupuesto de la Administración del Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires para el 2015',

<[http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/areas/hacienda/presupuesto2015\\_final/01\\_mensaje\\_proy\\_presu\\_p2015.pdf](http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/areas/hacienda/presupuesto2015_final/01_mensaje_proy_presu_p2015.pdf)> [accessed 2 May 2015], p. 34.

They explain the significance of the area in terms of its potential for generating outdoor and indoor public spaces for ‘the construction of citizenship’ and granting ‘universal access to cultural services and goods for the neighbours’. But they also stress the role of the arts in reinforcing the city’s role as a transnational cultural hub. They thus aim to ‘continue with the international projection of Buenos Aires by positioning its City Brand as grounded in the identity potentials of its cultural production.’<sup>115</sup>

The importance given by the City Council to the arts run side by side with the offer and consumption of theatre in Buenos Aires. After a fall between 2000 and 2001, theatre attendance in the CBA has been steadily increasing. During the 2001 national economic crisis, theatre venues in the city lost some 760,000 attendees. Withal, between 2001 and 2013, the amount of theatre spectators in the city has more than doubled, going from 1,289,599 people in 2001 to 3,126,610 in 2013. This contrasts sharply with theatre attendance in the rest of the country, which between 2006 and 2013 has not gone beyond 1,140,000 spectators, attracting only about 960,000 people in 2013. Similarly, in the same year 2,307 performances were registered in the country’s interior, as opposed to 8,736 in the CBA.<sup>116</sup>

The north-south socio-economic divide in the CBA impacts its production of theatre. Of the 288 registered theatre venues located in the city, only 16 are located on the south. Most of the venues lie in the northeastern side of the city.<sup>117</sup> This geographical demarcation also determines the production of different types of theatre praxes. On the northern part of town lies the ‘commercial circuit’, along Avenue Corrientes. It shows diverse kinds of productions including musicals; tango shows; music halls; comedies; national plays; and international shows performed and directed either by local or international casts. Publicly supported theatres are also located on the north and showcase established national and international plays as well as ballet and some local

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<sup>115</sup> ‘Continuar con la proyección internacional de Buenos Aires a través del posicionamiento de la Marca Ciudad apoyada en la potencia identitaria de su producción nacional.’ Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, ‘Mensaje del Proyecto de Ley’, p. 105.

<sup>116</sup> Sistema de Información Cultural de la Argentina (SINCA), ‘Cantidad de espectadores y de funciones por año y región geográfica’, <[http://sinca.cultura.gob.ar/sic/estadisticas/i.php?id=247&gr\\_type=>](http://sinca.cultura.gob.ar/sic/estadisticas/i.php?id=247&gr_type=>) [accessed 5 May 2015].

<sup>117</sup> The figures quoted need to be considered carefully as some of these venues do not actually function for the showcasing of theatre productions only but also for cinema, tango and other performing arts. Sinca, ‘Salas teatrales. Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires’, <<http://sinca.cultura.gob.ar/sic/mapa/?idProvincia=02>> [accessed 6 May 2015].

‘experimental’ shows. These include the Teatro Colón and the Complejo Teatral de Buenos Aires (both funded by the City Council), as well as the Teatro Nacional Cervantes (with national funding). In turn, the ‘alternative circuit’ gives priority to new and innovative pieces and actor’s dramaturgy. Around five to six alternative shows are premiered each week in small (less than 100-seat) venues located throughout the city but mostly in the neighbourhood of Balvanera (in the centre-west of the CBA).<sup>118</sup>

On the other hand, southern Buenos Aires is home to community theatre. These are groups that function outside all the other circuits and have modes of production of their own. Assembled around the Red Nacional de Teatro Comunitario (National Network of Community Theatre), there are twenty-eight registered groups in the Province of Buenos Aires. Of these, eleven are located in the CBA and five in GBA. Within the CBA, only one is located in the north; three in the central part of the city; and six in the south.<sup>119</sup> This mode of theatre, centred in Argentina firmly around the performance of cultural memory and place, was introduced to the country through the work undertaken in La Boca by Catalinas Sur.

### **Catalinas Sur theatre group**

In December 1982, General Reynaldo Bignone had opened Argentina’s transition to democracy after the *Junta Militar*’s twelve years in power. The first democratic elections after the *Junta*’s regime took place in October 1983. Raúl Alfonsín stepped in as the first democratically elected president of the country in December 1983.

March 1983. During this critical moment of transition, a group of parents of the school Nr. 8 Guido Della Penna suggested to Adhemar Bianchi, a father of two pupils, that he deliver acting workshops for the school. Bianchi accepted the invitation and made a

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<sup>118</sup> Sergio Spinella, ‘El mapa teatral porteño’, *Territorio Teatral. Revista Digital*, 9 (2013) <[http://territorioteatral.org.ar/html.2/articulos/pdf/n9\\_05.pdf](http://territorioteatral.org.ar/html.2/articulos/pdf/n9_05.pdf)> [accessed 6 May 2015].

<sup>119</sup> The theatre groups within the CBA are: Res o no Res (in Mataderos, southwest); Pompeya (in Nueva Pompeya, southeast); Los Villurqueros (in Villa Urquiza, north); Matemurga (in Villa Crespo, centre); Almamate (in Flores, centre); Boedo Antiguo (in Boedo, south); Circuito Cultural Barracas (in Barracas, south); Grupo Teatral de La Boca ‘3.80 y Crece’ (in La Boca, south); Los Pompateriyasos (in Parque Patricios, south); El Épico de Floresta (in Floresta, south); and Catalinas Sur (in La Boca, south). Red Nacional de Teatro Comunitario, ‘Grupos’ <<http://teatrocomunitario.com.ar/grupos/>> [accessed 6 May 2015].

counterproposal. He offered to start an amateur theatre group with anyone from the school who would like to join, be it teachers, pupils or parents. Instead of making theatre within closed doors, they would rehearse and perform in a public square – the Plaza Malvinas. The square was conveniently located next to the school and to Catalinas Sur, the middle- and upper-middle-class housing complex where most of the school’s pupils lived, on the northwestern side of La Boca. Most of the parents initially rejected the idea of performing in a square. Alfredo Iriarte, a founding and current member of the group, recalls those early years. Having just come out of a military regime that had forbidden public gatherings under the penalty of arrest, he explains that the parents’ initial hesitation soon turned into excitement when they realised that the idea would be a way to reclaim the use of a public space through the arts.<sup>120</sup> They named the group Catalinas Sur, after the housing development that had hosted their activities.

In March 2015 the group celebrated thirty-two years of uninterrupted work under Bianchi’s artistic and executive direction. Born in Uruguay, Bianchi was a theatre maker with Teatro Circular and union leader of the port workers in Montevideo. Made redundant for political reasons after the 1973 military coup in Uruguay, he had resettled in Buenos Aires where he wanted to make theatre that could be used to generate social transformation. He explains the initial driving force that gave birth to Catalinas Sur: ‘The group was born from the need to repair the public space and to restore social networks after the dictatorship.’<sup>121</sup>

The core of the group is made up of people who live in La Boca and have been with Catalinas for decades. Nora Mouriño has been in the group for the last 23 years, since she was fourteen, she co-directs and also leads the production team. Gilda Arteta, now twenty-seven, is a choral conductor who started with the group when she was eight. Gonzalo Domínguez, a forty-year who has worked with Catalinas for the last eighteen years, is the musical director and composer. Jimena Bianchi, aged forty-two, has been with Catalinas since she was eight, and co-directs and leads the puppet team.

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<sup>120</sup> Alfredo Iriarte, Interview by Michelle Nicholson-Sanz (Buenos Aires, February 2012).

<sup>121</sup> ‘El grupo nace por la necesidad de reparar el espacio público y de resanar las redes sociales después de la dictadura’. Bianchi.

The group's philosophy is that 'everyone who wants to join will have a place in the group'.<sup>122</sup> In practice, this means that Catalinas is a company made up of around three hundred members. To be able to devise shows with such a large number of performers, they create pieces that amalgamate some scenes with single characters and others showcasing the entire cast of three hundred. During the latter, the performers deliver their lines through potent choral songs that express the group's opinion around the topic dealt with in a production. For example, in the show *El Fulgor*, when they perform the final song they say: 'It is our voices that now sing a retreat. Our voices won't ever be silenced. Always singing for our history, for memory and dignity. As long as life gives us heartbeats, there will be reasons to celebrate and Catalinas will here remain.'<sup>123</sup>

Such multitudinous productions as well as the production modes that enable them have become a source of inspiration and model for other community theatre groups working nationwide, affiliated to the National Network of Community Theatre. Catalinas have facilitated this through collaborations with these other groups, providing them with advice and theatre workshops along their three-decade existence.<sup>124</sup>

## **B. Lima and Yuyachkani**

Lima is a city that does not show its charms at first sight. Dwellers and visitors often require time and patience to be able to see beyond its grey sky, permanent lack of rain, flat rooftops and heavy traffic. The city is full of contradictions, both geographically and socially. Considering its latitude, Lima should have a tropical climate – the metropolis sits only 12 degrees south of the equatorial plane and at merely 150 m.a.s.l. But the city is far from tropical. The so-called 'city of kings' – alluding to its former glory as the centre of the Spanish empire in the south of the Americas – lies in a desert. Its average annual precipitation (only 7ml) makes for a sharp contrast with its high relative humidity (almost 100%). During autumn and winter (approximately from May until December), dense low-altitude clouds expand over the city until they hit the hills

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<sup>122</sup> Iriarte.

<sup>123</sup> 'Son nuestras voces que ahora entonan la retirada. Son nuestras voces que no callarán jamás. Cantando siempre por nuestra historia, por la memoria y la dignidad. Mientras la vida nos dé latidos, habrá un motivo que celebrar y Catalinas aquí estará'. Catalinas Sur, *El Fulgor Argentino, Club Social y Deportivo* (unpublished script, March 2010).

<sup>124</sup> Bianchi.

that flank it along the West. The city exudes the atmosphere of a glasshouse, with mild temperatures (oscillating between 12° C in winter and 30° C in summer) and constant dampness in the air. Located in an area of high geological risk, regular earthquakes of various intensities shake this place originally founded by the Spaniards over a pre-Hispanic indigenous settlement.

In terms of human interaction, Metropolitan Lima's territory (2,819 km<sup>2</sup>) functions like an archipelago. As the capital of a highly centralised country, Lima houses all of Peru's social classes and ethnicities while maintaining rigid spatial divisions that reveal stark socio-economic hierarchies. An evident lack of public spaces emphasises the social fragmentation within the city. Such spaces constitute only 7.62% of Metropolitan Lima's total area – a figure that includes, among others, streets, marinas, squares and parks. Green areas alone make up only 1.5% of the city's territory; *i.e.*, there are 4.57m<sup>2</sup> of green spaces per inhabitant, a figure that falls far below accepted standards (8m<sup>2</sup> per inhabitant).<sup>125</sup>

Gated neighbourhoods, lack of public spaces, and blunt disparities between well-off and underprivileged districts are some examples of how deeply social inequalities run within Lima's physiognomy.<sup>126</sup> Clear cases in point are the social dynamics evident in the affluent holiday residential areas on the coast south of Lima. Here is where wealthy *limeños* (people from Lima) spend their summers – in beach houses within gated communities, aided by domestic staff that often comprise a cleaning lady, a chauffeur, a cook and a nanny.

An ethnic and class abyss separates employees from employers in these neighbourhoods. Employees come from low-class backgrounds and often have indigenous or *mestizo* features and accents. Employers, in turn, self-identify as 'whites' and often come from influential families of European descent. Detailed community codes regulate the interactions between these two groups. Among other stipulations, these codes mandate that staff members wear service uniforms (aprons for women) and

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<sup>125</sup> Wiley Ludeña, *Lima y espacios públicos. Perfiles y estadística integrada 2010* (Lima: PUCP, 2013), pp. 106, 214.

<sup>126</sup> For details on how social prestige translates spatially in Lima, its lack of public spaces and how Yuyachkani have explored these issues, see Chapter 4, section 4.2: 'The Arcade'.

make use of their free time in the sea and beach only at the end of the afternoon, when holidaymakers have left these areas.

These discriminatory practices have been repeatedly criticised by civil initiatives against racism. Prominent among these was a protest carried out in one of these beach resorts in 2007. Hundreds of volunteers irrupted in a gated community by the sea (Asia) wearing t-shirts with the slogan ‘Basta de racismo!’ (‘That’s enough racism!’). A group of female protesters dressed in the habitual ‘maid apron’ staged their dissent from the seashore, challenging the idea of the sea as a space regulated for the exclusive use of the wealthy.<sup>127</sup>

This is part of the postcolonial tensions and disarticulations harboured in Lima. Since its foundation in 1535, the city’s social hierarchies have been inscribed spatially. In fact, ‘fragmentation’ is the word that stands out most in urban, historic and sociologic accounts of the city.<sup>128</sup> A brief outline of Lima’s development shows these socio-spatial fractures.

The Spanish origins of Lima as the capital of the Viceroyalty of Peru have decisively shaped the city’s construction. Using a checkerboard design, the structure of the city followed the Spanish colonial principle of correlation between social status and physical distance from the main square: the closer to the main square, the higher in the social or political ranking.<sup>129</sup> However, this principle was often broken. A number of black and indigenous people as well as members of other lower castes lived in close proximity to the residences of noblemen. Seeking to avoid such closeness among the different castes, two new neighbourhoods were created during the first expansion of Lima. The Arrabal de San Lázaro (today’s Rímac neighbourhood) was built in 1563 in order to house black

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<sup>127</sup> The protest, ‘Operativo empleada audaz’ (Operation Bold Maid), was a coordinated effort among a series of social organisations: among others, Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos; Asociación Pro-Derechos Humanos (APRODEH); and Casa de Panchita. For a video of this mobilisation see Utero, ‘Video del operativo empleada audaz’, 29 January 2007, <<http://utero.pe/2007/01/29/video-del-operativo-empleada-audaz-6/>> [accessed 7 May 2015].

<sup>128</sup> See, for example, Ludeña, pp. 137, 145; Elio Martuccelli, *Arquitectura para una ciudad fragmentada. Ideas, proyectos y edificios en la Lima del siglo XX* (Lima: Universidad Ricardo Palma, 2000); Aldo Panfichi, *La urbanización de Lima: 1535-1900* (2012), 1-22 <[http://blog.pucp.edu.pe/blog/wp-content/uploads/sites/38/2012/01/urbanizacion\\_temprana\\_de\\_lima.pdf](http://blog.pucp.edu.pe/blog/wp-content/uploads/sites/38/2012/01/urbanizacion_temprana_de_lima.pdf)> [accessed 10 May 2015].

<sup>129</sup> Panfichi, p. 4.



slaves after an outbreak of leprosy amongst this group. Eight years later, natives were gathered in the Pueblo de Indios de Santiago, as part of a policy of Indian reductions carried out by Viceroy Toledo.<sup>130</sup> Better known as El Cercado, for the adobe walls that enclosed it, it was located eastwards, towards the Andes and had three doors that were kept closed at night to allow for the social control of the Indian population.<sup>131</sup> Later on, in 1678, the entire city was confined within defensive walls, mainly against sea pirates. These new walls brought the Indian reduction back within the city.

After almost 200 years, in the late nineteenth century, the city walls were torn down with a modernising impetus that was to be stopped by the devastating War of the Pacific among Chile, Bolivia and Peru [1879 - 1883]. This modernising thrust would last until around 1920 and brought with it, among other urban developments, two major connecting structures: a railroad that linked Lima with its port area, Callao (in 1851); and a series of wide avenues that coupled the city's old city-centre with upper-class seaside quarters like Miraflores, Barranco and Chorrillos. In a new attempt to seek exclusivity, the middle and higher classes populated these seaside quarters, leaving the old city centre to the lower classes. Thanks to this transformation, Lima's old city-centre gained a stronger *mestizo* atmosphere which soon crystallised into 'criollismo', a cultural category that developed into an aesthetics and a musical repertoire that sought to summarise what was 'genuinely limeño'. Peruvian sociologist Aldo Panfichi describes this category in the following terms: a sense of cunning and also advantage, loyalty to one's own kind, shared codes of interaction, speech and gestures.<sup>132</sup> Criollismo's musical repertoire and common codes were developed in *fiestas criollas*, or 'jaranas', carried out in streets and, especially, in *callejones* (communal housing buildings originated in colonial times where impoverished whites and people from all other castes lived). Still nowadays *callejones* are one of the most typical housing buildings of Lima's old centre. Often overcrowded, they constitute private spaces in which the limits of what is private and public are erased.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Juan Luis Orrego, 'La reducción del Cercado de Lima' <<http://blog.pucp.edu.pe/blog/juanluisorrego/2011/05/20/la-reduccion-del-cercado-de-lima>> [accessed 15 May 2015].

<sup>131</sup> Panfichi, p. 11.

<sup>132</sup> Panfichi, p. 22.

<sup>133</sup> Alicia del Aguila, 'Callejones y mansiones o la reconstrucción de los espacios públicos en Lima (1895-1919)', *Estudios sociológicos*, 39 (1995) 545-71.

In the 1940s, Lima began to undergo one of its most significant changes. It started receiving waves of immigration from the country's provinces. The city's population and extension grew exponentially and *criollismo* had to give in to the influence of other musical and artistic expressions, particularly *chicha* – a genre that fuses cultural elements from the Andes, the Amazon and the coast.<sup>134</sup> If Lima had around 22 thousand hectares in 1940, these had almost tripled by 1993. In a little more than 50 years the city had grown more than during its first three hundred years. This vast immigration was greatly due to Peru's bloody internal conflict of the 1980s and 1990s. The higher classes responded to these so-called 'invasions' with gated communities and, later on, by the turn of the century, when the internal conflict had receded, they started to seek exclusivity further south of the city centre. Gradually, Lima became a metropolis with almost ten million inhabitants.<sup>135</sup>

Nowadays, these socio-spatial divisions split the city in two. There is the so-called 'Lima moderna' (modern – or inner – Lima), which comprises long-established middle- and upper-class residential districts, and is surrounded by the Pacific Ocean (from the west); by Lima's port, Callao (from the north); and by areas of various socio-economic levels, most of which originated as slums. The latter comprise 'the other Lima', most of which was built informally by the internal migrants that arrived in Lima since the 1950s. This 'other Lima' initiated the city's process of conurbation; *i.e.* the formation of areas around modern Lima that have expanded this traditional outline of the city and have merged with it into one continuous metropolis. Most of these areas of 'Lima conurbana' (conurban Lima) have become significant development hubs, attracting the investment of financial, commercial and entertainment sectors traditionally based (and associated with) inner Lima.<sup>136</sup> Informality, however, is still part and parcel of the city's makeup. Indeed, it is estimated that nearly 70% of Metropolitan Lima's urban land is occupied by precarious constructions built without planning permission.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> For a detailed explanation of *chicha* and how Yuyachkani has explored this aesthetic, see Chapter 4, section 4.2: 'The Arcade'.

<sup>135</sup> The precise figure of city's population is 9,916,452. Ludeña, p. 80.

<sup>136</sup> For a study of the material success of conurban Lima see, Rolando Arellano, *Ciudad de los Reyes, de los Chávez, los Quispe...* (Lima: Planeta, 2010).

<sup>137</sup> Ludeña, p. 57.

Withal the thriving success of outer Lima, these sectors are still associated with internal immigration, particularly from the Andes. Hence, the city's dual spatial division – between modern and conurban – physically lays out Peru's social breach between the coast as a developed area with strong presence of 'white' Peruvians, and the Andes as archaic, uncivilised and peripheral.<sup>138</sup> This split is also present in the theatre that is made and offered in the city.

### **Lima's theatre scene**

It is commonly acknowledged that the demand and supply of theatre in Lima has gained momentum over the last five to ten years.<sup>139</sup> Miguel Valladares, a producer of commercially successful shows aimed at established middle- and upper class audiences, offers an eloquent description of the current success: 'Audiences are excited about attending national productions but we are lacking in venues. There are plenty of shows and we even have to fight for theatre venues'.<sup>140</sup>

This new prosperity responds to a number of factors. The entertainment and cultural sectors have capitalised on the country's financial and social stability that has been taking place since the new millennium – after the economic stagnation and political violence that almost paralysed Peru during the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>141</sup> A clear sign of this favourable juncture has been the creation of a Ministry of Culture in 2010, after technical and political debates that started in 2001, with the democratic election of President Alejandro Toledo – the first regime after the infamous decade of Alberto Fujimori.<sup>142</sup> In this upsurge, the theatre has benefitted from small, but unprecedented,

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<sup>138</sup> See Thorp and Paredes, pp. 108ff; see also Ludeña; Matos Mar.

<sup>139</sup> See, for example, Israel Lozano, 'Luis Peirano: Vivimos un boom del teatro y hay que celebrarlo', 26 March 2015, <<http://archivo.larepublica.pe/26-03-2015/luis-peirano-vivimos-un-boom-del-teatro-y-hay-que-celebrarlo>> [accessed 20 May 2015]; Karen Rojas, 'Juan Carlos Fisher: "Antes, pedir un auspicio para teatro era visto como pedir un favor"' 16 April 2014, <<http://gestion.pe/tendencias/juan-carlos-fisher-productores-antes-pedir-auspicio-teatro-era-visto-como-pedir-favor-2094757>> [accessed 20 May 2015].

<sup>140</sup> 'El público está entusiasmado con ir a ver teatro peruano, pero lo que faltan son locales. Hay muchas producciones y hasta nos peleamos los teatros'. Perú 21, 'Récord de taquilla', 4 May 2014, <<http://peru21.pe/opinion/record-taquilla-2181639>> [accessed 20 May 2015].

<sup>141</sup> For details of this conflict and how Yuyachkani delved into its consequences in Lima, see Chapter 3, section 3.2: 'Time to Abide'.

<sup>142</sup> Yuyachkani explore the aftermath of the Fujimori regime and the return of full democracy in their 2001 production *Hecho en el Perú*. See Chapter 4, section 4.2: 'The Arcade'.

state support such as the country's first public award for new writing, created in 2013.<sup>143</sup>

Local theatre making has also suffered from the lack of consistent public policies to support the arts. Perhaps one of the biggest setbacks for the city's theatre scene has been the cancellation of the Festival de Artes Escénicas de Lima, FAEL (Lima's Performing Arts Festival). Launched in 2012 by the then city mayor, Susana Villarán (2010-15), the festival had become a commercial and branding success, placing Lima within the regional cultural scene, next to long-established theatre festivals in Buenos Aires and Bogotá.<sup>144</sup>

FAEL was an unusual festival for Lima as it brought together audiences from both inner and outer Lima. During its 2014 edition, for example, almost 20% of the festival's total audience came from the peripheries (particularly from North Lima).<sup>145</sup> Taking place in various venues around modern Lima, the cancellation of FAEL has not had a major impact on the production of theatre shows in this area.

Contrastingly, festivals have become critical for the showcase and production of theatre made in conurban Lima. The largest and arguably the most influential of these is the Festival Internacional de Calles Abiertas, FITECA (Open Streets International Festival), which has been running for the last fourteen years in Comas (a populous district in North Lima). Organised by neighbourhood associations and cultural organisations that operate locally in Comas, this annual festival has become a landmark of community theatre in Latin America, gathering troupes from various Peruvian cities as well as from Latin American and European countries.<sup>146</sup> The festival functions as a networking and

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<sup>143</sup> The award includes two categories, plays for an adult audience and for young people, and is bestowed to playwrights born in Peru aged between 18 and 35. Winners receive funding for the staging and publication of their plays, and the two forerunners see their plays published.

Ministerio de Cultura del Perú, 'Concurso nacional Nueva Dramaturgia Peruana', <<http://www.cultura.gob.pe/es/industriasculturalesartes/dramaturgia>> [accessed 17 May 2015].

<sup>144</sup> Santiago Alfaro, the last director of the FAEL (2014), offers a detailed account of the festival's impact both nationally and regionally in 'Los beneficios de la cultura', 2 March 2015 <<https://resonanciasantiagoalfaro.lamula.pe/2015/02/03/los-beneficios-de-la-cultura/salfarorotondo/>> [accessed 17 May 2015].

<sup>145</sup> Alfaro.

<sup>146</sup> FITECA, <[https://www.facebook.com/fitecaperu/info?tab=page\\_info](https://www.facebook.com/fitecaperu/info?tab=page_info)> [accessed 27 May 2015].

exchange space for national and international self-funded neighbourhood theatre groups.<sup>147</sup>

Varied subject matter and goals inform theatre practices in conurban and modern Lima. Within the former, group theatre dominates the form of production. Actors, directors and producers are self-taught or have been trained in other conurban troupes. They make theatre as a means for voicing local social or political concerns, closely related to the experience of being an immigrant in Lima or being a second-generation *Limeño*. The work of these groups is grounded in the models of popular theatre that renovated the performing arts in Latin America during the late 1950s and the 1960s.<sup>148</sup> Around twenty-five of these groups have been operating in these areas since at least 2000, producing dramaturgical styles that emphasise cultural traditions from their own places of origins, largely in the Andes.<sup>149</sup>

In contrast, theatre in inner Lima is mostly dominated by commercial logic and ‘international’ subject matter. Profit orientated, these productions gather a cast of well-known local actors only for one season in order to stage plays often written by international playwrights. The past two decades, however, have seen this theatre scene widen thanks to an upsurge of new-writing competitions for local playwrights.<sup>150</sup> Commercial theatre in this area is predominantly showcased in venues located in middle-class districts and owned by universities (most notably by the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú and Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola) and binational cultural associations such as the Alliance Française, the Goethe Institute, the Peruvian-British Cultural Centre, and the Peruvian-North American Cultural Centre.

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<sup>147</sup> Another influential space for the promotion of community theatre is FIETPO – Festival Itinerante y Encuentro de Teatro Popular (Itinerant Festival and Summit of Popular Theatre), running for the last thirteen years in Comas. FIETPO, <<http://fietpo.blogspot.com>> [accessed 20 May 2015].

<sup>148</sup> For details on the development of popular theatre in Latin America, see Introduction, section 0.2, part A: ‘Latin American popular theatre’.

<sup>149</sup> Malcolm Malca, ‘La gente dice que somos teatro popular. Referentes de identidad en la práctica teatral de la zona periférica de Lima Metropolitana’ (unpublished bachelor’s thesis, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2011) <<http://tesis.pucp.edu.pe/repositorio/handle/123456789/392>> [accessed 21 May 2015], pp. 51ff.

<sup>150</sup> These awards often comprise funding the entire production of successful national applicants. Examples of this are ‘Sala de parto’, competition organised by Teatro La Plaza (privately funded organisation), and ‘Ponemos tu obra en escena’, organised by the Peruvian-British Cultural Centre.

Between these starkly different zones – central and peripheral Lima – there have been some crossovers. On the one hand, the middle-class commercially orientated Teatro La Plaza has opened a branch in North Lima, one of the most thriving metropolitan areas. This new venture has successfully taken productions that had been box-office hits in central Lima to the city’s periphery.<sup>151</sup> On the other hand, non-for-profit theatre groups based in inner Lima have been developing a much longer exchange with community theatre ventures in outer Lima. For example, Yuyachkani, Cuatrotablas (founded in 1971) and Maguey (founded in 1982) interact with troupes based in outer Lima through workshops and such festivals as FITECA. These companies are united through their common interest in group theatre as a mode of production and in the exploration of the country’s popular culture and social memory.<sup>152</sup>

### **Yuyachkani**

The neighbourhood where Yuyachkani’s venue is located is a lower middle-class district originally founded in 1857. Overlooking the Pacific Ocean, Magdalena del Mar (Magdalene by Sea) borders the much more commercially successful and socially prestigious district of San Isidro on the East, and is about an hour’s drive from El Callao, Lima’s port that lies to the West.<sup>153</sup> The district is clearly off both modern and conurban Lima’s cultural scenes.

Yuyachkani moved to their current house, as they call it, when they bought the building in 1987. It is a large neocolonial one-floor building with a gable roof originally constructed in 1910.<sup>154</sup> Protected by tall red walls, a green main gate opens up to a front patio with a small garden and a long wooden veranda. Everything looks well looked after. Inside, high ceilings give a feeling of amplitude as one walks along a central

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<sup>151</sup> Perhaps the biggest hit has been *Perú Jaja*, a farcical take on Peruvian history since colonial times. On the evening of its premiere in the Teatro Plaza Norte, the show sold 90% of its 421 seats. La República, ‘Lima Norte acudió en familia a su primera gran sala’, 20 April 2014 <<http://archivo.larepublica.pe/20-04-2014/lima-norte-acudio-en-familia-a-su-primera-gran-sala>> [accessed 20 May 2015].

<sup>152</sup> Malca, pp. 47ff.

<sup>153</sup> Municipalidad de Magdalena del Mar, ‘Nuestra historia’ <<http://www.munimagdalena.gob.pe/magdalena/nuestra-historia/index.html>> > [accessed 20 May 2015].

<sup>154</sup> Teresa Ralli, Interview by Michelle Nicholson-Sanz on Yuyachkani (Lima, March 2012).

corridor that branches out into various rooms: the troupe's archive, the producers' offices, a masks workshop, a meeting room, and a small café. At the end of the corridor, a backyard opens up which leads into the theatre itself – a large black box with seating capacity for 160 people.

The house is where the troupe meet regularly to plan their work, where they showcase their productions, rehearse, devise new pieces, offer theatre workshops and host national and international theatre groups. It is a highly personal space for Yuyachkani. They bought it with the proceeds from their work. Actress Teresa Ralli recalls, 'We didn't distribute any profits. Not even one dollar. That's faith, ah? When the theatre was being built, before we poured one of the columns, each of the members of the group put personal objects in the hole. We put letters, a lock of hair, a necklace. At the beginning our stage had only a cement floor, until we finally got the money to put in a wooden one. We also got some funding from foreign embassies in order to finish this or that'.<sup>155</sup>

The masks' room is emblematic of the group's trajectory as well as their long-standing interest in the Andes as a core source of Peruvian identity. Andean masks have been part of Yuyachkani's exploration of dramaturgical languages since the 1980s.<sup>156</sup> They have been central to the troupe's exploration of the country's cultural memory. Yuyachkani's director Miguel Rubio has studied the role of masked dancers in Andean fiestas, tracing these ritual performances back to local pre-Hispanic cultures and to cave paintings that are over 10,000 years old.<sup>157</sup>

The latest, and perhaps most critical, turn that the group has undergone has led them into a search for ways to challenge the extent to which theatre may portray the real. While the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission were active, Yuyachkani was

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<sup>155</sup> 'No nos repartimos ni un dollar. Que tal fe, ¿no? Antes de vacear una de las columnas, cada uno de los miembros del grupo puso cosas personales. Pusimos cartas, un mechón de pelo, un collar. Al principio teníamos un piso de cemento hasta que juntamos plata para hacer un piso de madera. Pedimos apoyo de embajadas para terminar esto o lo otro'. Ralli.

<sup>156</sup> In such pieces as *Músicos ambulantes* (1983); *Contraelviento* (1989); *Adiós Ayacucho* (1990); *Santiago* (2000); *Hecho en el Perú* (2001); *El último ensayo* (2008); *Con-cierto olvido* (2010).

<sup>157</sup> These paintings in the town of Toquepala, southern Peru, depict masked dancers performing hunting rituals. Miguel Rubio, 'En busca de la teatralidad andina', in *Fiestas y rituales. Memorias X Encuentro para la promoción y difusión del patrimonio inmaterial de países iberoamericanos*, ed. by John Galán (Lima: Corporación para la Difusión y Promoción de la Cultura, 2009), pp. 245-62 (p. 247).

invited by the Commission to accompany their public hearings, carried out in different parts of the country. Before these hearings, the group staged brief pieces in open spaces with characters from their repertoire that portray victims of the conflict.<sup>158</sup> The group hoped that these short happenings would facilitate the depositions of victims and relatives of victims, whose vast majority were indigenous peasants. For the group, the experience of viewing these hearings marked a milestone. Listening to the sector of Peruvian population that has been historically neglected and rejected speaking for themselves made the troupe reconsider the entire idea of theatrical representation. The TRC's work allowed for a space in which Quechua-speaking peasants could voice their stories and experiences in their own mother tongue.

Yuyachkani resolved then that never again would they attempt to represent any social actors. Reality itself was loud enough to be able to make itself heard. Since then, the group has begun to explore dramaturgical languages that avoid representation and instead play around the edges between representation and presentation. Since the mid 2,000s, they have been creating shows that avoid any recourse to especially designed costumes, sets, masks or makeup. In doing so they want to examine the possibilities of using their own presences as actors as a means to highlight the concept of personal testimony – their own personal testimony.<sup>159</sup> Thus, instead of representing disenfranchised Peruvians articulating what they have lived through, the actors themselves have begun to present their individual experiences regarding the country's socio-political conflicts.

### **C. Salvador and Bando de Teatro Olodum**

It is always hot in Salvador de Bahia. Average temperatures oscillate in the city between some 24°C in winter and 27°C in summer. Thermometers can reach maximum temperatures of 37°C during the warmer months, between January and March. Referred

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<sup>158</sup> Specially important were: Rosa Cuchillo, the character from their eponymous production (2004) – a woman who travels to the land of the dead in order to search for her disappeared son; and Augusto Cánepa, the character from *Adiós Ayacucho* (1990) – an indigenous peasant killed by the armed forces during the war.

<sup>159</sup> This has been the case of such shows as *Sin Título. Técnica Mixta* (2004), *Con-cierto olvido* (2010) and *Confesiones* (2013).



to by locals as simply Salvador or Bahia, the city is capital to the Northeastern state of Bahia.

The state's vast area (around 564,733km<sup>2</sup>) accounts for almost 6.6% of Brazil's territory and is formed by four geographical regions that run parallel to the Atlantic Ocean. Located closer to the coast, the *zona da mata* (forest zone) is the most populated, urbanised and industrialised of these regions. Encompassing the city of Salvador, the area is rich in oil and agriculture. Large-scale landowners produce cacao in the south and sugar cane along the littoral. Further eastwards, the *agreste* forms a thin strip of semi-arid land for the cultivation of small- and medium-scale agriculture. Further still to the east, stretches the *sertão*, or backlands. Covering almost 70% of Bahia's territory, the *sertão* is the hottest and driest part of Bahia and suffers from constant droughts.<sup>160</sup>

The contrasts between Bahia's coastline, the *zona da mata*, and the other areas are stark. The entire region is economically, culturally and politically dominated in this narrow band. Salvador lies right next to the sea and has 26.4% of the state's population according to the latest official census (2010). This census also shows that only 38.7% of Bahians live in rural areas. When the Portuguese first landed on these coasts in 1500, they did so in the southern part of Bahia, in Porto Seguro (Safe Port). Later, in 1549, Salvador became the capital of the Brazilian empire. Today, Salvador is the third most populous city in Brazil, after São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.<sup>161</sup>

During colonial times, Salvador's location made it the ideal Portuguese hub for the triangular trade between Brazil, Europe and West Africa. Set where the Northeastern corner of the Brazilian territory reaches out towards African soil, the city annually received about fifty ships from Portugal. Brazil's leading seaport was thus part of a dynamic trading route. Vessels arriving from Portugal contained European and Asian manufactured commodities (such as wine, salt and dairy products). On their return voyage, these ships were loaded with sugar, gold, tobacco, precious stones, cotton and

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<sup>160</sup> Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), *Brasil em números* (Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 2013), p. 53.

<sup>161</sup> The city's estimated population for 2014 is about two million nine hundred people. IBGE, 'Salvador', <<http://cidades.ibge.gov.br/painel/painel.php?lang=&codmun=292740&search=bahia|salvador|infograficos:-dados-gerais-do-municipio>> [accessed 3 July 2015].

coffee. Vessels from Africa arrived in Salvador with slaves and some minerals, and made their return trip with tobacco, seeds and vegetables. In turn, Portugal sent Africa alcohol and rough textiles.<sup>162</sup>

Today, Bahia and Salvador rank among the most economically and socially conflicted areas in Brazil. Firearm mortality rates have increased in both the city and the state, in stark contrast with the southeasterly cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. In 2012, the Northeast concentrated the majority of all the country's deaths by fire weapons (31.5%). On a federal level, and considering the period between 2001 and 2012, the state of Bahia increased its rate of violent deaths by a staggering 133.4%, going from the 15<sup>th</sup> Brazilian state with the highest amounts of victims in 2001 to being the 4<sup>th</sup> in 2012. In turn, the wealthier states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro decreased these rates by 62.2% and 54.9% respectively. On an urban level, Salvador has gone from being the 9<sup>th</sup> city with the highest firearm mortality rates in 2001 to being 4<sup>th</sup> in 2012. On the other hand, the city of São Paulo went from 11<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> place in the same period, and Rio de Janeiro from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> place.<sup>163</sup>

Comparisons are not random between the Northeast and the Southeast, and between Salvador and São Paulo. Over the years these regions and cities have formulated their racial and geopolitical identities in opposition to one another. National stereotypes describe the Northeast and Salvador as poor, backward, traditional and a bulwark of black Brazilianness. Furthermore, the Northeast's arid climate and regular droughts have required the central government's economic intervention on numerous occasions, triggering the image of a mendicant region. Conversely, the Southeast, and in particular the city and state of São Paulo, are portrayed as modern, progressive, hard-working and predominantly 'white'.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Teresa Meade, *A Brief History of Brazil* (New York: Checkmark Books, 2004), p. 29.

<sup>163</sup> Julio J. Waiselfisz, *Mortes matadas por armas de fogo. Mapa da violencia 2015* (Brasilia: Secretaria-Geral da Presidência da República, 2015), pp. 31, 34, 43.

<sup>164</sup> For exhaustive studies on the historical constructions of the North- and Southeast and how these two processes fed from each other, see Barbara Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity. São Paulo and the Making of Race and Nation in Brazil* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2015), and Durval Jr. Muniz de Albuquerque, *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014).

The first grave drought in the Northeast took place during 1877-79, but the area emerged in the national imaginary as a distinctive region only in the 1920s. Such a construction was a two-way road – with specific interests converging both from the North- and the Southeast. The latter arose with the economic wealth of the coffee boom that started in the late nineteenth century. In the 1920s, the primacy of the Southeast was further solidified when it consolidated as the leading manufacturing region. The influx of Europeans arriving in the area since the abolition of slavery in 1888 favoured the coalescence of race and civilisation by reinforcing associations of whiteness and productivity and modernity. Although some European newcomers influenced by anarchism incited strike action, they were preferred to Africans, who were considered part of the country's past.<sup>165</sup> Simultaneously, the Northeast had lost its former influence with the decline of the sugar boom and the iniquitous conditions in which former slaves had been left after emancipation – with no economic retributions and a complete disregard for their new working conditions. Northeastern intellectuals were joined by sugar and cotton producers in initiating a discourse on the distinctiveness of the region hoping it would hinder their being absorbed under an ideal of 'national integration' led by the Southeast that was aimed at cementing São Paulo's supremacy as the country's economic heart and a model of modernity and progress.<sup>166</sup>

In the period since 2010, these social representations have converted into very concrete socio-economic indicators. The leading industrial state of São Paulo concentrates almost half of all wages paid in Brazil (43.7%) and is responsible for 36.2% of all industrial production, while Bahia comes only fourth (after Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro) with 4.2%. Unemployment rates in 2011 came to nearly 10% in Metropolitan Salvador while the region of São Paulo accumulated 6%.<sup>167</sup> Access to justice is also very poor in Bahia, coming second-to-last of all Brazilian states in 2013, with only six judges and 1.48 defending counsellors for every one hundred thousand inhabitants.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Weinstein, pp. 14, 108.

<sup>166</sup> Muniz de Albuquerque, pp. 43, 52, 55. For more details on the economic and socio-political impact of slavery and emancipation in Brazil, see Chapter 1, section 1.1: 'Brazil: Making Race Invisible'.

<sup>167</sup> IGBE, *Brasil em números*, p. 221.

<sup>168</sup> Governo Federal de Brasil. Ministério da Justiça. 'Índices nacionais de acesso à justiça. Região. 2013'

<[http://www.acessoajustica.gov.br/pub/centraisDeConteudo/indicadores\\_preDefinidos.faces](http://www.acessoajustica.gov.br/pub/centraisDeConteudo/indicadores_preDefinidos.faces)> [accessed 1 June 2015], p. 142.

Not only on a regional level have racial inequalities acquired spatial dimensions. Within Salvador itself there is a clear residential segregation based on class and race.

Metropolitan Salvador is located in one of the peninsulas that form the bay that gives the region of Bahia its name. Public policies, private investors and destitute people leading informal land occupations have shaped the peninsula since the second half of the twentieth century so that today it is made up of four distinctive residential areas.

On the northeastern coast lies the city's old city centre, boasting historic buildings and sites that attest to Salvador's colonial and early republican periods and make the area the major tourist attraction in the region. The area further north from the historic centre is the Subúrbio Ferroviário (Railroad Suburb), the poorest area in the city, with informal self-made houses as well as a precarious infrastructure and limited sanitation. On the opposite side of the peninsula, running along the western coastline, the Orla Atlântica (Atlantic Waterside) is the wealthiest and most prestigious sector of Salvador, which also harbours a middle class quarter as well as some interspersed pockets of poverty. Finally, the Miolo (Interior) expands across the centre of the peninsula, with informal houses and large social housing projects for the working and lower-middle classes.<sup>169</sup>

According to the last demographic census (2010), these four urban areas are not only distinctive in terms of class but also race. Subúrbio Ferroviário and the Miolo are areas where at least 80% of their population are Afro-Brazilians. In some neighbourhoods figures rise as high as 90.57% (in Fazenda Coutos, Subúrbio Ferroviário). In the historic centre, the number of Afro-Brazilians is lower but they still make the majority (60%). Contrastingly, the Orla Atlântica is mostly composed by neighbourhoods where black Brazilians are less than 40%.<sup>170</sup>

Until the second half of the twentieth century, Salvador concentrated mainly around the old city centre, where the city's port lies. In the 1950s, the discovery of oil in the

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<sup>169</sup> Cristóvão Brito, 'A estruturação do mercado de terra urbana e habitação em Salvador-Ba a partir de 1970', *GeoTextos*, 1 (2005), 51-80 (pp. 65-7).

<sup>170</sup> João Soares and Rose Laila de Jesus Bouças (Sociedade Brasileira de Urbanismo), 'Racismo, luta e resistência da população negra na cidade segregada' <<https://sburbanismo.wordpress.com/publicacoes/racismo-luta-e-resistencia-da-populacao-negra-na-cidade-segregada>> [accessed 2 July 2015].

peninsula ignited the economic recovery of the region that had stagnated with the decline of the sugar cycle. Further boosted with the installation of new petrochemical plants in the 1960s and 1970s, this economic recovery attracted thousands of immigrants coming particularly from Bahia's interior. Between 1940 and 2010, Salvador grew from a city of 290,000 to a metropolis home to more than two and a half million people.<sup>171</sup> This demographic surge led to the gradual relocation of the poor to peripheral sectors while simultaneously incrementing the upper classes living spaces through gentrification and also stretching the habitable areas along the Orla Atlântica.<sup>172</sup>

Arguably the most extensive and transformational process of gentrification was carried out in the historic centre (the Pelourinho), during the 1990s. Although the area was already in decline in the 1930s, with its wealthy traditional families moving out into more affluent neighbourhoods, it was not until the late 1980s that the municipal government decided to 'clean' the area in order to attract foreign investors and tourists. By 2011, residential spaces in the area had reduced to merely 36%. The displaced population, largely made up of lower class Afro-Brazilians, moved to the Miolo. Their absence in Pelourinho gave way to new museums, shops, hotels and restaurants.<sup>173</sup> This process of gentrification is far from complete. The neighbourhood is in constant transition and in tension between populations, identities and functions.

Such changes in Salvador included also the creation of closed communities across the Orla Atlântica. Starting in the 1980s, such communities have been marketed as the response of the wealthy to what it is described as an increasingly violent and urbanised city. In turn, these places offer ecologically friendly housing with access to water sports, parks, swimming pools, playgrounds and a wide variety of services.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Nelson Baltrusis and Laila Nazem Mourad, 'Política habitacional e locação social em Salvador', *Caderno CRH*, 71 (2014), 267-84 (p. 268).

<sup>172</sup> It has to be noted that until 1968 the owners of the city's land were largely the council (Prefeitura Municipal de Salvador) and some religious orders. Since then, urban land has been increasingly privatised, catering especially to the upper classes and increasing levels of tourism. For more details see Brito; and Baltrusis and Nazem Mourad.

<sup>173</sup> Daniel de Albuquerque Ribeiro, 'Reflexões sobre o conceito e a ocorrência do processo de *gentrification* no Parque Histórico do Pelourinho, Salvador – BA', *Cadernos Metrôpole*, 32 (2014), 461-86, p. 479.

<sup>174</sup> Célia Sganzerla Santana et al., 'Vende-se um sonho: uma análise dos condomínios clube do eixo acesso norte-aeroporto na Salvador do século XXI', presentation for the conference 'XIII Encontro da Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Planejamento Urbano e Regional', 29 May 2009, Florianópolis, Brasil.

The privatisations of public spaces and processes of gentrification have taken place in the city despite the fact that the national government approved the *Estatuto da Cidade* in 2001. This is a law that regulates the use and property of land prioritising the ecological and social sustainability. The pervasive influence of the private sector and the building industry within Brazil is evidenced in the fact that it took the parliament almost twelve years to approve this law.<sup>175</sup>

Spatial segregation in Salvador according to social class and race has led to the creation of various cultural responses seeking to re-appropriate the city. The performing arts in particular have been instrumental in making visible Salvador's racial inequalities.

### **Salvador's theatre scene**

According to the latest national survey on cultural production (carried out in 2010), the Northeast is the region with the second largest number of theatre venues in Brazil. With 246 theatres, the region lies well behind the dynamic Southeast, which concentrates 689 locales. On a state level, Bahia stands seventh, with 60 theatre venues, well behind São Paulo (306) and Rio de Janeiro (231). The city of Salvador concentrates around 63% of Bahia's venues, providing one theatre space for every 71,000 people living in the city.<sup>176</sup>

The decade of 1990 saw an upsurge of venues in Salvador. In 1989 the city had only thirteen theatre spaces and between 1991 and 2010 nineteen new ones were built, eight were recuperated and reopened. The amount of theatre shows premiered each year also increased steadily, going from twenty eight shows in 1993 to thirty four in 2000, to forty seven in 2005 and fifty in 2010.<sup>177</sup> Responding to this offer, Salvador is among the Brazilian cities with more demand for theatre and opera. In 2012, these two art forms were the preferred choice for people who live in Salvador and attend cultural activities.

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<sup>175</sup> Baltrusis and Nazem Mourad.

<sup>176</sup> Ministério da Cultura de Brasil, *Cultura em números* (Brasília: Minc, 2010).

<sup>177</sup> Sérgio Sobreira Araujo, 'Produção cultural no contexto das políticas públicas: Uma análise da trajetória do teatro baiano profissional no período de 1988 a 2010' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador, 2011), pp. 151-3, 165.

To put this in context, such a figure is above the average for Brazil (11%) and São Paulo (12%), and below Rio de Janeiro (15%).<sup>178</sup>

Most theatre venues are concentrated in the middle- and upper class neighbourhoods close to the old city centre (Campo Grande, Vitória, Graça, Canela) and the Orla Atlântica (Barra, Ondina and Rio Vermelho). Programmes there include both local productions of Brazilian playwrights and well-known Western dramatists (such as Shakespeare, Arthur Miller and Anton Chekhov).<sup>179</sup>

The lower class neighbourhoods enjoy a very different theatre scene that is dominated by both amateur groups (formed variously in schools, religious groups, community organisations and labour unions) and more established theatre troupes based in Salvador's peripheral areas. The latter are particularly active in the area of Subúrbio Ferroviário, thanks to the initiative of the Coletivo de Produtores Culturais do Subúrbio (Collective of Cultural Producers of the Subúrbio) – an association of actors, producers and sociologists who live in, or have links with, the area. Founded in 2008 with the aim of supporting the arts in the Subúrbio, they based their activities in the Centro Cultural Plataforma, a cultural centre inaugurated the previous year by local artists in partnership with the state of Bahia. Since 2009, the Collective have been organising a successful festival that gathers local and national theatre groups based in peripheral neighbourhoods (*favelas*).

Revealing the close connections between *favelados* (people who live in slums) and race, the first of these festivals was dedicated to black theatre (*teatro negro*).<sup>180</sup> The festival has seen four editions, offering theatre shows, workshops and seminars. The first one (2009) attracted more than 2,500 people, half of whom were school pupils from the Subúrbio Ferroviário. In 2010, the topic was contemporary theatre and gathered 1,660 spectators; in 2012 the subject of Brazilian theatre invited groups from Rio de Janeiro

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<sup>178</sup> Instituto Brasileiro de Opinião Pública e Estatística (IBOPE), '11% da população das regiões metropolitanas brasileiras frequenta o teatro', 28 November 2012 <<http://www.ibope.com.br/pt-br/noticias/Paginas/11-da-populacao-das-regioes-metropolitanas-brasileiras-frequenta-o-teatro.aspx>> [accessed 3 July 2015].

<sup>179</sup> Gisele Marchiori Nussbaumer et al., 'Um Mapa dos Teatros de Salvador', Paper presented at the conference 'Encontro de Estudos Multidisciplinares em Cultura', 2006, Salvador.

<sup>180</sup> For an overview of black theatre in Brazil, see Introduction, section 0.2, part D: 'Bando de Teatro Olodum, 1990'.

and attracted 1,180 people; and the latest edition, in 2013, showcased troupes from Brazil's Northeast (audience numbers are not available for this edition).<sup>181</sup> Bando de Teatro Olodum took part in this event too, owing to their role in the development of a black theatre scene in the city – a phenomenon whose history has been marked by obstacles.

Arguably the two cultural phenomena that have been most influential in the formation of a black theatre in Bahia have been *candomblé* (the Afro-Bahian religion) and *blocos afro* (all-black musical groups that take part of street parades during carnival).

*Candomblé* is a syncretic religion that embraces Catholic as well as West African beliefs (particularly from the Yoruba, Fon and Bantu peoples). Rather than preserving African traditions intact, they were reinvented around the 1890s in order to respond to the new context faced by the forced black diaspora that arrived in Bahia. Central to all its rituals (including special festivities and everyday observances) are the use of plants, food, clothes, songs and dances whose origins lie in West Africa. A highly performative religion, followers believe the gods (*orixás*) acquire material form in certain human beings. These bodies become media through which the gods re-enact their legends dancing and singing. All these elements have kept West Africa deeply meaningful and alive in the imaginary of Bahian believers. So popular is the religion in the city that according to the latest survey (2006), Salvador is home to 1165 *candomblé* temples [*terreiros*].<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Coletivo de Produtores Culturais do Subúrbio  
<<http://www.coletivodeprodutores.com.br/fts4/>> [accessed 1 July 2015]

<sup>182</sup> Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais da UFBA and Secretaria Municipal da Reparação e da Habitação 2006, 'Mapeamento dos terreiros do candomblé de Salvador'  
<<http://www.terreiros.ceao.ufba.br>> [accessed 1 June 2015]. On the history and present practice of *candomblé* there is a wealth of sources. Particularly relevant are Ari Lima, 'Tradition, history and spiral of time in the samba de roda of Bahia', in *(Re)considering blackness in contemporary Afro-Brazilian (con)texts*, ed. by Antonio D. Tillis, (New York: Peter Lang, 2011) pp. 27-43; Pierre Verger, *Notas sobre o culto aos orixás e voduns na Bahia de Todos os Santos, no Brasil, e na antiga costa dos escravos, na África* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 1999); Stefania Capone, *Searching for Africa in Brazil. Power and Tradition in Candomblé*, trans. by Lucy Lyall Grant (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2010); Cheryl Sterling, *African Roots, Brazilian Rites. Cultural Identity in Brazil* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Miguel Alonso, *The Development of Yoruba Candomblé Communities in Salvador, Bahia, 1835-1986* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).



Banned by the Catholic Church and largely practiced clandestinely until the 1980s,<sup>183</sup> already in the 1930s *candomblé* priests and priestesses were instrumental in asserting a pride in black identity and Africa, though a mythic (more than real) Africa – a ‘motherland’ with an original source common to black people worldwide. Since its origins, *candomblé* authorities have been the most respected source of knowledge for the formation and assertion of an Afro-Bahian identity, including the work done by black theatre troupes.<sup>184</sup>

*Blocos afro* have also been critical for strengthening Afro-Bahian identity and, most importantly, for using the arts to do so. These music groups (*blocos*) have been taking part in carnival celebrations since the 1970s. Hugely popular today, with various radio hits and thousands of followers, they sing across Salvador’s streets about black identity and rights, accompanied by a forceful Afro-Bahian drumming that makes chests vibrate as the musicians pass by. Active all year round, and not only during carnival, they give workshops and talks on Afro-Brazilian history and music, and have become one of ‘the major producers of discourses of blackness in Bahia’.<sup>185</sup>

Bando de Teatro Olodum originated as a partnership precisely with one of the best-established *blocos afro* in the city, Olodum.

### **Bando de Teatro Olodum**

The current artistic director of O Bando, Márcio Meirelles, had a long trajectory in the cultural scene of Bahia as a theatre director and founder of the group Avelãz y Avestruz (1976-89). Meirelles had always been interested in making politically charged theatre, particularly questioning Brazil’s military dictatorship during the 1970s. A decade later,

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<sup>183</sup> Alonso, p. 9.

<sup>184</sup> For an analysis of O Bando’s exploration of *candomblé*, see Chapter 3, section 3.3: ‘Ancestral Time’. For a detailed bibliography on the influence of *candomblé* authorities in Bahia, see Capone; Sterling; Anadelia Romo, *Brazil’s Living Museum. Race, Reform and Tradition in Bahia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Patricia de Santana Pinho, *Mama Africa: Reinventing Blackness in Bahia* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010).

<sup>185</sup> Santana Pinho, p. 2. See also Antonio Luciano Tosta, ‘Resistance and citizenship in the songs of Ilê Aiyê and Olodum’, *Afro-Hispanic Review*, 29 (2010), 175-94; Kenneth Williamson, ‘Night becomes day: Carnival, Contested Spaces, and the Black Movement in Bahia’, *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, 17 (2012), 257-78.

he wanted to expand this political angle by exploring the dramaturgical potentials of Afro-Brazilian rites and culture, and *candomblé* in particular. To do so, he felt that he needed the support from an Afro-Bahian organisation that was already established and well recognised. He approached Bloco Olodum, one of the most prestigious *blocos afro* in Salvador, who soon after would collaborate with such international artists as Paul Simon, Michael Jackson and Herbie Hancock.<sup>186</sup> Olodum supported the project and it was further joined by three other artists: actresses and directors Chica Carelli and Maria Eugênia Milet (also former members of Aveláz y Avestruz) and dancer and choreographer Leda Ornelas, who specialises in Afro-Brazilian dances.

The leading team then called a casting that required only two eligibility criteria: an engagement in issues related to Afro-Bahian culture and politics and a willingness to partake in the exploration of these issues through the theatre. No previous experience in theatre making was required. More than a hundred people attended auditions, most of them black (*pretos* and *pardos*) but only twenty were selected.<sup>187</sup>

The group has grown to become one of the leading cultural agitators in Brazil, calling attention to racial discrimination against Afro-Brazilians. One of their most controversial productions caused immense public debate in Salvador even before it premiered on 8 October 1997. The controversy was so heated that it broke the partnership between O Bando de Teatro Olodum and Bloco Olodum. *Cabaré da RRRRRaça*, devised as a music hall piece discussed the role of race in the Salvador's society and the different stereotypes under which blackness has been branded in the city. Some days before its opening, O Bando announced through the media that tickets would be half price during the entire run of the show (until the 14<sup>th</sup> of December 1997) for all of those who approached the ticket office claiming they were black. This decision backfired. In a country where the ideology of racial democracy is still pervasive, asking the audience to claim a specific racial identity was seen as discriminatory. Even the city's government intervened, alerting the troupe that this was indeed a discriminatory

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<sup>186</sup> Olodum, Banda Olodum, <<http://olodum.com.br/index.php/olodum/banda-olodum>> [accessed 2 July 2015].

<sup>187</sup> Márcio Meirelles, Interview by Michelle Nicholson-Sanz on the work and trajectory of O Bando de Teatro Olodum (Salvador, February 2012).

practice that would thus be considered illegal. Bloco Olodum issued a public statement distancing themselves from O Bando and criticising their decision.<sup>188</sup>

This episode not only marked O Bando's rupture with Bloco Olodum. Most critically, it brought forward the theatre troupe's understanding of race, considering the composition of the group and the topics they explore. Indeed, in terms of racial phenotype and social class, O Bando is (and has been since its foundation) a group of black actors from Salvador's peripheries led by two white middle-class artistic directors – Meirelles and Carelli. The topic has been discussed in the group since the beginning and Meirelles' reaction is to explain that he considers himself black because he feels personally concerned for social inequalities against the black community and because along the years he has gained the respect of this community. Afro-Bahians attend the shows and seminars organised by the troupe and *candomblé* experts and priests and priestesses have advised O Bando on a number of productions that deal with Afro-Bahian culture.<sup>189</sup> One of the troupe's actresses, Valdemeia Soriano, explains the view that she shares with her colleagues:

In the group, Márcio [Meirelles] has brought together a large group of people for a long time. It's even good that he's white because it shows that one can, and must, talk about racism beyond the colour of one's skin. It's true that he won't experience the racism that I have experienced. But we cannot ignore his critical thinking and his genuine artistic and personal involvement in these issues.<sup>190</sup>

A commitment to activism in favour of Salvador's black community through the arts is a common feature among all the members of the troupe (including directors and actors). Many of the actors are either active followers of *candomblé* or they occasionally attend the religion's ceremonies. They claim that their work in O Bando has brought them closer to their own culture and history as part of the troupe's devising process involves month-long periods studying and debating these issues with academics, *candomblé* authorities and activists in favour of Afro-Bahian rights. What is more central for them,

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<sup>188</sup> Marcos Uzel, *O Teatro do Bando. Negro, baiano e popular* (Fundação Cultural Palmares: Salvador, 2003), pp. 174ff.

<sup>189</sup> Particularly so while devising *Bença*. See Chapter 3, section 3.3: 'Ancestral Time'.

<sup>190</sup> 'Márcio conseguiu juntar a tantas pessoas por tantos anos no grupo independentemente da raça. Hasta é bom que ele seja branco porque mostra que se pode e deve falar do racismo sem importar o cor da pele. É verdade que o racismo que eu tenho vivido não tem vivido ele. Mais não podemos ignorar seu pensamento crítico e seu genuíno envolvimento artístico e pessoal nestas questões'. Interview by Michelle Nicholson-Sanz on the work and trajectory of O Bando de Teatro Olodum (Salvador, February 2012).

through their work in O Bando, they feel they have become cultural referents in the city, initiating an interest in their neighbourhoods' children to get involved in making or attending black theatre.<sup>191</sup>

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Throughout this chapter I have tried to offer an outline of three themes that are central for the main argument of this thesis. First, I have tried to expose how elites in Argentina, Peru and Brazil have aimed at enforcing their utopian national visions in their respective countries. I have argued that these utopias have been at the roots of projects of national building in these countries throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I have suggested that the sectors of these countries' populations that did not fit these utopias have been placed at the margins of their nations. Within each national context, I have emphasised the condition of subalternity of the peoples who are the main focus of attention of Catalinas Sur, Yuyachkani and Olodum. In the section on Argentina, I have concentrated on the ways in which Buenos Aires has been constructed as white and cosmopolitan in contrast with the Argentine interior, Afro-Argentines, indigenous peoples as well as twentieth-century migrants from the interior and from Latin America. In relation to Peru, I have focused on the imaginary of Lima as a coastal, 'white' city in opposition to the Andes and Andean indigenous people. Regarding Brazil, I have examined the ways in which the large presence of Afro-Brazilians in Salvador and the Northeast have informed constructions of these places as burdens to the nation in comparison with the prosperous São Paulo and the Southeast.

Within each national context, I have suggested that the portrayal of marginalised regions and populations as primitive and backward has allowed national elites to place themselves as civilized, modern and 'white'. In this way, elites have constructed themselves as possessing the appropriate attributes to 'lead' these countries towards 'progress' and modernity.

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<sup>191</sup> Various actors and actresses of the troupe mentioned this effect in their neighbourhoods. These are Auristela Sa, Fabio Santana, Jeremias Arias Mendes, Jorge Washington, Sergio Laurentino, and Valdemeia Soriano Actors of O Bando de Teatro Olodum, Interview by Michelle Nicholson-Sanz on their work (Salvador, February 2012).

This chapter has also allowed me to delineate the historical developments of Buenos Aires, Lima and Salvador as port cities. An examination of their transition from colonial to postcolonial times has enabled me to demonstrate the ways in which these ports have been open to both transatlantic and national influences. These analyses have led me to examine the role of the theatre within each city, outlining major trends of production and consumption. Finally, I have tried to position the work undertaken by Catalinas Sur, Yuyachkani and Olodum within each city's theatre scene. What I hope to explore in the next chapter is the ways in which these companies have explored the tensions generated as a result of the waves of immigration that have arrived to these port cities.

## Chapter 2

### Journeys

#### 2.1 Transnational Routes and the Limits of Hospitality in Buenos Aires

[*Venimos de muy lejos* (We Come from Afar), Catalinas Sur, 1990]



(Scene from *Venimos de muy lejos*, Catalinas Sur's archive)

ARGENTINA: Yes! It's me, Argentina! The one with the fat cows, che! Here I am, in the world's granary, waiting for them to arrive. It's just that things are impossible with the bunch of savages from these lands, che! What else can I say? I love looking at Europe. Why not? I'm still young, don't you think? *A ship whistle blows and the actress playing the allegory of Argentina rushes out of the stage.*

Here they come! And I'm looking like a mess! I need to get ready; I'll fetch the coat of arms, the laurels!<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> '¡Sí, soy yo, Argentina! La de las vacas gordas, che. Aquí estoy, en el granero del mundo, esperando que lleguen ellos. Es que con esta salvajada de acá, no se puede che. ¿Y qué querés que te diga? A mí me encanta mirar a Europa, ¿por qué no? Todavía soy joven, ¿no te parece? (*Sirena del barco.*) Pero mirá, ya llegan, ¡ahí vienen! ¡Y yo con esta facha! ¡Me voy a arreglar un poco, voy a buscar el escudo, los laureles!' Catalinas Sur, *Venimos de muy lejos* (unpublished script, 2003).

Who are these visitors to deserve Argentina's attentions and desires? Why have they come from afar to the port city of Buenos Aires? Why is Argentina preparing such a warm and official welcome? Are all foreigners received with what looks like an unbounded hospitality? Are there limits to a country's hospitality to strangers? These are some of the questions the audience is left with in the first scene of *Venimos de muy lejos* ('We come from afar'), a piece performed by around forty non-professional actors of the community theatre group Catalinas Sur. First staged in 1990, and rerun regularly as part of the group's repertoire, *Venimos* pays homage to the collective memory of La Boca, the working-class borough in Buenos Aires where Catalinas Sur is based. Through improvisations around significant events from the district's history and also around the performers' family stories, *Venimos* interrogates the role played by past and present-day immigrants in the construction of Argentina as an imagined community.

I want to focus here on the ways in which *Venimos* performs La Boca as a space of transnational alterity with which to explore the limits of hospitality to the Other within the borders of the Argentine nation. After a brief reminder of the processes of immigration in Argentina, I shall examine the ways in which *Venimos*' exploration of the figure of the foreigner expands notions of identity grounded in national belonging.

The waves of European immigration in the late nineteenth century dramatically changed the demographics of Argentina and Buenos Aires. At its peak, in 1914, around one third of the country's residents was foreign born, and in Buenos Aires foreigners amounted to almost half of the city's inhabitants. Today, La Boca is still the mouth that receives impoverished immigrants, although they no longer come from Europe but from less affluent countries in Latin America. According to a 2010 national census, almost 5% of Argentina's population is foreign, and Latin Americans amount to the 3.5% of dwellers in the country.<sup>2</sup> Although these last figures do not seem significant compared to the amount of expatriates received by major global cities, Latin American relocation in Argentina has initiated tense discussions regarding the legality and desirability of these newcomers. Debates have been particularly heated in the last decades, now that countries in the region are revisiting their republican histories and transnational ties in the context of the bicentenary of their independence from Spanish and Portuguese

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<sup>2</sup> Tanja Bastia and Matthias vom Hau, 'Migration, Race and Nationhood in Argentina', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 40 (2014), 475-92 (p. 484).

colonial rule. Like old ghosts haunting the present, questions about the place of the Latin American foreigner in the Argentine nation are echoed by nineteenth-century discourses around pro-European immigration laws.

Ideas of progress and civilisation were prominent in the debates held by local elites about the kind of community that the recently founded Argentine nation should attain. Influential sectors of the Argentine intelligentsia and upper-class landowner Creoles of the time regarded locals as obstacles for development.<sup>3</sup> This attitude is encapsulated from the start of the show, through the speech quoted above, by the character that personifies Argentina: ‘(...) things are impossible with the bunch of savages from these lands, che! What else can I say? I love looking at Europe!’

The military campaign to conquest ‘the desert’ sought to eliminate part of this population of ‘savages’ and acquire control over Patagonia. With the infamous name, this campaign was justified on the grounds that Patagonia was an isolated land, a no-place, while it was in fact home to various native peoples. New land was gained and it needed to be populated and farmed, especially after slavery had been abolished.<sup>4</sup> The solution would come from the Old Continent but not without tensions. European newcomers saturated the labour offer, affecting as a result the livelihoods of former slaves. *Venimos* symbolises these concerns and the ways in which Afro-Argentines were rendered invisible within the country’s official history using the iconic figure of one single character playing the role of an Afro-Argentine. She is an old woman, who walks in a weary fashion and speaks in a deep, saddened voice. Among more than thirty other characters representing European migrants in the production, this woman poignantly conveys the absence of thousands of Afro-Argentines, killed in the wars after independence. In a bitter tone, she addressed the new settlers, denouncing the consequences of their arrival:

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<sup>3</sup> Kristin Ruggiero, ‘The legacy of Sarmiento’s civilization and barbarism in modern Argentina’, in *Sarmiento and his Argentina*, ed. by Joseph T. Criscenti (Boulder, CO.; London: Lynne Rienner, 1993), p. 184.

<sup>4</sup> For a brief overview of the Campaign of the Desert and the Afro-Argentine population, see Chapter 1, section 1.1, part A: ‘Argentina: Illusions of Whiteness’.



Neapolitans, usurpers, you take all jobs from the poor. No longer there are black people who recycle bottles or are porters. There are no black greengrocers or fishermen anymore.<sup>5</sup>

Nineteenth-century Argentine politicians' expectations regarding the effects of European immigration on their national project are evident through the slogan coined by local political theorist and diplomat Juan Bautista Alberdi (1810-84), 'to govern is to populate'.<sup>6</sup> According to Domingo Sarmiento, the prominent Argentine politician and president of Argentina (1868-74), and one of the most enthusiastic advocates of the allures of replacing the 'barbaric' locals with Europeans, migration from the Old Continent would '(...) eradicate time and add capacity,' alluding to the still pervading idea of Latin America's backwardness.<sup>7</sup> Argentina's warm welcome to her guests in the first scene of *Venimos* hints to the efforts made by the Argentine state to attract the attention of Europeans:

Welcome, ladies and gentlemen! Here I am (...), the one for whom you've crossed the seas facing thousands of dangers! Come on in! Come into this wonderful country where dreams come true. Leave behind the nightmares of war! Forever forget hunger and cold! Come on in and have a look: ears of wheat grow as high as the sky; silver from El Dorado covers our soil; and the horizon is carpeted with cows, che!<sup>8</sup>

But the vast majority of Europeans arriving in Argentina were not the ones the nation's pro-immigration laws, advertising campaigns and contract work programmes were designed to attract. Argentine politicians were hoping to attract northern Europeans, especially Germans, due to their perceived strong work ethic. Instead, it was predominantly Italians and Spaniards who settled in the country, followed by French, Polish, Russians and Germans.<sup>9</sup> Many of them kept their nationalities of origin rejecting

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<sup>5</sup> 'Napolitanos, usurpadores, que todo oficio quitan al pobre. Ya no hay negro botellero ni tampoco changador, ni negro que venda fruta ni tampoco pescador.' Catalinas Sur.

<sup>6</sup> Solomon Lipp, 'Sarmiento Revisited: Contradictions and Curiosities', in *Sarmiento and His Argentina*, ed. by Joseph T. Criscenti (Boulder, CO.; London: Lynne Rienner, 1993), p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> Samuel L. Baily, 'Sarmiento and Immigration: Changing Views on the Role of Immigration in the Development of Argentina', in *Sarmiento and His Argentina*, ed. by Joseph T. Criscenti (Boulder, CO.; London: Lynne Rienner, 1993), p.134.

<sup>8</sup> '¡Bienvenidos, señoras y señores! Aquí estoy yo, la que vinieron a buscar, por la que cruzaron los mares afrontando mil peligros. Pasen, pasen y vean, entren a este país maravilloso donde los sueños se hacen realidad. ¡Dejen atrás el fantasma de la guerra! ¡Olviden para siempre el hambre y el frío!

¡Pasen y vean: las espigas de trigo que crecen hasta el cielo, la plata del Dorado que cubre nuestro suelo y el horizonte tapado de vacas hasta donde alcanza la vista, che!' Catalinas Sur.

<sup>9</sup> Ruggiero, pp. 1, 5.

Argentine citizenship and, especially in the case of Italians, they also rejected educating their children in local schools where they could learn Spanish.<sup>10</sup> Shortly before he died in 1888, Sarmiento assessed the results of this policy in the city of Buenos Aires:

The most industrious and progressive of its 400,000 inhabitants are strangers who, the more one recognizes them as the artisans of its transformation, themselves remain unchanged (...) we shall build, if we have not already built, a Tower of Babel in America, its workmen speaking all tongues, not blending them together in the task of construction but each persisting in his own, and thus unable to understand the other.<sup>11</sup>

This sense of a Tower of Babel is present throughout *Venimos*, functioning as a reminder that misapprehensions and communication failures are inevitable in the agglomeration of peoples with diverse origins, languages and traditions. As soon as Argentina leaves the stage at the beginning of the production, the bow of a made-up ship slowly enters the stage and opens up in two, letting travellers off from various Italian and Spanish cities as well as from Poland, France, Germany and Russia. The audience learns their nationalities while witnessing how their first contact with the Argentine state is a violent one. Their very names are changed arbitrarily in order to simplify the registration process. A Basque man called Manuel Torubio Aipuzcoa Arruñada de Ayarragaray ends up being registered by a border officer as Manuel Garay. An Italian woman quotes her name, Clementina Costadoni de Bozzani, and explains in Italian that she has four daughters ('e quattro figlie'). She is then registered as Clementina Cuatrofille ('Clementina Fourdaughters'). After their arrival, the group of travellers settles in a tenement house – a *conventillo* – and everyday life becomes traversed by miscommunication and a polyphony of languages. Through these acts, *Venimos* invites the audience to experience what Marvin Carlson calls a heteroglossic stage, one of multiple voices: 'not only in the limited sense of voices taking positions at odds with those of the author, but also in the literal sense of voices that speak a language not that of the author or the presumed audience'.<sup>12</sup>

Heteroglossia marks this piece on a series of levels. The dramatic world it conjures up is plagued with languages different from those of the authors (a collective devising

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<sup>10</sup> Baily, p. 138.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Baily, p. 140.

<sup>12</sup> Marvin Carlson, *Speaking in Tongues* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), p. 20.

enterprise by the members of Catalinas) and the audience (present-day Spanish-speaking Argentines). Perhaps more poignantly, the use of multiple voices becomes the norm within the fictional world of the play. But the tongues spoken by the various foreigners that appear on stage are not real and grammatically correct. Instead, they are an imitation, a corrupt parody of the original languages that in many instances do not actually have any meaning. Like the names and identities distorted in the first encounter of the strangers with the host state, languages are also altered, assigned a new grammar and rendered meaningless sounds.

For example, Lola, a coquettish Spanish woman approaches a German who has just arrived at the *conventillo*. She doesn't know how to read and, without realising that this man could not speak Spanish, she asks him if he can read her a letter that has just arrived for her. The German looks at her puzzled and replies, 'Ish ferstehe daine tolhait vai is libe tolhait is daine libe und maine libe. Ish ferstehe vi ish in maine anarkistishen idealem.' A succession of random meaningless words that sound like German and resemble Spanish enough for the audience and Lola to realise that this man is one of the many anarchist Europeans that arrived in Buenos Aires at the time. Utterly confused by these words, Lola then asks a fellow countryman of hers what language is that, to which the Spanish man convincingly answers, 'But haven't you noticed, woman? That's Sanskrit!' His self-confidence serves Lola as guarantee of the exotic provenance of this man.

Rather than giving 'dramatic expression to the voice of the Other',<sup>13</sup> as Carlson defines this term, I would claim that the heteroglossic stage in *Venimos* gives dramatic voice to a generalised Otherness, without any specificity. The show heightens alterity in one of its most radical, although today very frequent, forms: the situation arising when vast numbers of strangers arriving in a country communicate with locals and other strangers in ways that are constantly disrupted, plagued with conjectures and sometimes just utterly unsuccessful.

The show's use of multiple tongues is often a defining feature of the genre it falls into – *sainete criollo* ('Creole *sainete*'). A local form rooted in Spanish *sainetes*, or folkloric

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<sup>13</sup> Carlson, p. 20.

farces featuring lower-class characters conceived through bold brush strokes, *sainete criollo* was already popular during the colonial era.<sup>14</sup> The high demand of Spanish farces among nineteenth-century migrants, who had, in some cases, grown up with these works in Spain's major cities, proved a fertile ground for re-routing this European form into a new local genre. By 1890 Argentine *sainetes* had accrued an audience of six million in Buenos Aires – a city then boasting a population of a million. Although the country's elites regarded the style as marginal and distasteful because it staged the lives of the lower social strata and the Tower of Babel into which strangers had allegedly turned Buenos Aires, *sainete criollo* enjoyed such a success that it would soon give rise to Argentina's first local theatre scene, with actors, audiences, authors, and critics of its own. This local, albeit marginal, scene ran parallel to Buenos Aires' rather more official theatre landscape made up of various European touring companies.<sup>15</sup> Argentine *sainete* kept the comical nature of Spanish farces, their exploration of urban archetypes, and their use of popular social spaces as fictional settings, but added local situations, characters, milieus and buildings into its repertoire.<sup>16</sup>

Following this tradition, the main action of *Venimos* is set in one of the favourite backdrops of this genre – the patio of a *conventillo*. These one- or two-storey houses received their name from the Spanish diminutive for 'convent', for the way their confined rooms evoked the seclusion of convent cells. Their design follows a pattern of a series of small rooms set around a central patio that features precarious common showers and toilets. By the turn of the century families of between two and four people shared four-square-meter rooms in *conventillos* in La Boca.<sup>17</sup> The Argentine theatre historian Raúl Gallo quotes the description given by a local early-twentieth-century newspaper, 'To this day, there is no other accommodation for the worker than the appalling *conventillos*, models of barbarism from the point of view of morals, decency, and private as well as public hygiene'.<sup>18</sup> At the start of this century, according to figures

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<sup>14</sup> Raúl Gallo, *Historia del sainete nacional* (Buenos Aires: Quetzal, 1959), p.147.

<sup>15</sup> Osvaldo Pellettieri, *El sainete y el grotesco criollo: Del autor al actor* (Buenos Aires: Galerna, 2008), pp. 11-2.

<sup>16</sup> Pellettieri, pp. 7, 40.

<sup>17</sup> Jorge Ramos, 'Arquitectura del habitar popular en Buenos Aires: El conventillo', *Seminario de Crítica*, 101 (1999) 1-31 (p. 5).

<sup>18</sup> 'Hasta la fecha no hay otro alojamiento para el trabajador que los horrible conventillos, modelos de barbarie desde el punto de vista de la moral, la decencia e higiene pública y privada', p. 164.

from 2001, 83% of the people living in *conventillos* in La Boca do so in overcrowded conditions.<sup>19</sup>

Genoese sailors, dockland and factory workers originally built these houses using ship paint and discarded materials from La Boca's shipyards.<sup>20</sup> Built with recycled materials from the ships that transported goods and people during La Boca's heyday as the port of Buenos Aires, *conventillos* are, I would argue, like run-around ships where immigrants have established themselves in order to recycle their own cultural identities in this host country. In this sense, such buildings are highly heterotopic places. Home to foreigners of diverse nationalities who had been invited to the country but were not quite the expected guests, these houses represent Argentina's project of nation building, its desire to find appropriate surrogates for the perceived 'vacancies' left by previous settlers. As heterotopias, they also constitute counter-sites for such a project. They contest and call into question the limits of the hospitality that grounded this project. The ship is, for Foucault, 'the heterotopia *par excellence*', 'a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea'.<sup>21</sup> *Conventillos*, these beached ships that have harboured transnationality – nineteenth-century Europeans refusing to integrate into the ways of the country and present-day Latin Americans, many without papers and unwelcomed – challenge their surrounding space. They question notions of sovereignty, of what a nation is and how it negotiates the presence of difference when it is radical; *i.e.* when it is undesired and threatening.

One particular scene of *Venimos* reveals both the heterotopic nature of *conventillos* in La Boca and the intricacies of the heteroglossic exchange they generated. The scene re-enacts the first major historical crisis point in the relationship between migrants and the Argentine state in 1882. Due to an unresolved industrial dispute, the Genoese settlers of La Boca decided to found the 'Independent Republic of La Boca' by raising the flag of Genoa and sending a letter to the King of Italy to notify him of the event.<sup>22</sup> General

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<sup>19</sup> Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. *La Boca. Diagnóstico y líneas de acción de escala barrial* (Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Gestión Pública y Descentralización, 2007), pp. 29-31.

<sup>20</sup> Ramos, p. 6.

<sup>21</sup> Foucault, Michel, 'Of Other Spaces', trans. by Jay Miscowiec, in *Diacritics*, 16 (1986), 22-7 (p. 27).

<sup>22</sup> Vicente Cutolo, *Historia de los barrios de Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: Elche, 1998), p. 210.

Julio Roca, by then president of Argentina and former military leader of the Campaign of the Desert, restored order by bringing the army to confront the rebellious settlers. In *Venimos*, this incident dramatically marks La Boca as ‘a floating piece of space, a place without a place’, as Foucault describes the heterotopic nature of ships.

The actor playing General Roca announces that the army has been called to ‘these barbaric lands [of La Boca] in order to reinforce the sacred principles of order and authority’.<sup>23</sup> Speaking in a mixture of Spanish, Italian and Genoese dialect, the newly elected president of the Independent Republic of La Boca explains that the Genoese deserve their independence because they had transformed La Boca from a swampy, stinking port into a habitable place with a strong naval industry – ‘Aviamo fato una avanzata de civilizzazione e progresso’ (we have furthered civilisation and progress). Without understanding a single word uttered by the Genoese, Roca calls a native Indian, recently brought from the Campaign of the Desert, and asks him to translate this strange language. However, when the native speaks, all he utters are indigenous names of towns and landmarks in Argentina (‘Pehuajó, Trenque Leuquén, Clericó, Tapalqué’). Needless to say, his intervention does not assist communication in any way.

This re-enactment of the real event of La Boca briefly becoming an independent republic accentuates the ways in which the neighbourhood became a placeless-place. During this historic event, this area of the city became temporarily suspend from the surrounding Argentine territory as their Genoese inhabitants called for independence and the foundation of a new republic in La Boca. This transformed the neighbourhood into ‘a floating piece of space’, in Foucault’s words. The re-enactment allows for this part of present-day Buenos Aires to be re-imagined as a ground opened up both for the negotiation of place and cultural identity. Staging the grounds of place and subjectivity in this way, *Venimos* calls into question notions of nation and the individual that are constructed in terms of a pre-given, substantial essence.

This is, according to Derrida, one of the strongest reasons for the defence of an unrestricted ethics of hospitality. Even if a guest is an enemy to the state, Derrida claims, hospitality should be conceived of not as an invitation but rather as a visitation,

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<sup>23</sup> ‘[E]stas tierras bárbaras para hacer respetar los sagrados principios de orden y autoridad’, Catalinas Sur.

as an event of absolute surprise. 'I must be unprepared or prepared to be unprepared, for the unexpected arrival of any other'.<sup>24</sup> Considering hospitality a visitation allows room for alterity within the self and the nation; or, for that matter, it prevents essentialist definitions of cultural and national identity. In *Adieu à Emmanuel Levinas* Derrida explains:

To be able to welcome, perhaps one supposes that one is at-home, that one knows what one means by being at-home, and that at-home one hosts, one receives or one offers hospitality, thus appropriating a place in order to welcome the other, or worse, welcoming the other in order to appropriate a place.<sup>25</sup>

The kind of hospitality that the Argentine state dispensed to nineteenth-century Europeans was precisely that of welcoming the other in order to appropriate a place. Immigration policies at the time aimed at filling up the vacuum left by having excluded, through rendering invisible or annihilating, the natives, the lower-class Creoles, and the Afro-Argentines. Europeans were the desired surrogates for such vacancies. Welcoming European immigrants into the country responded to an invitation to populate the nation with white peoples perceived as industrious and civilised. In turn, what really happened was that Argentina received the visitation of impoverished Southern Europeans who wouldn't integrate into the nation and who even confronted the authority and sovereignty of the local state.

This tense relationship between European immigrants and the Argentine state is further explored in *Venimos* through the representation of another historical crisis. At the start of the twentieth century, the tenants living in *conventillos* in Buenos Aires went on strike as a protest for the high rent fees they had to pay in exchange for dreadful living conditions.<sup>26</sup> Labour unions had become increasingly influenced by Bakunin's theories and socialist ideas brought into the nation by these foreigners. Making up 60% of the urban working class in Buenos Aires by 1895, expatriates became a real threat to the country's political and social stability. After long and heated debates in the Argentine parliament, the so-called Residence Law was passed to expel the striker migrants

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<sup>24</sup> Jacques Derrida, 'Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility: A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida', in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, ed. by R. Kearney and M. Dooley (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 70.

<sup>25</sup> Cited in François Raffoul, *The Origins of Responsibility* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), p. 181.

<sup>26</sup> Felipe Pigna, 'Los inquilinos en pie de guerra', in *Clarín*, 29 July, 2007, p. 40.

without a trial.<sup>27</sup> An Argentine member of parliament, Antonio Argerich, made the case for this law in the following terms:

(...) The vigorous spirit of nationality, which is the spirit that makes countries strong and great, alongside a sense of patriotism and progress (...), are not favoured in any way by all these semi-barbaric elements who are inassimilable by a civilised society. It is these elements that the Residence Law aims to repel; a law that highly aspires to prevent the republic of Argentina from becoming the drainpipe of the world's rubbish.<sup>28</sup>

In *Venimos*, the parliamentary debate around this law is enacted through the use of large puppets performing from a side balcony. The sight of members of parliament being played by puppets and speaking from a site located above and in-between the stage and the audience, suggests an alienation effect. Unsettling the mimetic representation of the past, the wooden dolls show the artifice of the theatre and invite the spectator to extrapolate former times into contemporary considerations of present-day immigration. Certainly, exposing the illusionist nature of the theatre was already a common feature in the first *sainetes*, which featured caricaturised characters, exaggerated customs and acting styles, and disrupted stage actions through the use of songs and direct addresses to the audience.<sup>29</sup> *Venimos* makes use of these features of the *sainete* and further expands them through the additional presence of puppets. Moreover, re-enacting the passage of the Residence Law through this stage technique exposes the constructed nature of the rhetoric that fuelled the local politicians' discourse about unwanted immigrants. The puppets of the politicians debate and present the reasons why the nation should expel menacing foreigners from its frontiers. The sight of these narratives being produced by manipulated objects, the puppets, exposes the arbitrariness of

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<sup>27</sup> Julia Albarracín, 'Explaining Immigration Policies in Argentina During the 1990s: European Immigration, "A Marriage in Sickness and in Health"', Paper delivered at the 2003 meeting of the Latin American Studies Association, 7 November 2012, <<http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/Lasa2003/AlbarracinJulia.pdf>> [accessed July 2015], pp. 6-7.

<sup>28</sup> '(...) el único espíritu que hace a los pueblos fuertes y grandes, el espíritu vigoroso de la nacionalidad, confundido en un mismo interés, con el mismo sentido de patria y de progreso (...), a que no sirven, de ninguna manera, todos esos elementos semibárbaros inasimilables por una sociedad civilizada, a quienes exclusivamente tiende a repeler la ley de residencia, que aspira superiormente a que no sea la República Argentina el vaciadero de las basuras del mundo.' Cited in Ana Paula Penchaszadeh, 'Reflexiones sobre los bordes de la nación argentina. Extranjeros y habitantes en los pliegues de la Ley de Residencia', paper presented at the Sociedad Argentina de Análisis Político, 2005, <<http://www.saap.org.ar/esp/docs-congresos/congresos-saap/VII/programa/paneles/a/a5/penchaszadeh.pdf>> [accessed 20 July 2015], p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> Pellettieri, pp. 76ff.



constructions of the Other that project local anxieties so as to fabricate the illusion of menacing foreign invaders.

In twentieth-century Argentina, the spectre of current migration flows from neighbouring countries has raised alarms in the media that echo the discussions surrounding the Residence Law at the turn of the century. Quoted in the right-wing newspaper *La Nación*, a former minister of the country and member of the National Academy of Sciences referred in 1994 to the presence of Latin Americans:

(...) Recent studies on the Argentine population reveal that health has declined due to Chagas disease, meningitis, tuberculosis, [and other contagious diseases] until recently unknown in our country. This alarming increase in morbidity is related to the entrance of South American illegal immigration which, in expansion, promiscuously crowds around the periphery of Buenos Aires [and] in other cities (...). In Greater Buenos Aires the contamination is already very serious. The latest medical examinations to conscripts show a deficit of ten and twelve centimetres in height in adolescents living in frontier zones and in Greater Buenos Aires, compared to those living in the rest of the country.<sup>30</sup>

These references to infection, contamination and the effects of these in the general health and the anatomy of the new generations of Argentines bring to mind the Eugenics initiatives that were so influential in late nineteenth-century Europe and Latin America.<sup>31</sup> In contrast to such prejudiced attitudes from a sector of contemporary Argentine society, European immigration is now seen much more favourably and most Argentines are fond of their ties of kinship with the Old Continent. *Venimos* points towards the disparity of local attitudes towards immigrants when Angiulina, an old Italian lady who is the keeper of the *conventillo*, says farewell to the European immigrants that are moving to other districts in Buenos Aires and to the Argentine

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<sup>30</sup> 'Recientes estudios sobre la población argentina demuestran que la salud ha empeorado por aumento de la enfermedad de Chagas, meningitis, tuberculosis (...) hasta hace poco desconocido en nuestro país. Este alarmante aumento de la morbilidad se relaciona con el ingreso de inmigración ilegal sudamericana que, en aumento, se hacina promiscuamente en la periferia de Buenos Aires [y] en otras ciudades (...). En el Gran Buenos Aires, la contaminación es ya gravísima. Los últimos exámenes médicos para conscriptos registraron déficit de estatura de 10 a 12 centímetros en los adolescentes de zonas de frontera y Gran Buenos Aires en relación con los del resto del país.' Enrique Oteiza, Susana Nivick and Roberto Aruj, 'Política migratoria, inmigración real y derechos humanos en la Argentina' (Instituto de Investigaciones Gino Germani, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 1996) <<http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/laoap/iigg/dt5.pdf>> [accessed 20 July 2015], p. 6.

<sup>31</sup> Nancy Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics. Race, Gender and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 21ff., 36.

countryside in order to start a new life. Expecting that this departure would mean the arrival of new waves of immigrants from Latin America, she laments:

Goodbye! Goodbye! I've been left all alone. I have nowhere to go. And I don't want to go back to Italy after so long and like this, alone, poor, old. Old like this *conventillo*, with the roofs all broken, the pipes all rotten, and with cockroaches everywhere. New immigrants will begin to arrive now. Immigrants from other countries. And I will remain here; I'll still be the housekeeper, but they will not be my friends.<sup>32</sup>

In re-enacting the historic conflicts between Argentina's nineteenth-century ancestors and the state, this production estranges the traces of Europeaness present at the very foundation of the country, and levels off first-world and third-world foreigners. Strangers from all nationalities mingle in the final scene of this production, when the cast of around forty actors appears on stage singing, in Italian, the song that has come to characterise old Italian immigrants in the show: 'We come from afar with much sacrifice. We eat *pasta sciuta* and sleep in the hall. We make love and have many children. We bring hope. We want to work! Queremo lavorar! Queremo lavorar!'<sup>33</sup>

The staged patio of a *conventillo* becomes thus a metaphor for the kind of Argentina that Catalinas Sur invites the spectator to imagine – a country which, like a patio, is a space of transit, a place where the host does not invite the stranger but rather expects the visitation of unexpected guests. Conceiving nation and citizenship in ways that allow unrestricted room for the emergence of heterogeneity may sound utopic but, as Catalinas claim, utopia is precisely their form of resistance.

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<sup>32</sup> '¡Adío! ¡Adío! Io me he quedado sola qui. Non tengo dove partire. E non voglio ritornare a l'Italia dopo di tanto tempo, cosí sola, póvera, e vechia. Vechia como questo conventillo, con tutto lo techo roto, la cañería pudrita e tutto pieno de cucarachas. Adesso, incominciarán a arrivare nuovi inmigranti, de altre paese, e Io staré quí, continuaré siendo l'encargada, ma essi non sarai mi amici.

<sup>33</sup> 'Venimo de muy lejos con mucho sacrificio. Mangiamo pasta sciuta, dormimo en el pasillo. Faciamo el amore, tenemo molti figli. Traemo la esperanza ¡Queremo lavorar! ¡Queremo lavorar! ¡Queremo lavorar!' Catalinas Sur.

## 2.2 Witnessing Forced Internal Displacement towards Lima

[*Adiós Ayacucho* (Goodbye Ayacucho), Yuyachkani, 1990]



(Scene from *Adiós Ayacucho*, Yuyachkani's archive)

Three distinctive presences are washed with soft, wide spotlights in an otherwise empty and darkened stage during the first minutes of *Adiós Ayacucho*. Stage-right, a woman plays a *zampoña*, a traditional panpipe from the Andes. She does not utter a word throughout the show. Sat in the corner, she observes the stage action attentively, and accompanies it with Andean musical instruments. A *charango* (small lute), a *quena* (flute), a *pututu* (large seashell used as wind instrument), among others, will punctuate the show. Barefoot, and with her long black hair in braids, the gathered skirt she wears is typical of those used by women from the Andes. Her black clothes suggest a woman in mourning.

Centre-stage, a wooden platform only slightly larger than a coffin is surrounded with flowers and a row of white candles burn at the bottom of the platform. Perceptibly lifted on its upper side so that the audience can see that it displays a man's suit and shoes. The worn-out clothes lie flat, neatly arranged as if being used by an immaterial, absent body lying down. The time and use that have evidently passed through these clothes bring to mind the missing owner of the outfit in a particularly strong way. His existence is made

uncannily present by the sheer display of his clothes, stretched out and lacking the support of his body. This array of attire, framed with flowers and candles, is a common sight in the Andes. It is part of a farewell ritual for the dead that is often carried out eight days after the burial of a loved one.

As the candles burn silently and the woman in black plays the *zampoña*, a large black plastic bag bends and moves in the stage-left corner. These bags became a tragic icon in Peru during the internal conflict that devastated the country between 1980 and 2000.<sup>34</sup> The bodies of those killed in army and terrorist attacks during the conflict were disposed of in these large black bags. Bags just like the one now wriggling and curling on the stage. Slowly, stumblingly, a Qapaq Qolla comes out of the bag. This character (a playful and comic trickster from Andean fiestas) gradually appears on stage, dressed in full Qapaq Qolla costume – white shirt, black vest and trousers, stuffed baby llamas tied to his waist, white woollen gloves and balaclava, and a flat hat adorned with dangling multi-coloured ribbons. Holding a white flag as he gets out of the bag, as if signalling truce, the Qolla's first phrases are in Quechua, a language that most Peruvian audience members will not understand. Indeed, although this is the most spoken native language in the country, it is mother tongue only to 13.2% of the total population – in contrast to 83% of Peruvians whose first language is Spanish.<sup>35</sup>

These first few minutes of the show already point to its subject matter. *Adiós Ayacucho* engages with the disappeared, either by terrorists or by the state, during Peru's internal conflict. The wake of a man's clothes, the palpable absence of his body, and the black plastic bag are unequivocal signs pointing to this difficult period in Peru's recent past. In this production, the character of Alfonso Cánepa, a farmworker leader of his community in the department of Ayacucho (in the southern Andes), returns from the dead and tells how he was murdered and 'disappeared' by the army. Half of Cánepa's remains have been taken to Lima by the army. So, when the Qolla goes to Cánepa's clothes in wake and attempts to put them on and steal them, Cánepa's spirit takes possession of the Qolla's body and begins to tell his story through the Qolla. This Andean trickster then becomes a vehicle through which Cánepa sets out on a journey to

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<sup>34</sup> For details of this conflict, see Chapter 1, section 1.1, part B: 'Peru: Racism without Races'.

<sup>35</sup> INEI, *Censos nacionales 2007. XI de población y VI de vivienda. Perfil sociodemográfico del Perú*, 2nd. edn. (Lima: INEI, 2008), p. 117.

Lima in order to reclaim his bones. Adapted from an eponymous novella published by Peruvian writer Julio Ortega in 1986, the show was devised for one actor who plays both the Qolla and the farmworker.<sup>36</sup> Yuyachkani's Augusto Casafranca performs this piece, capitalising on his close connections with the Andes: he was born in the city of Cusco and is fluent in Quechua and Spanish.

In this section I will examine the ways in which *Adiós Ayacucho* explores the forced migration to Lima of victims of the Peruvian civil war. First, I shall give a brief explanation of this conflict and the social causes that ignited it. This will serve as a background for a close reading of *Adiós Ayacucho*. In this reading I will use the concept of testimony to examine how this production aims to give voice to those who have remained marginalised in Peru since colonial times. I will argue that the show subverts the category of the subaltern in order to explore the possibilities of reclaiming a voice for disenfranchised Peruvians within the country's political sphere.

### *Forced immigration to Lima*

After the internal migration into Lima that started in the 1950s as a result of industrialisation, a second migration wave made its way to the city in the 1980s.<sup>37</sup> This was the uprooting of around 600,000 people from rural areas affected by the internal conflict.<sup>38</sup> Leaving their homes in order to avoid the unprecedented levels of violence sparking. This constitutes a very specific form of relocation. Unlike migrants who resettled in Lima voluntarily from the 1950s – looking for job opportunities and better life conditions – this second urban resettlement was a forced one.

Entire families saw no other option but to emigrate in precarious conditions, running away from crimes against human rights. Not only had they to endure the hardships of leaving their homes without much planning and consideration. On their arrival in

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<sup>36</sup> Julio Ortega (1942) is a poet, novelist and playwright whose work has been published in English and Spanish. He is professor of Hispanic Studies at Brown University.

<sup>37</sup> For more details on the country's internal immigration during the 1950s, see Chapter 1, section 1.1, part B: 'Peru: Racism without Races'.

<sup>38</sup> Coordinadora Nacional de Desplazados y Comunidades en Reconstrucción del Perú (CONDECOREP), *Agenda nacional de las y los desplazados* (Lima: CONDECOREP, 2011), p. 16.

coastal cities they also experienced racial discrimination and social stigma because most of them migrated from the sierra and from places beset by terrorism.

In 2011, FLACSO, a South American academic institution that houses social scientists from the region, organised a workshop in Lima with migrants displaced during Peru's internal conflict. One of the participants in this workshop describes the experience of displacement in the following terms:

Being called 'terrucos' [terrorists] has been the hardest part of the displacement. When we arrived here [in Lima] we had no money and we took refuge in rented houses or we stayed with friends. Otherwise we went to shantytowns. People say, 'there's a land invasion taking place, let's go!' And we go to see a small piece of land, and we live there [in huts made of] hemp mats and leaves. But when winter comes, it is horrible. We get wet and live in extreme poverty. The mother [of the family household] has to go to work. We are people from the Andes who have never lived in a city before. How are we to live in a city all of a sudden? We cannot.<sup>39</sup>

Most of these new forced migrants settled in the outskirts of Lima, creating shantytowns and suffering the contempt of Lima's more longstanding residents who stigmatised them with derogatory names such as *terrucos* – slang for terrorist – *serrano* – highlander – and *cholo* – a mixed-race person of Spanish and Quechua descent.<sup>40</sup> *Serrano* in particular, is an ethnic label that refers to the country's topography, which is clearly divided longitudinally into three natural regions, each of them with distinct landscapes – the coast, the sierra (the Andes), and the Amazon rainforest. Since the Quechua – the largest native culture in the country – are Andean, the highlands have been traditionally associated with indigeneity and insulting allusions to them have been in place since colonial times. The *mestizo* writer Garcilaso de la Vega (1539-1616), describes the social connotations of being a highlander and a *mestizo* in the Viceroyalty of Peru:

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<sup>39</sup> 'Ser llamados terrucos, ha sido lo más duro del desplazamiento... Cuando llegamos acá no tenemos dinero y nos refugiamos en casas alquiladas o en casas de algunos amigos, de lo contrario vamos a los asentamientos humanos. Dicen: "han invadido en tal parte, vamos" a ver un pedacito de tierra y nos ponemos a vivir en esteritas, en chocitas de hojas, pero cuando viene el invierno, se vuelve pues horrible, nos mojamos, se vive en extrema pobreza, la mamá tiene que salir a trabajar. Gentes de la zona de la sierra que nunca hemos vivido en la ciudad ¿cómo vamos a vivir en la ciudad de buenas a primeras? No podemos vivir.' Lucy Santacruz Benavides and Lorena Flórez Holguín, 'Desplazamiento forzado en la región andina: entre el conflicto armado y la ocupación territorial violenta en Colombia, Ecuador y Perú', *Andina Migrante, Boletín del Sistema de Información sobre Migraciones Andinas*, 12 (2012), 2-12 (p. 10) <<http://www.flacsoandes.org/reporte/bitstream/10469/3832/1/BFLACSO-AM12-01-Santacruz.pdf>> [accessed 7 February 2015].

<sup>40</sup> Santacruz Benavides and Flórez Holguín, p. 9.

The word [*mestizo*] was applied by the first Spaniards who had children by Indian women, and because it was used by our fathers, as well as on account of its meaning, I call myself by it in public and am proud of it, though in the Indies, if a person is told: ‘You’re a mestizo,’ or ‘He’s a mestizo,’ it is taken as an insult. (...) [And] although in Spain the word *montañés* is a honorable appellation, on account of the privileges that have been bestowed on the natives of the Asturian and Basque mountains, if it is applied to anyone who is not from these parts, it assumes a pejorative sense derived from its original meaning ‘something from the mountains’ (...), [and in Peru] whoever applied the word (...) was calling them savages.<sup>41</sup>

Most of the ethnic labels in place during colonial times do not exist anymore. However, what is still prevalent is the idea that whiteness is the racial and social pattern against which all other ethnicities are measured. Moreover, *cholo* and *serrano* are still often used as insults. The former alludes to racial features – most predominantly dark skin – and the latter to Andean origins, which, as in Garcilaso’s time, still connotes savagery and backwardness.

Some of the most echoed recent public uses of these insults show the extent to which colonial racism is still entrenched in the mentality of Peruvian elites. In 2006, the imminent signing of a free-trade agreement with the United States sparked protests from people in the Andes, asking for a referendum on the treaty, concerned that it would entail cutting off benefits to national agriculture. In this context, a right-wing congressman, Ántero Florez Aráoz, gave the following off-the-record statement, which eventually reached the media: ‘Are you going to ask llamas and vicunas their opinion on the free trade agreement?’<sup>42</sup> Similarly, the then Prime Minister Pedro Pablo Kuczynski – of Polish descent – made the following claim during an international conference on investment and social equity organised in Lima: ‘The idea of shifting rules, amending legislation and nationalizing is both terrible and fatal; it comes from a sector of the Andes, areas where high altitude prevents oxygen from reaching the brain’.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas and General History of Peru*, trans. By Harold V. Livermore, part 1 (Austin; London: University of Texas Press, 1966), pp. 607-8.

<sup>42</sup> ‘¿Le vas a preguntar a las llamas y vicuñas sobre el TLC?’ José Alejandro Godoy, ‘Cuidado con los racistas’, 15 June, 2006 <<http://www.desdeeltercerpiso.com/2006/06/cuidado-con-los-racistas>>.

<sup>43</sup> ‘Esto de cambiar las reglas, cambiar los contratos, nacionalizar, que es un poco una idea de una parte de los Andes, lugares donde la altura impide que el oxígeno llegue al cerebro, eso es

Ironically, Kuczynski was Prime Minister to the government of President Alejandro Toledo (2001-6), the first president of indigenous (Quechua) origins in the country, who was born and raised in a small, impoverished Andean village. Toledo himself had been victim of racism when running for president in 2001. The most explicit expression of this came from the father of a right-wing party leader who was also aspiring to the presidency. In a televised interview, he called Toledo a ‘Harvard llama’, referring to the fact that the future president of the country had been an affiliated researcher at the Harvard Institute for International Development. The fact that he is highly educated, holding a PhD in Economics from Stanford University, could not compensate for the president’s indigeneity.

Andean people made their way towards Lima for a third time between 1989 and 1993. By then, forced disappearance had become a systematic practice during the armed conflict.<sup>44</sup> So, this time the city received the relatives of those who had been illegally arrested and/or ‘disappeared’. Properly speaking this was not migration, as it did not entail permanent relocation. Rather, having exhausted all other possibilities in their places of origin, these peoples travelled to Lima – the country’s centre of political, legal, economic and social power – demanding to know the whereabouts of their loved ones.

Yuyachkani have engaged with these journeys to Lima. They have done so in a series of productions that the troupe call the ‘Migration and Marginality Project’.<sup>45</sup> The first of these, *Los músicos ambulantes* (The Travelling Musicians, 1983), explores voluntary internal migration. It narrates the journey to Lima made by four animals from Peru’s natural regions. An Afro-Peruvian hen, a rainforest cat, an Andean donkey, and a dog from the northern coast meet along their trip to the capital city, where they go in search of their dreams. The show, which has become part of Yuyachkani’s repertoire, depicts the country’s diversity with enthusiasm and humor, and is often showcased to a full-

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fatal y funesto’. Perú 21, ‘Inclusión vs. racismo’, 15 July 2006

<<http://archive.is/vEAU#selection-549.1123-549.1629>> [accessed 13 February 2015].

<sup>44</sup> Comisión de la Verdad y de la Reconciliación (CVR), *Informe Final* (Lima: CVR, 2003) <<http://cverdad.org.pe/ifinal>> [accessed 13 February 2015], p. 57.

<sup>45</sup> Miguel Rubio, *El cuerpo ausente. Performance política* (Lima: Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani, 2008), pp. 92-3.



house in July, when Peru celebrates its independence. The country's ethnic and social divisions were explored in *Encuentro de zorros* (Meeting of Foxes, 1985), a show about the fraught encounter between the coast, mostly populated by whites and *mestizos*, and the highlands. *Adiós Ayacucho*, which premiered five years later, is the final part of this trilogy on Peru's internal migration. And it is this production that I will focus on for the rest of this section. In Rubio's own words:

Abandonment, travel, journey and pilgrimage were the images that propelled us; the way in which we felt our country was moving. Our productions were somehow reflecting the changes the country was going through: the increasing impoverishment of the countryside, the mobilisation of peasants, the constant march into cities. All this spoke of a time of crisis opened by those years that still does not dissipate. That economic and social crisis would be the prelude of the time of violence that would start later on in the country. After reading Julio Ortega's *Adiós Ayacucho*, we thought that our project would not be complete without exploring this other migration – the permanent pilgrimage of relatives of disappeared peasants coming to Lima in order to demand justice.<sup>46</sup>

### *Peru's civil war*

Such claims for justice were finally acknowledged with the creation of the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2001. The report published by the TRC two years later exposed the extent to which the internal war had concentrated in the Andes and the province of Ayacucho. Almost 40% of all casualties came from this province, in the Central Andes.<sup>47</sup> More than 55% of the disappearances reported to the TRC took place in this area.<sup>48</sup> This is the place to which *Adiós Ayacucho*'s main character says farewell, embarking on a journey to Lima in order to recover his bones. Ayacucho and other four Andean provinces were the areas most affected by violence (Junín, Huánuco, Huancavelica and Apurímac). These, with the Amazonia region of San Martín produced a striking 85% of the total number of victims estimated by the TRC. In terms of socio-economic background, peasants were the main targets in the conflict – 79% of victims

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<sup>46</sup> 'Abandono, viaje, travesía y peregrinación eran las imágenes que nos daban impulso, la manera cómo sentíamos a nuestro país en movimiento. Nuestros espectáculos estaban de algún modo reflejando los cambios que se daban en el país: el empobrecimiento creciente del campo, las movilizaciones campesinas, la continua marcha a las ciudades. Daban cuenta de una época de crisis abierta por esos años y que aún no se disipa. Esa crisis económica y social sería el prelude de la época de violencia que se iniciaría luego en el país. Luego de leer *Adiós Ayacucho* de Julio Ortega, pensamos que nuestro proyecto no estaría completo si no nos referíamos a esa otra migración consistente en el continuo peregrinaje de los familiares de los campesinos desaparecidos que venían a Lima a pedir justicia.' Rubio, p. 93.

<sup>47</sup> CVR, *Informe final*, p. 53.

<sup>48</sup> CVR, *Informe final*, p. 74.

lived in rural areas and 59% were peasants. Yet, in 1993, only 29% of the country's population lived in rural areas. The majority of victims fall outside of the formal education system too – 68% of them had not reached secondary education. Yet, in 1993 40% of the country's total population was in this bracket.<sup>49</sup> Violence was clearly concentrated on a small and very specific sector of society – the poorest and most socially and ethnically marginalised Peruvians.

Paradoxically, the civil war began as a call against social inequalities and in favour of broader economic and social rights. But, having begun as guerrilla movements, both the Shining Path and the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement soon turned into radical organisations that used brutal methods to terrorise civilians. Indeed, the TRC determined that the Shining Path had been responsible for 53.68% of the total amount of casualties. The state, however, contributed to the escalation of violence and was found to be responsible for 28.73% of the recorded victims.<sup>50</sup>

Informed by a Marxist, Leninist and Maoist ideology, the Shining Path aimed to impose a dictatorship of the working classes through a war that would start in the countryside, and would then take control of cities.<sup>51</sup> In one of the most centralised countries in South America,<sup>52</sup> Lima was the ultimate tactical goal of this war. Influenced by the revolutions in Cuba, the Soviet Union and China, in the aftermath of the 1960s many countries in South America were moving towards regimes modeled on socialist aspirations. In Peru, some efforts had been made to redress the country's extreme social and economic disparities during the military dictatorship of Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968-75). A much-needed land reform was put in place mainly from 1969, aiming to stop a system of landed estates (*latifundios*) that dated back to colonial times.<sup>53</sup> Through such a system, landless peasants worked the land and cattle of wealthy landowners in exchange for small wages, products (such as coca leaves and liquor), and in some cases personal

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<sup>49</sup> CVR, *Informe final*, pp. 315-6.

<sup>50</sup> CVR, *Informe final*, pp. 54-5.

<sup>51</sup> CVR, *Informe final*, p. 14.

<sup>52</sup> Javier Protzel, Lima imaginada. Imaginarios de la tradición y la modernidad.

<[http://www.divulgacion.unal.edu.co/critica\\_cultural/2008/iu\\_conferencias.html#lima](http://www.divulgacion.unal.edu.co/critica_cultural/2008/iu_conferencias.html#lima)> [accessed 15 February 2015].

<sup>53</sup> The reform was timidly launched in 1964 by a democratically elected center-right government. From 1969 it was strengthened by the military regime. José Matos Mar, *Yanaconaje y reforma agraria en el Perú* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1976), p 219.

servitude. It transformed farm workers into owners of their own labour and the land they cultivated. For a faction of the Peruvian left, however, much more radical measures were needed. Thus, in 1980, when the country was going through a presidential election after twelve years of military government, the Shining Path declared war on the state, refusing to take part of any democratic process. Four years later, a second terrorist movement the MRTA (Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru) entered the conflict too.

Lima suffered attacks by these organisations early on in the conflict. But it was not until 1989 – one year before the premiere of *Adiós Ayacucho* – that the city became the main site of the war.<sup>54</sup> It suffered bombings on state and private buildings, power cuts, as well as the targeted killings of police members, and government and community leaders. *Limeños* (people from Lima) experienced violence first hand only for three years, as the capture of the Shining Path's leader in 1992 practically dismantled the organisation. Before enduring the brutality of the war in their own city, *limeños* remained mostly ignorant of the bloodshed that had been taking place in the country for almost a decade.<sup>55</sup> Relatives of the disappeared arrived in the city by the hundreds demanding justice and information, but their social and ethnic backgrounds radically estranged them from the centres of power. When in 2003 Salomón Lerner, President of the TRC, delivered the final report in a ceremony that was broadcasted nationally, he read an emotional speech in a broken voice:

The two final decades of the twentieth century have been – it is necessary to say it without hesitations – marked by horror and disgrace for the Peruvian state and its society. (...) [During the two decades that we have examined – 1980-2000 – there has not been] justice, compensations or sanctions. Even worse – there is not even the memory of what occurred. This leads us to believe that we still live in a country where exclusion is so radical that it is possible for thousands of citizens to disappear without anyone in the integrated society – the society of the non-excluded – even noticing their loss. Indeed, we Peruvians used to claim, in our worst predictions, that violence had left a balance of 35,000 losses and deaths. What can we say about our political community now that we know that there were other 35,000 brothers missing without anyone noticing their loss?<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> CVR, *Informe final*, p. 399.

<sup>55</sup> CVR, *Informe final*, p. 316.

<sup>56</sup> ‘Las dos décadas finales del siglo XX son – es forzoso decirlo sin rodeos – una marca de horror y de deshonra para el Estado y la sociedad peruanos. (...) [En las dos décadas que hemos investigado no ha habido] justicia, ni resarcimiento ni sanción. Peor aún: tampoco ha existido, siquiera, la memoria de lo ocurrido, lo que nos conduce a creer que vivimos, todavía, en un país en el que la exclusión es tan absoluta que resulta posible que desaparezcan decenas de miles de

The TRC's report showed Peruvians the atrocious consequences of centuries of engrained racism, putting in very concrete figures the psychological, social, political and economic consequences of the violence in the country. The report was the final product of a national process of witnessing testimonies on the horrors of conflict. In its two-year mandate, the Commission received 17,000 voluntary testimonies from victims and their relatives, most of which were broadcast nationally.<sup>57</sup> The hearings gave most Peruvians the first chance to listen to the people who had been directly affected in the conflict.

For example, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2002 the TRC received seven testimonies during five hours at the Postgraduate School of the Universidad San Cristóbal de Huamanga, in Ayacucho.<sup>58</sup> In the session, Liz Rojas Valdez (23 years old) told how her mother was detained by the police in 1991 and later disappeared. The police colonel Guillermo Linares Bay recounted how he was injured in 1982 during a terrorist attack and, in tears, asked peasant communities for their forgiveness for the concerted looting the police had carried out. Georgina Gamboa García narrated that in 1981, when she was 16 years old, she had been raped by seven police officers and then incarcerated; as a consequence of the rape, she had a daughter who was 20 years old at the time of her testimony. Angélica Mendoza told how her son, Arquímedes Ascarza, was detained and disappeared by the police in 1983. The same year, Mrs Mendoza joined other mothers of disappeared and formed ANFASEP – the National Association of Relatives of Detained, Disappeared and Abducted in Peru. Her tireless struggle became iconic of the journeys that the relatives of victims had to make to Lima in their demands for justice. During her testimony, she explained in Quechua how, after her son's arrest, she and other women went to the barracks where police kept the detained. She recalled her

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ciudadanos sin que nadie en la sociedad integrada, en la sociedad de los no excluidos, tome nota de ello. En efecto, los peruanos solíamos decir, en nuestra peores previsiones, que la violencia había dejado 35 mil vidas perdidas. ¿Qué cabe decir de nuestra comunidad política, ahora que sabemos que faltaban 35 mil más de nuestros hermanos sin que nadie los echara de menos?' Salomón Lerner, 'Discurso de presentación de la Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación' <[http://www.cverdad.org.pe/ingles/informacion/discursos/en\\_ceremonias05.php](http://www.cverdad.org.pe/ingles/informacion/discursos/en_ceremonias05.php)> [accessed 18 February 2015].

<sup>57</sup> CVR, *Informe final*, p. 14.

<sup>58</sup> CVR, 'Nota de prensa y resumen del primer día de audiencia pública en Huamanga', 8 April 2002 <[http://cverdad.org.pe/apublicas/audiencias/np\\_ayacucho03.php](http://cverdad.org.pe/apublicas/audiencias/np_ayacucho03.php)> [accessed 15 February 2015].

encounter with a police officer: ‘Yes, I’m looking for my son. Kill me! Kill me! Shoot us! You’re going to do that too? Do it! Where is my son? Where are these women’s sons? Where are their husbands? Ah? What have you done!’<sup>59</sup>

These victims were testifying about events that had happened either to their relatives or to themselves in the context of the TRC’s hearings. But twelve years earlier, when *Adiós Ayacucho* was premiered in Lima in 1990, there was little public recognition in cities about the dimension of the atrocities that were taking place in rural areas, and especially in the Andes. As Lerner explained in his speech, the most daring appraisals had estimated only half of the total the number of victims uncovered by the TRC later on, in 2003. In Lima, the presence of relatives of the disappeared functioned as a living testimony of the violence that was desolating the central Andes. Their journeys into the city gave a face to the stories that *limeños* had only read and heard in the media. Bringing with them their accounts of how their loved ones had disappeared, they bore witness to their experiences – they spoke about them to Peruvian city dwellers.

#### *Yuyachkani’s Adiós Ayacucho*

When Yuyachkani adapted the novella written by Julio Ortega, the company kept the narrator’s perspective used in the book. Thus, the story staged by the troupe retains the idea of the direct testimony of one of the people killed and disappeared by the armed forces. This defies all common sense because the witness must be a survivor. As Derrida claims, death exposes the ultimate limits of a testimony – a person cannot testify to their own death. The dead cannot speak and a testimony is primarily a speech act. By the same token, it is also impossible to testify for someone testifying to his own death.<sup>60</sup> I would claim that Yuyachkani’s *Adiós Ayacucho* defies both impossibilities – testifying to one’s own death and witnessing the testimony of someone who testifies to his own death. The show makes the dead speak about their killing while simultaneously staging the presence of witness to this testimony.

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<sup>59</sup> ‘Arí, wawayta maskani, wañurachiwayya, wañurachiway, baliyaruwaykuyá, chaytapas rurankiraqchu, ruraruychik, maytaq waway, maytaq kay señorakunapa wawan, maytaq qusanku, ah, imanarunkitaq. (‘Sí, busco a mi hijo. Mátame, mátame, pues; baléanos pues. ¿Eso también vas a hacer? Háganlo. ¿Dónde está mi hijo? ¿Dónde están los hijos de estas señoras? ¿Dónde están sus esposos? ¡Ah, qué has hecho!’). CVR, *Informe final*, p. 57.

<sup>60</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Demeure. Fiction and Testimony*, trans. by Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 45-6.

In Julio Ortega's book, the character of Alfonso Cánepa, a leader of a farming community who had been accused of terrorism, tells the story of how he was tortured in order to obtain a confession. The dead Cánepa narrates how he had gone to the police station of his village to face charges, but had then been taken by the police to the outskirts of the village, thrown off a cliff, and killed with a hand grenade. His remains were abandoned at the place of his death, with the men who had killed him, he believed, taking some of his bones with them to Lima.

Yuyachkani's adaptation adds to this narrative the character of the Qolla, who lends his body to Cánepa and thus becomes the medium for his testimony. A second addition to Ortega's original novella is the character of the woman who, sat on a corner of the stage, observes the action while playing Andean instruments. From the perspective of the audience, the stage offers a series of layers of witnessing and testimony. The dead Cánepa, taking possession of the Qolla, tells the story of his death and journey to Lima. The Qolla becomes thus a witness to this testimony. But he is not merely an observer. He jumps out of the soul that has temporarily possessed him and punctuates the narrative with remarks on Cánepa's actions and choices:

CÁNEPA: This policeman, before throwing me into the hole that would become my grave, filled my stomach with stones and wicker, as if I were a doll that had been made to be unmade. (...) I was dying there for a long time, or perhaps I might have been already dead, when they covered me with rocks and wild straw, and I entertained myself thinking about my condition as a gullible Peruvian.

QOLLA: Of course, only a fool would go to the police station knowing that he was wanted.

CÁNEPA: (...) We knew people were being killed everywhere. Some detainees appeared a month later with their bodies tortured. But they had blown me to pieces. (...) Give me back my body! Where have you taken my body!

QOLLA: I too have things to do. Look, I wish you the best of luck. I hope everything goes well.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> 'CÁNEPA: Este mismo policía, antes de arrojarme al hueco que sería mi tumba, me rellenó la barriga con piedras y paja seca, como si yo fuera un muñeco hecho para ser deshecho. (...) Me estuve muriendo un largo rato, o debo haber estado ya muerto, cuando me cubrieron de rocas y paja brava y me entretuve pensando en mi condición de peruano crédulo. QOLLA: Claro, solo un tonto iría hasta la comisaría sabiendo que lo perseguían. CÁNEPA: (...) Se sabía que estaban matando por todas partes. Y algunos detenidos aparecían al mes en fosas comunes y con el cuerpo torturado. Pero a mí me habían hecho pedazos. (...) ¡Devuélvanme mi cuerpo! ¡A dónde se han llevado mis huesos! QOLLA: Yo también tengo que hacer mis cosas. Mira, te deseo la mejor de las suertes. Que te vaya bonito.' Yuyachkani, 'Adiós Ayacucho', in Rubio, pp. 105-6.

Just when the Qolla is swiftly slipping away from the scene, reluctant to get involved in this horror story, Cánepa's invisible soul pulls him by the neck back towards the clothes in wake. The Qolla has no other choice but to enable the testimony of the dead. Through his body and voice, Cánepa will tell the details of how he got out of the ditch where he was thrown; how he eventually managed to hide himself in the back of a truck that transported fruit to Lima; and the difficulties of his journey to the capital city during a time when large extensions of the Peruvian territory were overtaken by the guerrillas and the armed forces. From his hideout in the back of the truck Cánepa can see crowds of people walking along the road and he wonders if he's not alone in the endeavour to travel to Lima in order to demand justice – 'The suspicion that they were, like me, disappeared, shook me up. Could it be possible that I was not the only one going to Lima to recover their bones?'<sup>62</sup> Along the way the track also comes across the army, the marines and terrorist cells that interrupt the journey with forced checkpoints. When they arrive in Huanta, the capital city of Ayacucho, Cánepa recounts his own confrontation with the mass killings that were taking place there: '(...) not long ago, secret graves had been discovered there; huge mass graves. The corpses were still on the square, unrecognisable. (...) [M]others grizzled looking for their dead. (...) So much death, so much death'.<sup>63</sup>

The Qolla enables the testimony of the disappeared. He is not a relative but a bridge through which the dead Cánepa himself can have a voice in order to give the testimony of his murder. Qolla is a well-known character of Andean fiestas. His Quechua name (Qapaq Qolla) means rich Qolla, and refers to wealthy traders from the Qollasuyo – the southern region of the Inca Empire, which comprised the high Andean plateau located in today's southern Peru, northern Chile, Bolivia, and northern Argentina. Today's Andean fiestas are a blend of Spanish and indigenous traditions.<sup>64</sup> During the Inca Empire (c.1438-1533), the various peoples who had been colonised by the Incas

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<sup>62</sup> 'La sospecha de que fueran como yo, desaparecidos, me sobrecogió. ¿No era yo acaso el único que iba a Lima a recobrar mis huesos?' Yuyachkani, p. 110.

<sup>63</sup> 'hacia poco que allí fueron descubiertas tumbas secretas, enormes fosas comunes. Los cadáveres aun estaban en la plaza, irreconocibles. [L]as madres gemían a coro buscando a sus muertos (...). Tanta muerte, tanta muerte.' Yuyachkani, p. 111.

<sup>64</sup> Deborah Poole, 'Accommodation and Resistance in Andean Ritual Dance', *TDR*, 34 (1990), 98-126 (pp. 110ff.); Gisela Cánepa, *Máscara, transformación e identidad en los Andes: La fiesta de la Virgen del Carmen Paucartambo, Cuzco* (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 1998), pp. 94 ff.

attended regular state festivals where they performed their ethnicity through dances for the Inca nobility. Such festivals played a core political role in the administration of the empire – they granted recognition to the colonised cultures and a sense of belonging to the empire; and they were also tokens of submission to the Inca rule.<sup>65</sup>

After the Spanish conquest, these festivals were capitalised by the Spaniards as a strategy to assert their own ideology and beliefs in the colonial Andes. With a long tradition of their own of performing dances in churches, the Spanish introduced *seises* in their colonies.<sup>66</sup> *Seises* – a configuration of young children who sing and dance in synchronic patterns in church altars – originally commemorated the Spanish triumph over the Moors during the re-conquest of Iberian territories. As a symbol of the unification of Spain under Catholicism and against a barbaric Other, *seises* also fit well in the context of colonisation and were thus taught by church officials to indigenous dancers since the early days of the Spanish colonies. In the Andes, these group synchronised dances fused with earlier traditions of dances during Inca festivals and became the origins of contemporary fiesta *comparsas*.

In general, characters of Andean fiestas share a series of features. Performed through dance choreographies, they represent types, rather than individual roles – people from the Amazonia, nineteenth-century Chilean soldiers, and colonial Spanish ball dancers, among many others. During these ritual performances – often undertaken to honour a patron saint or virgin –, dozens of performers play a single role wearing matching costumes and masks, and dancing patterned choreographies that are indicative of the character they play. Performers are not professional dancers but regular townspeople who undergo rigorous processes of initiation. Once accepted as a member of a *comparsa* (dance association devoted to a certain character), dancers take part of annual fiestas that take over towns with dances and music over several days. These ritual performances, where local myths become dance dramas, function as a site for the negotiation of ethnic, racial, gender, generational and class differences within the communities where they take place.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Poole, pp. 107ff.

<sup>66</sup> Poole p. 110; Yvonne Daniel, *Caribbean and Atlantic Diaspora Dance. Igniting Citizenship* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2011), pp. 56ff.

<sup>67</sup> Poole, p. 117; Cánepa, p. 94; Mendoza, p. 4.



In present-day Andean fiestas, Qollas embody indigeneity and autochthony because they present concrete ties with the Andean plateau. In fiestas, the Qolla is a playful trickster. Adapted for the stage by Yuyachkani, he performs in full costume and retains his gaiety, giving a touch of lightness to the representation of killings and disappearances in *Adiós Ayacucho*.

The Qolla mediates both the testimony of the peasant and the account of his journey. Through the Qolla, Cánepa repeats the content of the letter he had written to the country's president, hoping to hand it to the president once he arrived in Lima:

Mr. President, [o]n the 15<sup>th</sup> of July I was arrested by the police in my village; I was isolated, tortured, burnt, mutilated, and killed. I was declared disappeared. (...) As you well know, all national codes and international treaties (...) proclaim not only the inalienable right to life but also to a proper death, with a proper burial and with a whole body. The corpse is, let's say, the minimum unity of death, and to divide it, as it is done today in Peru, is to break natural and social law. Your anthropologists and intellectuals have determined that violence originates in terrorism. No Sir. Violence has its origins in the system and the state that you represent. (...) I am speaking from personal experience. I want my bones; I want my entire literal body, even if it were entirely dead.<sup>68</sup>

When the time comes to narrate his arrival and experiences in Lima, the actor playing both characters takes off the baklava, the gloves and the baby alpacas he had tied around his waist. Now stripped off his Qolla clothes, the actor speaks as Cánepa, directly telling the audience what happened to him on his arrival in Lima:

When we arrived at the very walls of the great city, we found (...) food stalls, pen pushers, bribe-takers, photographers, policemen, and relatives of the disappeared holding the photos of their dead and searching for them. It seemed like a card game where they were shuffling the lot of their children.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> 'Señor Presidente, (...) [el] 15 de julio fui apresado por la guardia civil de mi pueblo, incomunicado, torturado, quemado, mutilado, muerto. Me declararon desaparecido. (...) Como usted bien sabe, todos los códigos nacionales y todos los tratados internacionales (...) proclaman no solo el derecho inalienable a la vida humana sino también a una muerte propia con entierro propio y de cuerpo entero. (...) El cadáver es como si dijéramos la unidad mínima de la muerte y dividirlo como se hace hoy en el Perú es quebrar la ley natural y la ley social. Sus antropólogos e intelectuales han determinado que la violencia se origina en la subversión. No señor. La violencia se origina en el sistema y en el Estado que usted representa. (...) se lo digo por experiencia propia. Quiero mis huesos, quiero mi cuerpo literal entero, aunque sea enteramente muerto.' Yuyachkani, p. 113.

<sup>69</sup> 'Cuando llegamos a las puertas mismas de la gran ciudad, nos encontramos con (...) los puestos de comida, los tinterillos, los coimeros, los fotógrafos, los policías, los familiares de los desaparecidos que buscaban unos a otros en las fotos de sus muertos. Parecía un juego de naipes barajando la suerte de sus hijos.' Yuyachkani, p. 115.

Once in Lima, Cánepa explains, he passed off as a lunatic and lined up to see the president in his way to a public speech in the city's main square. Failing to give the president his letter, he then heads to the city's cathedral, where he finds the alleged bones of Lima's Spanish founder – Francisco Pizarro. After getting rid of half of Pizarro's remains, Cánepa enters the conquistador's tomb and finds there his final place of rest.

Throughout the show, the woman sitting in a corner observing the stage action acts as a witness to the testimony that Cánepa gives to, and through, the Qolla. Thus, the audience witnesses a woman witnessing a disappeared who gives his testimony to a Qolla. According to psychoanalyst Dori Laub, one can distinguish three different levels of witnessing (that she associates with the Holocaust experience): being a witness to oneself within the experience; being a witness to the testimonies given by others; and being a witness to the action of witnessing itself.<sup>70</sup> I would argue that *Adiós Ayacucho* explores these three levels of witnessing and testimony. Through Cánepa's recount of his own experience he bears witness to his own death and disappearance; also from the stage, both the Qolla and the woman bear witness to Cánepa's process of giving his testimony; and the audience is then placed in the position of witnessing the action in witnessing that which is staged.

The acting style through which the actor plays the characters of Cánepa and the Qolla is particularly conducive for making the audience aware of their position as witnesses to a testimony. All through *Adiós Ayacucho*, Augusto Casafranca, the actor, plays as if in quotation marks. While moving around the stage and speaking, he simultaneously performs stylised movements with his body that demonstrate the actions he is narrating. Similar to Brecht's epic actor, the demonstrative nature of Casafranca's movements emphasise the story being told and the separation between actor and role.

The show – premiered ten years before the country underwent real public hearings thanks to the TRC – brought the Peruvian highlands to Lima, and made audiences in the city bear witness to the travels that thousand of relatives of the disappeared were

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<sup>70</sup> 'An Event Without a Witness: Truth, Testimony, Survival', in *Testimony, Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*, ed. by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 70-103 (p. 89), Nook edition.

making to the capital in order to claim justice. Through this exploration of witnessing and testimony, the production made visible a double erasure of Andean peoples in the city: their invisibility comes from a racism that can be traced back to colonial times; and the killings and devastation of a number of rural highland communities during the armed conflict of the 1980s.

*Adiós Ayacucho*'s exploration of the experience of witnessing confronts the audience with the thousands of disappeared persons whose absence went unnoticed by the privileged citizens of the country, as the president of the TRC claimed in his speech. Through the use of Andean rituals and aesthetics, the show brought the Andes to the forefront in Peru's capital city and called the attention of urban audiences to the violation of human rights that were taking place in rural areas in the Andes.

### **2.3 Re-routing Afro-Brazilian Identity towards the African Diaspora [*Áfricas*, Bando de Teatro Olodum, 2007]**



(Scene from *Áfricas*, Bando de Teatro Olodum's archive)

Before boarding the ships that would take them across the Atlantic and into the New World, slaves on the West Coast of Africa were made to perform the ritual of repeatedly

walking around a tree that would erase the memories of the lives they once had.<sup>71</sup> Slave-traders hoped that by wiping out the captives' African past, the 'Tree of Forgetfulness' would strip them of any sense of agency grounded in feelings of belonging to a culture. The path was thus cleared for strategically constructing the enslaved as savages, a faceless mass with no history; their bodies turned into a white canvas on which to inscribe a Western hegemonic ideology.

Aiming to redress what seems like the effects of the colonial Tree of Forgetfulness, *Áfricas* take their audiences into a return journey across the Atlantic in order to retrace the African roots of today's Afro-Brazilian culture. Described by the company as aimed at primary and secondary school children, the show realises this through the symbolic voyage undertaken by the black young characters of the show who, living in the city of Salvador, are intrigued by their schoolteacher's explanation that black Brazilians are descendants of Africans. The teenagers wonder what this Africa is. This mysterious and distant continent seems to be at the origins of their very existence and yet no history schoolbook they find appears to grasp the details of its contours, colours and sounds. All they read are histories of slavery, and they are convinced there ought to be more than this to a place inhabited by their ancestors before being forced to cross the Atlantic and relocate in Brazil as early as the sixteenth century.

In this section I will examine how this show's imagining of Afro-Brazilianness as specifically positioned in the city of Salvador seeks to subvert representations of *negritude* [blackness] that have frozen this cultural identity in positions of subalterity since colonial times. I shall begin by briefly describing the participation and portrayal of Afro-Brazilians in television, film, and textbooks. This description will evidence a systematic exclusion of this sector of the population that will then be followed by a swift genealogy of the construction of Afro-Brazilianness in the country's social imaginary, and the most recent state policies implemented in order to atone for such historical segregations. This context will then allow me to examine the signs of Afro-Brazilianness that have been privileged in *Áfricas* in order to attain the show's main goal: to create 'positive models' of African ancestry for the city's black young

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<sup>71</sup> Eduardo de Assis Duarte, 'Posthumous memories of slavery. Blackness and Machado de Assis', in *(Re)Considering Blackness in Contemporary Afro-Brazilian (Con)Texts*, ed. by Antonio D. Tillis (New York: Peter Lang, 2011), pp. 83-96 (p. 83).

audiences.<sup>72</sup> The children's singing in the production, '[o]n my mind's world map I see an Africa, and there, [beyond the ocean], there's another Africa', encapsulates this tension.

According to Afro-Brazilian researcher and filmdirector Joel Zito Araújo, the representation of black Brazilians in national soapoperas did not go beyond the roles of slaves and servants for decades and it began to change significantly only in the 1990s.<sup>73</sup> Analysing closely all archived national telenovelas since 1963, he shows that in the 1960s although black actors played secondary roles, lead roles of black characters were assigned to white performers in blackface: 'In Brazil, portraying other races, like black and indigenous peoples, was always a unilateral prerogative of Euro-Brazilian actors, not of Afro-Brazilian ones'.<sup>74</sup> This was the case of *A Cabana do Pai Tomás*, the 1969 Brazilian version of *Uncle's Tom Cabin*, where Tomás was played by Sérgio Cardoso, a white Brazilian actor, while Ruth de Souza, an experienced actress from the all-black theatre group Teatro Experimental do Negro (TEN) had to resign herself to see her character, Cloé (Tomás' wife), shrink in importance in comparison to other roles played by white actresses that were comparatively less significant in the original storyline.<sup>75</sup>

It was only in the 1970s that television slowly began to change this trend. Following the trend impulsed by the Black Power movement in the United States, it initiated a portrayal of black pride. However, the pervasive stereotypical treatment of black characters and actors in the media led to approve a federal law in the state of Bahia that enforced the mandatory presence of black characters in all state government institutional advertising. Similar initiatives followed in the rest of the country from 1988 and into the 1990s.<sup>76</sup> These, however, were not taken up in the private sector; sponsors still preferred whiteness both in terms of casting-selection and in the overall aesthetics of the advertisings. This was on the grounds that Brazil's black population

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<sup>72</sup> Chica Carelli, Interview by Michelle Nicholson-Sanz on *Áfricas* and the work done by Bando de Teatro Olodum (Salvador, February 2012).

<sup>73</sup> *A negação do Brasil. O negro na telenovela brasileira* (Sao Paulo: SENAC, 2000), pp. 81-2, 310.

<sup>74</sup> 'No Brasil, representar outras racas, tais como negros e índios, sempre foi uma prerrogativa unilateral dos atores euro-brasileiros, e não dos atores afro-brasileiros.' Araújo, p. 95.

<sup>75</sup> Araújo, pp. 89-90. On the history of TEN and their role in the consolidation of an Afro-Brazilian identity, see Chapter 1, section 1.2, part C: 'Salvador and Bando de Teatro Olodum'.

<sup>76</sup> Araújo, pp. 222, 73-4. For details on these initiatives, see Chapter 1, section 1.1, part C: 'Brazil: Making Race Invisible'.

was not a significant economic force – ‘black equals poor, which in turn equates to lifeline consumption’.<sup>77</sup>

If television had to wait until the late 1990s to display black actors as ‘a specific beauty within Brazil’s racial diversity’<sup>78</sup> and to deal with race in more nuanced ways, the medium of film gave Afro-Brazilians a favourable treatment much earlier. Although far from being a box-office success, the 1949 film *Também Somos Irmãos* saw two black actors (Grande Otelo and Aguinaldo Camargo) performing leading roles in a blunt portrayal of race relations and racism in the city of Rio de Janeiro.<sup>79</sup> In the 1960s the movement *O Cinema Novo* – concerned with showing social inequalities as well as race and class conflicts in a style influenced by Italian neorealism – expanded the field so that black Brazilians’ lives were portrayed in ways that ‘avoided indifference and exoticism’.<sup>80</sup> And in the late 1990s black actors and filmmakers in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro voiced again the need to develop nuanced representations of Afro-Brazilians by Afro-Brazilians.<sup>81</sup>

Despite these developments, a 2007 study carried out by the pro-black organisation Fundação Cultural Palmares concluded that Afro-Brazilians are still under-represented in the national media. After examining all the content aired in public TV during one week between 7:30 and 24:00 hours in São Paulo-capital, Rio de Janeiro-capital, and Brasília-DF – three of the cities with the largest population of blacks in the country –, the study concluded that euro-descendants occupied 86% of the placements for TV presenters and 93.3% of the placements for journalists.<sup>82</sup> This situation led to the creation of a public manifesto in 2000, the Manifesto de Recife, in which black actors and filmmakers protested against the consequences of rendering black Brazilians invisible in the media:

We, Afro-Brazilian artists (...) hereby express the end of our patience with the persistence of segregation in our audiovisual industry (TV, cinema and

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<sup>77</sup> ‘[P]reto é igual a pobre, que é igual a consumo de subsistência.’ Araújo, p. 39.

<sup>78</sup> ‘[U]ma beleza específica na diversidade racial brasileira.’ Araújo, p. 302.

<sup>79</sup> Noel dos Santos Carvalho, ‘Introdução. Esboço para uma História do Negro no Cinema Brasileiro’, in *Dogma feijoadada. O Cinema Negro Brasileiro*, Jeferson De (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado de São Paulo, Cultura – Fundação Padre Anchieta), pp. 17-103 (p. 32-4).

<sup>80</sup> ‘[S]e evita a indiferença e o exotismo’. Santos Carvalho, p. 74.

<sup>81</sup> Santos Carvalho, p. 94

<sup>82</sup> Fundação Cultural Palmares, ‘Onde está o negro na TV pública’ <<http://www.palmares.gov.br/sites/000/2/download/pesqtv.pdf>> [accessed 20 May 20015].

advertising) (...). The invisibilising and lack of recognition of black actors demonstrates the producers' utter ignorance of the negative impact of their products in the self-esteem of our country's black and indigenous populations, and particularly in our children.<sup>83</sup>

It is perhaps not surprising that, bearing in mind the limited ways in which Afro-Brazilians have been represented in the media and film, positive citations of Afro-Brazilians have been scarce in schoolbooks. In a book published in 2003, sociologist Edward Telles claims that textbooks have portrayed Afro-Brazilians as lazy, uncivilised, violent, and talented only in music and football; and that even though the Brazilian Ministries of Culture and Justice have made explicit attempts to ban such books from public libraries, they are still common in Brazilian schools.<sup>84</sup>

Olodum's *Áfricas* became part of a governmental initiative to examine Afro-Brazilian culture in schools. In 2010, three years after the show's premiere, it was showcased as part of *Outras Áfricas* (Other Africas), a larger project in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture that sought to inspire Bahian pupils attending primary and secondary schools to cultivate an interest in the continent.<sup>85</sup> The project aimed at reinforcing the implementation of Federal Law 10.639/2003. Passed in 2003, this law sanctioned the mandatory teaching of African history and the history of Afro-Brazilians in publicly and privately funded schools nationwide.<sup>86</sup> However well intentioned this law might have been, in practice the Brazilian state has not put in place strong mechanisms for its implementation and schoolteachers lack the necessary knowledge to teach African history. Surveying 36 schools around the country between February and December 2009, a team of Brazilian academic researchers concluded that 'the knowledge of school teachers about ethnic and racial relations (in the country), and

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<sup>83</sup> 'Nós, artistas afro-brasileiros (...) [e]xpressamos o fim da nossa paciência com a persistência em nossa indústria audiovisual (TV, cinema e publicidade) da cota de segregação existente (...). A invisibilidade e a falta de reconhecimento dos atores negros demonstram por parte dos produtores uma completa ignorância do impacto negativo dos seus produtos nos processos de auto-estima da população negra e indígena de nosso país, em especial de nossas crianças'. Fundação Cultural Palmares, p. 8.

<sup>84</sup> Edward Telles, *Racismo à brasileira: Uma nova perspectiva sociológica* (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Ford, 2003), pp. 237, 240.

<sup>85</sup> Carelli.

<sup>86</sup> For details on this law and other similar policies of affirmative action, see Chapter 1, section 1.1, part C: 'Brazil: Making Race Invisible'.

about African history, is still superficial, filled with stereotypes and in some instances mistaken'<sup>87</sup>

Within this context, Olodum presented *Áfricas* in different schools in various cities; led post-show discussions with specialists on African history; and gave dance, theatre and music workshops based on the African aesthetic that the group has been exploring since the 1990s. Chica Carelli, the director of this show, explains the rationale behind *Outras Áfricas*:

In a time when society begins to turn its attention to its black ancestry, the show aims to make up for the shortages of African referents in the imaginary of both children and adults, an imaginary that is usually populated by characters with European features.<sup>88</sup>

Putting forward positive models of Afro-Brazilianness in the public domain is particularly critical given the country's history of systematic invisibilisation of black peoples in the media, in textbooks and in national debates on race. *Áfricas* frames this enterprise as an exploration of the African roots of Afro-Bahian identity. Rodrigo, the main character of the show, is intrigued by his teacher's explanation that Afro-descendancy entails the influence of Africa in various practices that are local to Bahia – food, language and artistic forms such as *capoeira* [the Afro-Brazilian art that stylises combat through music and dance]. Rodrigo tells his friend Justina of these discoveries and she then asks: 'JUSTINA – Do you know what heritage is? RODRIGO – A thing passed on from father to son. JUSTINA – Exactly! Then, our Afro-descendancy is our heritage.'<sup>89</sup>

The matrix chosen by Olodum in this show in order to explore the African origins of Afro-Brazilianness in the port of Salvador is clearly *candomblé* – the deeply influential

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<sup>87</sup> Nilma L. Gomes and Rodrigo E. de Jesus, 'Pedagogical practices with ethnic-racial relations in the school from the perspective of Law 10.639/2003: Challenges for educational policy and inquiries for research' *Educar em Revista*, 47 (2013) 19-33 (p. 31).

<sup>88</sup> 'Numa época em que a sociedade começa a voltar seus olhos sobre sua ancestralidade também negra, o espetáculo tenta, de maneira lúdica, suprir a escassez de referenciais africanos no imaginário tanto de crianças como de adultos, povoado tradicionalmente de fábulas e personagens com características européias.' Bando de Teatro Olodum, 'Projeto Outras Áfricas', August 2010 <<http://bandodeteatro.blogspot.co.uk/2010/08/projeto-outras-africanas.html>> [accessed 15 May 2015].

<sup>89</sup> 'JUSTINA – Você sabe o que é herança? RODRIGO – Uma coisa passada de pai para filho. JUSTINA – Isso. Então. a nossa afro-descendência é a nossa herança.' Bando de Teatro Olodum, *Áfricas* (unpublished script, 2007).



Afro-Bahian religion that embraces various rituals and deities worshiped on the West coast of Africa.<sup>90</sup> The set immediately transports the audience to the world of this religion – a snake biting its tail is the backdrop for a group of musicians with different Afro-Brazilian drums in the upstage area. The snake is Oxumarê. A well-known symbol for Bahians familiarised with *candomblé*, this is the Orixá (Afro-Brazilian deity) of movement and transformation; s/he (both male and female) symbolises very distant ancestors, and holds the earth together preventing it from disintegration.<sup>91</sup>

Employing *candomblé* as a matrix for the show is no gratuitous choice. In contrast to the fostered European immigration to Brazil, African slaves did not enter the country having been offered the prospect of a better life. Instead of reporting ethnic identity, slave-ships manifestoes listed only the enslaved Africans' ports of embarkation, so on arrival to the harbour of Salvador da Bahia these peoples had literally been stripped of their own specific origins.<sup>92</sup> The French anthropologist Roger Bastide (one of the main interlocutors of *candomblé* in the 1940s and 1950s) showed how, given the disintegration of social and economic structures due to slavery, this religion brought together deities from various ethnic West African groups and thus re-configured in Brazil a community that shared affective kinships, 'an unsubordinated corporeality and autonomous categories of thought'.<sup>93</sup> But the relationship between *candomblé* and Africa was not only shaped during the centuries of slave trade in Bahia.

After slavery was abolished, and as early as the second half of the nineteenth century, freed Afro-Brazilian *candomblé* priests travelled to Africa for fresh knowledge about the rites and epistemology behind this practice. Later on, in the 1930s, these became initiatory travels aiming to legitimise the authority of *candomblé terreiros* (temples or

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<sup>90</sup> Ari Lima, 'Tradition, History and Spiral of Time in the Samba de Roda of Bahia', in *(Re)Considering Blackness in Contemporary Afro-Brazilian (Con)Texts*, ed. by Antonio D. Tillis (New York : Peter Lang 2011), pp. 27-43 (p. 30). For a more detailed explanation of *candomblé* and the role it has played in the history of Salvador and the construction of an Afro-Bahian identity, see Chapter 1, section 1.1, part C: 'Brazil: Making Race Invisible'.

<sup>91</sup> Pierre Verger, *Notas sobre o culto aos orixás e voduns na Bahia de Todos os Santos, no Brasil, e na antiga costa dos escravos, na África* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 1999), p. 231.

<sup>92</sup> Cheryl Sterling, *African Roots, Brazilian Rites. Cultural Identity in Brazil* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 18.

<sup>93</sup> Lima, p. 29.

also called ‘houses’).<sup>94</sup> Transatlantic exchanges were not limited to the religious sphere though. During the second half of the nineteenth century the elite of liberated Africans in Bahia often sent their children to be educated in West Africa. During the peak of return journeys (between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), about 8,000 Afro-Brazilians permanently relocated to Africa and several hundreds of them travelled back and forth for pilgrimage, business and education.<sup>95</sup> Africa was a source of knowledge and belonging and in no way was it a mythic past.

In the twenty-first century, although there still are transatlantic exchanges fostered by national governments, academics, and *candomblé* leaders, everyday lived-connections with Africa are mediated by *candomblé* practices and the ritual yearly celebrations which takeover vast areas of the city in honour of certain Orixás (syncretised with Catholic saints). The influence of *candomblé* in the city is not limited to the sacred; the religion’s epistemology, aesthetics, myths and dances have been reinterpreted by numerous sectors, including popular Brazilian musicians, Salvador’s touristic bureau and *blocos afro* – the Afro-descendant music bands with a strong presence in the streets of Salvador especially during carnival.<sup>96</sup>

It is no surprise, then, that in the task of looking at the sources of Afro-Bahianness, Olodum set their eyes in *candomblé*. With Oxumarê as a witness to the show, the action in *Áfricas* starts when Olodum’s all-black actors troupe populate the stage playing different characters who are setting up their stalls, getting ready to start a regular weekend Afro-Bahian market in Salvador. In this market, where loud overlapping voices suggest a busy atmosphere of transitions and transactions, the school students set out to search for *Africas* – in plural.

This quest for belonging set in an Afro-Bahian market – a place of trade and commerce – vividly conjures up the space of flows and diaspora upon which Afro-Brazilian identity has been constructed along the centuries. The natural remedies, crafts and cooked and raw food sold in the market are instances of African practices having

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<sup>94</sup> Stefania Capone, *Searching for Africa in Brazil. Power and Tradition in Candomblé*, trans. by Lucy Lyall Grant (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2010), pp. 212, 216.

<sup>95</sup> Sterling, pp. 32-3.

<sup>96</sup> For contextual information on the role of *candomblé* in Salvador, see Chapter 1, section 1, part C: ‘Brazil: Making Race Invisible’.

percolated into Bahian culture. Spoken language makes these connections particularly evident in the show as the Brazilian Portuguese spoken by the actors in their own Bahian accent carries strong influences from West-African languages. The character of an Angolan immigrant in Salvador – the owner of one of the various market stalls on stage – makes the audience laugh by pointing out how certain words common to the Portuguese language spoken in African countries and in countries from the black diaspora sound more familiar to the Bahian public than their counterparts in European Portuguese. Playing with the contrast between the domestic *cochilar* ('to sleep lightly' in Brazilian Portuguese) and *dormir* (to sleep deeply), he points out: 'did you know that the word 'cochilar' has its origins in Africa and is not a Portuguese word? The Portuguese don't *cochilam*, they *dormem*'.<sup>97</sup> The audience's laughs reveal how effectively this reference makes manifest that the African traces present in Brazilian Portuguese feel more homely in Bahia than its European ties.

Muzenza, the Angolan immigrant in the market, will mediate the imaginary travel into Africa undertaken by the youngsters in the show. Rodrigo and his friends approach Muzenza wanting to know more about Angola. In response, Muzenza gives Rodrigo a *tambor falante* (speaking drum), an instrument used by professional troubadours in Africa (*griôs* in Brazilian Portuguese).<sup>98</sup> Playing this drum, Rodrigo will activate a mythic world brought to life on stage by Olodum's actors wearing African-inspired costumes made of wax-print fabrics in bright colours; their heads, necks, arms and ankles wrapped in jewellery with cowry shells and visually rich beads; and carefully arranged Afro-braid hairstyles. In this way two parallel worlds coexist on the stage in *Áfricas*: the Afro-Brazilian market set in present-day Salvador and the mythic universe of African and Afro-Brazilian stories brought to life by Rodrigo's speaking drum. Performed by the same actors at alternate moments during the show, these two worlds bring together the contemporary lives of Afro-Bahians and the continent to which these peoples feel an affective, religious and epistemological attachment. And *candomblé* will reconcile both. Rodrigo's imaginary travel to Africa is compared in the show to the symbolic and physical journey that people who are initiated in this religion go through.

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<sup>97</sup> '[S]abia que a palavra cochilar é de origem africana e não uma palavra portuguesa? Português não cochila, português dorme.' Bando de Teatro Olodum.

<sup>98</sup> Babacar M'Baye, 'African Folclore', in *Africa and the Americas: Culture, Politics, and History*, ed. by Richard M. Juang and Noelle Morrisette (Santa Barbara CA: ABC-Cliosenate, 2008), p. 482.

Before approaching the Angolan immigrant to ask him about the Black continent, Faísca, Rodrigo's mother has planned a consultation with a *candomblé* priest and she predicts his initiation: 'Do whatever you need to do today because after the ritual, you will travel. You will sleep three days and three nights; you will see!'<sup>99</sup>

Accompanied by the speaking drum, Rodrigo's imagination will conjure up the tales of a crocodile hunter in Senegal, a Malian sorcerer, as well as *candomblé* myths about the Orixás. Each myth is simultaneously narrated by a *griô* on stage and performed either by physicalising the actions described in words or by enacting dance choreographies that are used in *candomblé* ceremonies to invoke each deity. In this religion each Orixá has plants, food, colours and dances that are related to specific episodes of their mythology. Some of the movements of these dances are quoted on stage by Olodum's actors when re-telling *candomblé* myths and these choreographies, running parallel to the storytelling of the *griô*, fill the stage with both oral and embodied ways of transmitting stories that are deeply rooted on both coasts of the Atlantic.

In the final scene of the show, another *griô* – this one dressed in regular, 'everyday' clothes – directly addresses the audience with the following remarks as a prologue to the most significant myth of the show:

The Yoruba believe that stories repeat themselves. That what's happening with you now has already happened to someone in the past. That's why they like collecting stories and why they brought them here – to help their sons and daughters understand their lives.<sup>100</sup>

There is no way to escape from such an undisguised address. It is clear that what is to come encapsulates the lived-experience of being Afro-descendant in Brazil and that this narrative is meant to speak expressly to each one of the audience members – be they *pretos*, *pardos*, indigenous or whites: '(...) what's happening to *you* now has already happened to someone in the past.' And so the *griô* tells the story of Omolú, the Orixá of illness and suffering who hides his body badly affected by smallpox under a tunic made from raffia. Omolú lives distanced from human contact because, as the *griô* explains,

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<sup>99</sup> 'Faça tudo o que tiver de fazer hoje porque depois do trabalho tu vai viajar, nego. Vai dormir três dias e três noites, você vai ver'. Bando de Teatro Olodum.

<sup>100</sup> 'Os Yorubas acreditam que as histórias se repetem. Que o que está acontecendo com você agora, aconteceu com alguém no passado. Por isso gostam de colecionar histórias e as trouxeram para cá para ajudar seus filhos a entender as suas vidas'. Bando de Teatro Olodum.

although a great connoisseur of medical practices, he ‘was ashamed of his body covered with wounds’.<sup>101</sup> One day Omolú had attended a party of the Orixás invited by Ogum – the deity of war and revolution that symbolises resistance and strength. Iansã – the goddess of winds and tempests – sees Omolú trying to go unnoticed on a corner and, determined to dance with him, pushes him to the middle of the room stirring a wind around him that lifts the straws that covered his body. Feeling desperate that his wounds had been exposed, he and all the other Orixás were surprised to see how they were transformed into small flowers and popcorn, thus revealing the body of a beautiful warrior. ‘Our people – concludes the *griô* – is like Omolú, that warrior captured in Africa, expelled by the illness of the slave traffic, and taken far away from his people’. Ogum, in turn stands for ‘political activism. He comes to say, “Let’s go! Come and fight for your place in society!”’. And Iansã is the ‘arts and beauty, she’s the movement that transforms all our wounds, sequels of racism and slavery, into a cloud of popcorn’.<sup>102</sup>

Through the symbol of Omolú, the Orixá of disease who himself is affected by smallpox, *Áfricas* compels its audience to consider the corroding psychological consequences of freezing the cultural identity of a people to the absolute subaltern position of slavery. As shown in the introduction to this section, children in the country have interiorised this position that is disseminated through the media, schoolbooks, and intellectual discourse. So much so that dark-coloured children aspire to become white, as if – as suggested by *Áfricas* –black skin was a disease. Theorising diaspora identity, Stuart Hall (himself from the African diaspora) writes:

It is one thing to position a subject or set of peoples as the Other of a dominant discourse. It is quite another thing to subject them to that ‘knowledge, not only as a matter of imposed will and domination, by the power of inner compulsion and subjective con-formation to the norm. (...). This inner expropriation of cultural identity cripples and deforms. If its silences are not resisted, they produce, in Fanon’s vivid phrase, ‘individuals without an anchor, without horizon, colourless, stateless, rootless - a race of angels’.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>101</sup> ‘[T]inha vergonha de seu corpo coberto de feridas’. Bando de Teatro Olodum.

<sup>102</sup> ‘O nosso povo é como Omolu, aquele guerreiro capturado na África, expulso pela doença do tráfico negreiro, apartado dos seus’. ‘[Ogum é] a luta política. Ele vem pra dizer: Vamos em frente! Venha e dispute o seu lugar na sociedade. [E Iansã é] a arte, a beleza, o movimento que transforma todas as nossas perebas, seqüelas do racismo e da escravidão em uma nuvem de pipocas’. Bando de Teatro Olodum.

<sup>103</sup> Stuart Hall, ‘Cultural Identity and Diaspora’, in: *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. by Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), pp. 222-37 (p.226).

The construction of Afro-descendant identity in the Brazilian ‘imagi-nation’ has left the effects described by Hall in the country. It has crippled black Brazilians with shame for not conforming to the norm set by the *ideologia de embranquecimento* (whitening ideology) that arose in the country soon after slavery was abolished – an ideology that today operates under the disguise of the ideal of *mestiçagem* (miscegenation).<sup>104</sup> *Áfricas*, showcased in different schools across the state of Bahia, disrupts the narrative that links black identity with suffering and aims to germinate a narrative in which Afro-Brazilians are agents of change through the arts and political activism. In so doing it challenges the view that restricts the role of Afro-Brazilians in the country’s history mainly to the slave era.

The utterance of *candomblé* and West-African myths, overlapped on the space of a Bahian market, yields a collective claim to belong to a diaspora space. By appealing to affective attachments rooted both in Bahia and in the African West Coast, *Áfricas* yields both for its audience and performers, ‘a consciousness of themselves as an ethno-transnational group’.<sup>105</sup> But the return travel to Africa proposed by the show is not a call for recovering original sources and traditions. Instead, what it suggests is a journey to the affective and religious attachments of today’s Afro-Bahians that is mediated through storytelling, *candomblé* and the main character’s imagination. In other words, it stages a return to past origins that is mediated through interpretation.

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In this chapter I have examined how these theatre companies have staged the ways in the ‘Other’ has left an imprint in each of these port cities through different migration processes. Through the analysis of *Venimos*, I have considered how Catalinas Sur explores the figure of the nineteenth-century European immigrant in Buenos Aires and contrasts it with twentieth-century migration trends from the Argentine interior and from Latin America. I have suggested that this exploration emphasises a problematic

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<sup>104</sup> For details on the *ideologia de embranquecimento*, see Chapter 1, section 1.1, part C: ‘Brazil: Making Race Invisible’.

<sup>105</sup> Sandra L. Richards, “‘Function at the Junction’? African Diaspora Studies and Theatre Studies’, in *The African Diaspora and the Disciplines*, ed. by Tejumola Olaniyan and James H. Sweet (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2010), pp. 193-212 (p. 203).

relation, which initially involved local expectations that these foreigners would infuse modernity and eradicate backwardness in the country. However, their unexpected refusal to assimilate transformed Europeans into threats to the nation. I have claimed that Catalinas' portrayal of the local tensions and fears that resulted from European immigration to Buenos Aires functions as a way to challenge the perceived 'white' roots of Buenos Aires. This challenge is further accentuated by the production's depiction of the populations that were decimated in order to carry out the project of 'populating' and 'civilising' the country.

Through my examination of *Adiós Ayacucho*, I hope to have demonstrated how Yuyachkani exposes the inequalities that Andean peoples have suffered throughout the country's history. I have considered this production's staging of the testimony of an Andean peasant 'disappeared' during Peru's civil war who needs to travel to Lima in order to seek justice. This consideration has led me to suggest that the company's choice to stage this journey allows Yuyachkani to explore the possibilities of agency that Andean populations faced during the Peruvian internal war. Simultaneously, this perspective denounces Lima as the centre of power of a country that has failed to incorporate Andean peoples as fully recognised citizens.

Finally, through my consideration of *Áfricas* I have investigated how Olodum has sought to promote images of the African continent that transcend representations of blackness as 'naturally' associated with slavery. I have suggested that this depiction enables claims to place belonging that stretch fixed national borders.

## Chapter 3

### Time

#### 3.1 Re-versing Time [*Carpa quemada. El circo del centenario* (Scorched Tent. The Centennial Circus), Catalinas Sur, 2013]



(Scene from *Carpa Quemada*, Catalinas Sur's archive)

Dressed in all white, a clown waves his hand, greeting the audience as he makes his way onto an empty, darkened stage. A small red hat partially covers the white bandages that are wrapped around his head, protecting a head injury. Speaking in Spanish but with a strong English accent, he welcomes theatre spectators to his circus, 'the Great International Circus of Frank Brown!'<sup>1</sup> A fanfare follows, accompanying about thirty circus performers entering in a merry parade. Their claps, pirouettes and tumbles seem to confuse Brown the clown, who stumbles as he walks looking somewhat disorientated. The parade is soon over. Brown, alone again on the stage, speaks to the audience:

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<sup>1</sup> Catalinas Sur, *Carpa quemada. El circo del centenario*, (unpublished script, August 2013).



I know what you're thinking. That Frank Brown is crazy for wanting to install his circus here. It's just that they burnt it down and left me with nothing! Some posh boys from the city centre did it.<sup>2</sup>

Rosita, also a clown, approaches Brown. At first comforting him with soothing words and caring strokes, she then explodes in anger as she explains to the theatregoers:

Yes, he is crazy; his head is filled with smoke. And you know why? Because he's so stubborn! You saw it! I told him not to put up the tent on the junction of Córdoba and Florida. Well, they came along and set fire to the tent. Those rich brats, evil-minded oligarchs!<sup>3</sup>

Gunshots interrupt the scene and announce the arrival of a group of young men, smartly dressed in tailcoats. They are responsible for the torching of Brown's tent. Walking arrogantly, they sing in unison to the tune of the march of the Argentine Navy:

'Brave men of our fatherland! We will forever fight against enemies who lie in wait. They despise our flag, don't respect any authority and even want to steal our little cows. We'll burn down their dens – those habitats for evil and social chaos.'<sup>4</sup>

A second group enter the stage, defying the disdainful youngsters. This crowd, formed by the circus troupe and residents of La Boca, respond to the earlier threats singing to the music of 'Bandiera Rossa' (Red Flag), the iconic song of the Italian labour movement:

These posh boys, children of the wealthy, have come to this neighbourhood to beat us up. But La Boca is a barricade of libertarians and proletarians. With grand gestures and piles of money, they speak of celebrations and the nation. But only a few are invited to the party: the exploiters, the flatterers.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> 'Yo sé lo que piensan ustedes. Que Frank Brown loco está por querer armar su circo acá. Es que me lo incendiaron, sin nada me dejaron unos pitucos de allá, del centro de la ciudad'. Catalinas Sur.

<sup>3</sup> Córdoba and Florida are two well know streets in the city centre of Buenos Aires. The junction of these streets is home to an area of busy commerce and key theatre venues. 'Sí, tiene humo en la cabeza. Y saben por qué? Por testarudo y ustedes son testigos, yo le dije que no pusiera la carpa en Córdoba y Florida y se la quemaron, esos señoritos bien, oligarcas hijos de mala entraña!' Catalinas Sur.

<sup>4</sup> 'Valiente muchachada de la patria que por siempre luchará contra los enemigos que acechando están. Ellos desprecian nuestra bandera, no respetan autoridad y hasta las vaquitas nos quieren sacar. Les vamos a quemar sus madrigueras, donde habita el mal y anida el bacilo del caos social'. Catalinas Sur.

<sup>5</sup> 'Los señoritos, hijos de ricos, vienen al barrio para apalearnos. Pero La Boca es barricada de libertarios y proletarios. Con alharaca, con mucha plata, hablan de fiesta, hablan de patria. Mas el festejo es de unos pocos.' Catalinas Sur.

Both factions leave the stage as a chorus with Brown's circus performers enters, chanting joyfully as they provide the audience with further details of the context: The show is set in May 1910, and the celebrations alluded to are no less than the commemoration of Argentina's centennial of independence. Buenos Aires city centre has been smartened up anticipating parades that will be attended by 'everyone who is anyone' in Argentine politics and society. Foreign dignitaries from Spain, Japan, Italy, Germany, Russia and the United States are the guests of honour. With their presence, they are asserting Argentina's coming of age within the concert of civilised early-twentieth-century nations. It is during this momentous occasion that Frank Brown had taken the unfortunate decision to set his circus tent precisely in the centre of Buenos Aires. The gang of local well-off teenagers set fire to the tent to protest against what they perceived to be the spoiling of a central city vista with the unsightly view of a circus tent. At a time when important European guests are visiting Buenos Aires, the capital should look as cosmopolitan as the cities from which they come.

*Carpa quemada. El circo del centenario* was premiered in 2013, a particularly significant year for Catalinas Sur as it marked the thirtieth anniversary of their foundation. Furthermore, only three years before (in 2010), Argentina had celebrated its bicentennial of independence. With *Carpa quemada*, Catalinas Sur commemorated their birthday by reflecting on the origins of their nation. The show reconsiders the 'official history' of Argentina's process to independence and its first hundred years of republican life. It exposes how such a history has been constructed through academic and artistic production, political events and urban planning. In this official history, Buenos Aires and the political and economic elites based in the city are the victors insofar as they have been able to maintain and reproduce their sphere of influence within the country as well as shape the contours of the Argentine nation; *i.e.* which regions, social classes and races have a right to belong to the country and in what capacity.

In this section I want to examine how *Carpa quemada* destabilises Argentine official history while making room for 'the other history', that of the defeated. I claim that the show's main strategy for this is to put in place a *mise-en-abyme* dramaturgical structure that allows spectators to zoom into the country's past and then out again back into the present. In doing so *Carpa quemada* materialises the country's elapsed time, its history,

in order to expose the extent to which it has favoured a single narrative and the social and economic classes that have benefitted from it.

*Carpa quemada* contains a number of worlds that are set within specific moments of Argentine history. The production is organised like a set of Chinese boxes, displaying each world as it leads to another, which in turn leads to yet another.

The first of these worlds takes place in La Boca in 2013. It is framed by Catalinas Sur performing *Carpa quemada* as part of their anniversary celebrations in the context of the country's bicentennial. The show is framed within these two events in the programme notes.<sup>6</sup> This first frame is also emphasised at the end of the production, when the entire troupe of eighty performers sing their final song facing the audience:

There was fire in this tent today – an arrogant and vain fire that aims to erase us from history. But we put it out with another fire, which is the flame that warms up the souls of those neglected by history. Memory is the name of this flame of resistance. It's a fragile flame that needs to be nurtured: blown and stirred from below – from a circus ring, from the neighbourhood, from the stage, from the streets and squares. There's no such thing as an erased past. What there is, is a recovered future.<sup>7</sup>

This final song brings the audience back to the present time of the show after an eventful journey that aims to re-write Argentina's nineteenth century. The song stresses Catalinas' intention in the show – to look back at the country's past in order to throw new light onto its present and its future.

Inside this first frame lies a second world, that of Frank Brown in La Boca in 1910. This second world transports the audience from the context of the years soon after the country celebrated its bicentennial of independence (in 2010) into its centennial celebrations. Contrasting two Buenos Aires – the one in 2013 and the one in 1910 – allows the show to propose a re-vision of the 'official' national history, a new version

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<sup>6</sup> The programme notes explain that Catalinas are celebrating three decades by premiering this show examining the country's roots in the nineteenth century. Catalinas Sur, 'Carpa quemada. El circo del centenario' <[www.catalinasur.com.ar](http://www.catalinasur.com.ar)> [accessed 1 September 2015].

<sup>7</sup> 'Hoy estuvo el fuego en esta carpa. Fuego prepotente y vanidoso que pretende borrarlos de la historia. Pero le opusimos otro fuego. Es la llama que calienta el alma de los postergados de la historia. Esa llama que resiste es la memoria. Es un frágil fuego hay que cuidarlo. Soplarlo, avivarlo desde abajo. Desde la pista de un circo. Desde el barrio, el escenario. Desde la calle, la plaza. No hay pasado pisado. Hay futuro recuperado.' Catalinas Sur.

that challenges the Argentine myth of a white nation that has been built over various exclusions.<sup>8</sup>

By the time of the country's centennial of independence, Argentina had developed a complex relationship with Europe, admiring what local elites perceived as northern Europe's civilisation and modernity while also condemning the uncivil behaviour and 'racial disadvantages' of the Southern European migrants that arrived in the country. 1910 also found Buenos Aires as the unquestionable dominating force in the country's economic and cultural life. This was the result of the chasm between Buenos Aires and the interior provinces that had emerged soon after independence, leading the country into civil wars between 1814 and 1880.

The third 'Chinese box' contained in *Carpa quemada* deals with the specific events that took place during these wars as well as those leading to the country's independence from colonial rule. Frank Brown's troupe will perform these events in succession as a way of trying to explain why the circus was expelled so violently from this wealthy quarter of Buenos Aires. I shall be examining this play within the play later on in this section. For now, suffice it to say that 1910 Buenos Aires (the time and place set for Brown and his circus) epitomised the ideals of modernity and the supposedly homogenous white and progressive society that made up the local elite. It was this definition of national identity that emerged victorious after the civil wars that had dominated the country throughout much of the nineteenth century. According to this definition, the country's interior had to be 'civilised', rescued from the barbaric nature that had been imprinted there through centuries of Spanish dominion and the presence of indigenous peoples.<sup>9</sup>

On the opposite side of this dichotomy, landowners (*estancieros*), military *caudillos* and an intellectual elite linked to the interior defended a nationalist project that sought to

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<sup>8</sup> For a concise explanation of the origins of this myth and its repercussions on the ways in which present-day Argentineans consider their national identity, see Chapter 1, section 1.1, part A: 'Argentina: Illusions of Whiteness'.

<sup>9</sup> This dichotomy between the countryside and the city (Buenos Aires in particular) found its perfect example in *Facundo: Civilización y barbarie*, a book published in 1845 by the intellectual and later Argentine president Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811-88). See Chapter 1, section 1.1, part A: 'Argentina: 'Illusions of Whiteness''; and also Chapter 2, section 2.1: 'Transnational Routes and the Limits of Hospitality in Buenos Aires'.

revitalise the image of the countryside as the legitimate and primordial source of Argentine identity. The *gaucho* (rural horseman) was asserted as ‘the authentic’ Argentine, one who was free from foreign influences and connected to the land. The interior provinces who aligned with this view, proposed a federal organisation for Argentina, hoping this system would allow the provinces to retain their autonomy and curb Buenos Aires’ radius of influence within the nation.<sup>10</sup>

For the audiences of *Carpa quemada* in 2013, these tensions between two very different ways of conceiving Argentine identity were particularly resonant. The dichotomy was that between a homogenous, white Argentina with strong European roots and another Argentina, more in tune with its Latin American history and more open to recognise itself as multicultural. The country was starting to distance itself from the myth of a white nation while coming to terms with the social and cultural impact produced through twentieth- and twenty-first-century Asian and Latin American immigration.<sup>11</sup>

The choice of circus as the preferred performing genre for *Carpa quemada* further reinforces this reflection of the historical construction of prevalent definitions of the cultural, social and political centres and margins in Argentina. The social and political divide between Buenos Aires and the interior was reflected in clearly segmented audiences. While Buenos Aires’ upper classes frequented theatre productions of plays written in Europe and performed by local actors or European touring companies, the lower- and working classes preferred such popular entertainments as the circus.<sup>12</sup>

### *Circo criollo*

More precisely, *Carpa quemada* falls within the category of *circo criollo* (creole circus), a genre that caters for popular audiences presenting local themes (rural

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<sup>10</sup> There is a wide literature on the historically tense relationship between Buenos Aires and the interior. For comprehensive accounts on these topics see, among others, *Argentina since Independence*, ed. by Leslie Bethell (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Larry Sawers, *The Other Argentina. The Interior and National Development* (Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 1996); Jorge Lanata, *Argentinos. Desde Pedro de Mendoza a la Argentina del centenario* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones B, 2002); Tulio Halperin Dongui, *Una nación para el desierto argentino* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1992).

<sup>11</sup> See Chapter 1, section 1.1, part A: ‘Argentina: Illusions of Whiteness’.

<sup>12</sup> Manuel Maccarini, *Teatro de identidad popular en los géneros sainete rural, circo criollo y radioteatro argentino* (Buenos Aires: Instituto Nacional de Teatro, 2006), p. 14.

characters and customs) through a fusion of Italian pantomime with European circus and drama. *Circo criollo* has a two-part structure. The first one is made up of stock numbers from European circus: acrobats, clowns, trapeze artists, jugglers and tightrope walkers. The second part consists of a brief theatre piece that often focused on the character of the *gaucho* and presented him rebelling against the abuses of corrupt authorities and the inequities of the Argentine modernising project that saw the countryside as something rooted in the past.<sup>13</sup>

The first ever piece of *circo criollo* dealt precisely with the figure of the *gaucho*. It was produced and performed by the Uruguayan-born Podestá brothers in 1886 in Chivilcoy (Buenos Aires Province). The show, *Juan Moreira*, contained a dramatic section staging the life of the eponymous *gaucho* (Juan Moreira). The piece was the product of a series of transformations across different media. Moreira's life was first captured as a novel published in a Buenos Aires newspaper between 1879 and 1880. Four years later, the Podestá brothers transformed the novel into a pantomime staged at the Politeama theatre in Buenos Aires city. Later on, in 1886, the Podestás adapted the pantomime into a short play and added it as the second part of their circus show.<sup>14</sup>

This new genre proved critical in the history of Argentine theatre. As local theatre historians agree, *circo criollo* became the seed of a 'national theatre', *i.e.* a repertoire of dramatic genres that explored local topics and customs developed for local popular audiences (the lower- and working classes).<sup>15</sup> *Circo criollo* also gave birth to a 'national

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<sup>13</sup> Julieta Infantino, 'A Contemporary History of Circus Arts in Buenos Aires, Argentina: The Post-dictatorial Resurgence and Revaluation of Circus as a Popular Art', *Popular Entertainment Studies*, 6 (2015), 42-61 (pp. 44-5). On the genre of *circo criollo* see also, Osvaldo Pellettieri, *De Totó a Sandrini. Del cómico italiano al 'actor nacional' argentino* (Buenos Aires: GETEA, 2001); Beatriz Seibel, 'Teatralidad popular en Argentina: Coexistencia de múltiples manifestaciones', *Latin American Theatre Review*, 23 (1989), 27-36; Eva Golluscio, 'Del circo colonial a los teatros ciudadanos: Proceso de urbanización de la dramática rioplatense', *Cahiers du monde hispanique et luso-brésilien*, 42 (1984), 141-9.

<sup>14</sup> Juan Moreira died in Buenos Aires' countryside in 1874, killed by the police after refusing to accept the arbitrariness and injustices of the local authorities. The novel based on his life was written by Argentine writer Eduardo Gutiérrez (1851-89). Clara Rey de Guido and Walter Guido, *Cancionero Rioplatense (1880-1925)* (Caracas, Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1989), p 32.

<sup>15</sup> The Argentine repertoire of national theatre includes genres such as creole *sainete* (festive folkloric farces) and creole grotesque (tragic farces), both influenced by Spanish and Italian farces and *commedia dell'arte*. Apart from the use of farce (entertaining through exaggerated and absurd situations), these genres also feature lower-class characters representing fixed social types (such as the *gaucho* in *circo criollo*). See Maccarini; Pellettieri; Golluscio. For an analysis

actor’, one defined in contrast to a ‘highbrow actor’ (*actor culto*). The latter was the actor of naturalist European plays that used a cultured language. On the other hand, ‘national actors’ (*actores nacionales*) used the language of the lower classes, the audience they aimed to target. They were expected to improvise departing from the original play, to have a wide performing register (including dance, singing and reciting), and to build a rapport with their public, often breaking the naturalist fourth wall.<sup>16</sup>

The conflict between a Europeanised Buenos Aires and a nationalistic interior materialised in this distinction between a ‘highbrow actor’ specialised in performing ‘polished’ European plays for elite theatre audiences and a ‘national actor’ playing and creating a national repertoire that explores rural and marginal characters for ‘lowly’ audiences. In utilising *circo criollo*, Catalinas Sur takes up this historical divide as a means to expose the extent to which they are still in place and are the product of specific interests – the interests of the political and social classes whose influence depend on Buenos Aires’ economic and political primacy over the rest of the country.<sup>17</sup>

*Circo criollo* is evident within the show through Brown’s troupe – performed by actors using the classical clown red nose, big shoes and exaggerated make up. It is also apparent in the show’s structure, its subject matter and acting style. *Circo criollo*’s two-part structure is maintained – with a first section displaying circus skills and a second section presenting a farcical drama through stock characters: the wealthy abusive youngsters, the circus impresario and, later on in the show, various well-known historical characters. Performances include dancing (a minuet that mocks the city’s European taste) and singing. Exchanges with the audience are also frequent, as in the show’s opening, when Brown and Rosita explain their predicament to the audience.

What makes the characters of Brown and Rosita particularly poignant is the fact that they are based on real people who were involved in events that evidenced the arrogance and disdainfulness of a sector of the ruling classes during the centennial festivities.

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of a show by Catalinas Sur that falls within the genre of *sainete criollo*, see Chapter 2, section 2.1: ‘Transnational Routes and the Limits of Hospitality in Buenos Aires’.

<sup>16</sup> This style of acting reached its peak between 1884 and 1930. It then was relegated from the theatre back to circus tents, but then came to occupy a significant place from the 1950s onwards through television dramas and series with household names such as Luis Sandrini and Alberto Olmedo gaining a popular following. See Pellettieri, pp. 11-7.

<sup>17</sup> See Chapter 1, section 1.1, part A: ‘Argentina: Illusions of Whiteness’.

Frank Brown was an English circus impresario and clown, born in Brighton in 1858. A contemporary of the Podestá brothers, he arrived in Buenos Aires in 1884, accruing great success with local audiences. Rosita (Rosalia Robba) was born in Buenos Aires in 1869 and worked in Argentine circuses from childhood. In 1886, she performed at Covent Garden (London) and returned to Buenos Aires the following year, when she started working with Brown, whom she later married. In 1910, and with a permit from the city town hall, Brown and his troupe opened their circus in downtown Buenos Aires, where it was torched by a group of upper-class young men. Brown and Rosita lost everything and had to start their business again from scratch.<sup>18</sup>

I would suggest that the inclusion of these real-life characters in *Carpa quemada* heightens Catalinas Sur's aim in the show. By retelling the history of Argentina during its first hundred years of republican life, Brown, Rosita and their troupe serve as a mirror reflection of Catalinas Sur's cast and their own re-enactment of the country's past as a critical lens into its present and future. This is no difficult comparison, considering that Catalinas Sur themselves are organised in a fashion very similar to the structure of classical circus. It is a company whose cast includes various generations of family members, with actors learning their trades through the training received from more experienced cast members. Furthermore, this training has a strong component of circus skills (such as acrobatics, juggling, unicycle riding and trapeze).<sup>19</sup> These similarities add to the sense that the structure of *Carpa quemada* is like a game of mirrors, with various worlds containing and mirroring each other.

The use of *circo criollo* supports further this game of mirrors. After displaying their acrobatic skills, the Brown's troupe perform *Carpa quemada*'s third world: the historical events that led to the supremacy of Buenos Aires over the rest of the country. Brown's company recount Argentina's first hundred years through a series of 'small numbers' or scenes, each aiding the development of the larger story.

### *Performing Argentina's 100 years of independence*

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<sup>18</sup> Beatriz Seibel, *Historia del circo* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del Sol, 2005), pp. 50, 53-4.

<sup>19</sup> Chapter 1, section 1.2, part A: 'Buenos Aires and Catalinas Sur'.



First, Brown urges his troupe to set up at the Avenida de Mayo, one of the main roads of downtown Buenos Aires, named in remembrance of the May revolution, which led to the country's independence. Various clowns enter the stage carrying mock-ups of buildings that were built at the turn of the nineteenth century and are still standing. Scaled models of neo-baroque and neoclassic buildings are lined in two parallel rows, as if bringing to the stage the urban design and planning that the upper classes chose for Buenos Aires. Making fun of the Europeanised taste of the city's aristocracy, Rosita remarks, 'Oh! Such a beautiful avenue! If I look at it from this side, it reminds me of Madrid. But if I look at it from this other side, it makes me think of Paris!'<sup>20</sup>

One by one the international dignitaries who have come to Buenos Aires enter in order to celebrate the country's birthday and recognise its geopolitical role at the time. The Japanese emperor is dressed in a kimono. The Italian king wears a crown. The Russian emperor sports his military medals. Princess Isabel, heir to the Spanish crown, has an entourage of *meninas* (dames of honour) who look just like the characters in the eponymous picture by Diego Velázquez, with voluminous dresses that hit everyone around them. Looking puzzled, Frank Brown asks if these are all the guests who had been invited. Confused by the absence of Latin American presidents, he comments, 'I don't see the dark-skinned from the neighboring countries'. Rosita's explanation makes it clear which side both troupes (Brown's and Catalinas Sur) are on:

'Perhaps they didn't come because they didn't have something to wear. Or perhaps, such ostentatiousness put them off and they didn't want to come. (...) Or maybe those oligarchs from the 'Progress Club' didn't let them in'.<sup>21</sup>

Once the place is set – Buenos Aires' Avenida de Mayo – and the 'main' audience for the centennial celebrations have entered, Brown's clowns perform pivotal scenes from the country's history. Rosita introduces the first scene: 'It all began in the late eighteenth century. Flamboyant royal houses governed the world and from Europe they plotted our course'.<sup>22</sup> Two clowns perform King Louis XVI of France and Queen Marie Antoinette dancing a minuet while a group of revolutionaries shout that they will take

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<sup>20</sup> 'Ah! ¡Pero qué linda avenida! Si la miro de acá, me recuerda a Madrid. ¡Y si la miro de aquí, me recuerda a París!'. Catalinas Sur.

<sup>21</sup> 'BROWN: No veo a los morochos de los países de al lado. ROSITA: A lo mejor no vinieron porque no tenían que ponerse... O al ver tanta paquetería no se animaron a entrar. (...) O no los dejaron entrar los patovicas de ese club de oligarcas "Del Progreso"'. Catalinas Sur.

<sup>22</sup> 'A fines de mil setecientos comenzaremos la cosa. Realezas aparatosas gobernaban todo el mundo y desde la vieja Europa nos iban marcando el rumbo'. Catalinas Sur

the Bastille and slay the monarchy. Napoleon Bonaparte enters proclaiming the end of the Revolution and the start of a French invasion of Spain (1808-14). Brown interrupts the scene abruptly claiming that it is too bloody for the occasion. He reminds his troupe that they are performing during the celebrations of Argentina's independence and encourages them to create more cheerful scenes.

However, what follows is far from cheerful. A clown holding a painter's palette walks onstage and, with a grave voice, introduces himself. He is Francisco Goya, court painter to the Spanish crown. Now the Spanish royal family comes to the stage and they prepare to pose for Goya. Ferdinand VII, forced to abdicate in 1808 when Napoleon invaded Spain, stands side by side with Princess Isabel and her *meninas*. Joseph Bonaparte joins the group depicted by Goya. Having Napoleon's brother – made King of Spain during the French invasion – posing among the Spanish nobility sets for the audience the context in which Argentina, and the rest of the Spanish colonies, gained independence. The Napoleonic invasions debilitated the Spanish crown up to the point where it could no longer exert enough military force or political control over its colonies in America.

The scene then gives way to a succession of portrayals of well-known etchings from Goya's series *Los desastres de la guerra* (The Disasters of War). Brown's clowns interpret some of the violent effects that the war against Bonaparte had on Spanish soil. The clowns pose for Goya, freeze the pose and say the name of the etching out loud. And thus they move through a horrific depiction of the war that fatally debilitated the Spanish crown. But soon Brown complains again. He had requested a joyful performance and this scene is even more brutal than the previous one. Reminding the audience of his own Nordic origins, he claims, 'Please do forgive these clowns. They are a bit foolish. Even though I feel creole and will die in Argentina, you know well that I was born in England – a country with royal blood and the greatest trading emporium.' And Rosita sarcastically replies, 'Yes! And they have their working classes fattening up capitalism.'<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> 'BROWN: Ustedes perdonen: estos payasos son un poco brutos. Aunque me siento criollo y moriré en esta tierra, ustedes lo saben bien, he nacido en Inglaterra, país con sangre real, el gran emporio comercial. ROSITA: Sí! Y tienen a su clase obrera engordando el capital!'. Catalinas Sur.

This passing mention of England's role in trading at the start of the twentieth century serves as a pointer for the next scene – an enactment of the British invasion of the River Plate (1806-07). These were military interventions that proved critical for Argentina's independence. In 1806, after the defeat at the Battle of Trafalgar, Napoleon enforced economic sanctions against Britain. Decreeing illegal all trading between France's European allies and the British Empire during the industrial revolution, Napoleon seriously put the British economy in check. In urgent need of markets, the British aimed to take control of the Spanish colonies, starting with the River Plate. By this time, Buenos Aires had become one of the most prosperous port in the region and was much less guarded than the port of Callao, the Spanish stronghold in Peru. The two attempts to seize control of the River Plate failed thanks to the defence of local militias with little support from the Spanish crown. This victory against a major empire fed the desire of the River Plate for self-government and gave way to the May Revolution – a weeklong series of events that led to the establishment of the first local government in Buenos Aires in May 1810. This First Junta still governed in the name of the Spanish king deposed by Napoleon, Ferdinand VII. However, the climate for independence from Spain had been set in motion across the continent and, in 1816, Argentina was formally declared a republic.<sup>24</sup>

Brown's clowns perform the clash with the British Empire as a confrontation between two choruses. One, made of the people who defended Buenos Aires during the invasions – ordinary women, men and children armed with pots and stones – and the other formed by clowns dressed in British military uniforms holding weapons. From one side of the stage, the soldiers sing their confusion in the face of strong resistance:

This city made of mud. Who are they fighting for? If we leave, what will they have left? The Inquisition, trade monopoly and a destiny of remaining being a village. Why are these people defending the masters who hold their chains?

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<sup>24</sup> For studies on the Argentine and Latin American independence processes, see, among others, *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, ed. by Leslie Bethell, 11 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985–95), iii, *From Independence to c. 1870* (1985); Tulio Halperin Donghi, *Argentina. De la revolución de independencia a la revolución rosista* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1972); Felipe Pigna, *Los mitos de la historia argentina* (Buenos Aires: Norma, 2004); Felipe Pigna, *1810. La otra historia de nuestra revolución fundadora* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2010); *Historia de América andina. Crisis del régimen colonial e independencia*, ed. by Germán Carrera (Quito: Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, 2003); *Latin American Independence. An Anthology of Sources*, ed. and trans. by Sarah Chambers and John Charles Chasteen (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2010).

In turn, the chorus of people from Buenos Aires ardently reply:

They didn't get it. Who were these people who were fighting tooth and nail. (...) They didn't get that a people was being born and they were fighting with thirst for homeland. (...) So imperial they looked and still they didn't see it coming. So blond and well dressed, so arrogant. They didn't see it coming.<sup>25</sup>

As these choruses leave the stage, Rosita enters and looks around her. Licking her finger as if trying to locate the direction of the wind, she announces the change of mood that saw South America steering towards independence. 'Winds of change are coming. They're not only blowing in Buenos Aires but in other places of Latin America'.<sup>26</sup> The stage is darkened and a deep female voice sings a solo recounting some of the uprisings against Spanish rule that set crucial precedents for the independence of Argentina and the Americas – the revolution of *mestizo* leader Túpac Amaru II and his wife Micaela Bastidas in Peru (1780), the uprising of indigenous leader Túpac Katari in Bolivia (1781) and the Haitian revolution (1791-1804). In total darkness, the resonant, low, soulful voice resonates to the compass of an Afro-Argentine drum. Her song potently reminds the audience that the history and destinies of Buenos Aires and Argentina are deeply rooted in South America – the continent that has been so decried by the country's elite.

From then on, Brown's clowns perform a series of scenes that depict the political and military struggles that took place in the newly independent Argentina. These conflicts, spanning much of the nineteenth century (1814-80), originated in the economic and political power that the port of Buenos Aires had accrued during colonial rule.

### ***Buenos Aires against the Argentine interior***

Any reading of the production is dependant on an understanding of the political climate that followed independence in 1810, when the territories of the former Viceroyalty of

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<sup>25</sup> 'Soldados ingleses: Esta ciudad de barro, ¿por quién pelea? Si nos vamos nosotros, ¿qué les queda? Inquisición, monopolio y destino de aldea. ¿Por qué defienden al amo que los aporrea? Vecinos de Buenos Aires: No lo entendían, qué les pasaba. Con uñas y dientes por quién luchaban. (...) No lo entendieron que un pueblo nacía y con sed de patria combatía. (...) Tan imperiales, no lo esperaban. Tan rubiecititos, tan bien vestidos, tan arrogantes no lo esperaban'. Catalinas Sur.

<sup>26</sup> 'Vientos de cambio. Pero no solo soplan en Buenos Aires, sino también en otras partes de Latinoamérica'. Catalinas Sur.

the River Plate were renamed as the United Provinces of the River Plate. Buenos Aires aimed to impose a centralised form of government based in the city, facing strong opposition from regional leaders who in turn demanded a federal political organisation. This led to a succession of battles and conflicts between the so-called ‘unitarians’ – the advocates of a centralised administration unified around Buenos Aires – and ‘the federalists’ – who favoured a federal system of national organisation in which all provinces would remain autonomous. The original colonial demarcation of the viceroyalty suffered substantial changes with the independence of Paraguay (1811), Bolivia (1825) and Uruguay (1828).

The remaining provinces of the River Plate organised themselves in 1831 as a national confederation (the Argentine Confederation), with Buenos Aires province consolidated as the wealthiest region. For this province, controlling the city of Buenos Aires and its port was key as this meant receiving the revenues from the only customhouse in the country. Although the federalist cause largely succeeded and the Argentine Confederation lasted until 1852, Buenos Aires province maintained the economic supremacy thanks to the traffic of the port and customhouse of Buenos Aires city.

Trying to foster more federalisation, a national constitution, receiving the support of almost all the provinces was sanctioned in 1853. Critically, Buenos Aires province did not recognise this document as it curtailed its national influence. This led to the formation of the State of Buenos Aires in 1852, a national state independent from the confederation. Without the port, the provinces were lost. They had to re-annex Buenos Aires by military means in 1861. The civil wars between Buenos Aires and the interior came to an end in 1880, when the city of Buenos Aires came officially under federal control, becoming the capital of the national government and thus a political entity separate from Buenos Aires province. However, the political primacy of the city was again reaffirmed in 1994, when a constitutional reform granted it autonomy along with its status of national capital.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> In practical terms, this means that Buenos Aires city is administered by a chief of government (rather than a mayor). It has its own legislative and judicial branches as well as members of parliament within the national parliament. Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, ‘Información sobre el gobierno de la ciudad de Buenos Aires’ <<http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/gobiernodelaciudad>> [accessed July 2015].

*Carpa quemada* stages these events as a succession of scenes in which Brown's clowns perform the historical characters that decided the destiny of the Argentine republic. Anyone familiar with local history will recognise pivotal scenes from the civil wars that destabilised the country as the interior tried to curtail the influence of Buenos Aires and its ruling classes. At the end of this series of re-enactments, Brown stops the performance claiming that it is biased and it offends the Buenos Aires audiences who have come to see the show in 1910, expecting a celebration rather than a fatal tale of national fratricide. His protest receives the reply of a loud chorus of clowns who denounce:

How can we continue without causing offense? This is the start of a new dawn; the dawn of the rich and wealthy motherland: A motherland with children of her own and also with stepchildren (those condemned to a 'no place'). The rich motherland that looks towards Europe. Sir! Madame! This is the beginning of the great "National Progress"!<sup>28</sup>

With this sarcastic remarks, the clowns end their depiction of the origins of the Argentine nation and are then joined by all the cast. Around eighty actors, including adults and children, sing the final song of the show: 'There was fire in this tent today – an arrogant and vain fire that aims to erase us from history. But we put it out with another fire. (...) Memory is the name of this flame of resistance'.<sup>29</sup>

This re-enactment of national history is not any journey through time. As Brown correctly points, it is a loaded tale. It is a re-vision of the country's official history. This is the history that has naturalised the economic and political preponderance of Buenos Aires over the country as well as the myth that Argentines descend from European ships.<sup>30</sup> It is a re-versed time – a reversed glimpse directed backwards, into the past. But also a recounting, a new version of Argentine history that brings the national 'Others' to the front row: the interior provinces as well as the Latin American, black and indigenous roots of Argentina.

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<sup>28</sup> 'Cómo seguimos sin ofender? (...) Si aquí comienza la nueva aurora. La patria rica, (...) la de la abundancia. Con hijos propios y entenados. Los condenados del no lugar. La Patria rica, la que mira a Europa (...) Aquí comienza, señor, señora... ¡El gran "Progreso Nacional"!'. Catalinas Sur.

<sup>29</sup> For the original text in Spanish, see note 7 in this Chapter.

<sup>30</sup> See Chapter 1, section 1.1, part A: 'Argentina: Illusions of Whiteness'.

### 3.2 Time to Abide

[*Hasta cuándo corazón* (Until When, My Heart?), Yuyachkani, 1994]



(Scene from *Hasta cuándo*, Yuyachkani's archive)

A three-storey building stands imposingly as the backdrop of a darkened scene. The structure is not make-believe scenography. It is part of the actual backstage space of Yuyachkani's house. Stage right, white clothes hang from washing lines that stick out from the corner of the building. Further down, seven empty chairs stand in transversal rows, pointing to the farthest corner of the auditorium. A blue wooden gate stands on its own in the centre. This same gate used to be at the front exit of the troupe's venue. It was the point of entry into the house; its border with the city outside.

A few lights coming mainly from inside the house call the viewer's attention towards the building. Seven characters stand in the hallways of the second and third floors. Each of them, standing in front of what seems to be their private rooms, gets undressed in slow, careful movements. They all remain in white underwear – men, in vests and briefs; women in petticoats. As they strip off their clothes, the sound of a beating heart

pounds in the air adding rhythm to the scene and human quality to the house. It is as if the building was a large living organism that breaths while the small figures within are undressing to expose what lies beneath their exterior attire. The heartbeats bring to mind the production's name, *Hasta cuándo corazón* – until when my heart.

The plot is revealed through successive monologues in the first half hour. Seven characters from different backgrounds live separate lives in a tenement house and find themselves sharing the fate of an impending eviction. Rather than forging ties of solidarity, they undergo the experience from the private perspectives of their individual life stories and hopes. They all await something. It is not only their imminent departure, which is anticipated with heightened tension, but also the fulfilment of their individual dreams, anticipated with nostalgia and despair. An Opera Singer waits for a contract; a Matador, the best bullfight of his career; a Laundress, the return of an absent husband so that he might impregnate her; a Rebel Woman who is now classified as a deserter, her lover who is an active terrorist leader; an Ornithologist, the visit of his admired professor; an Actor, his father's performing costume so he can dance just like him; a Pious Woman even awaits God's descent.

*Hasta cuándo* marks a new phase in the troupe's trajectory, one in which grand political and ideological narratives were left aside, favouring instead the characters' inner lives and, to some extent, the actors' too. As I shall explain later in this section, the show was devised and premiered in a time when Lima, and indeed the whole country teetered on the brink of chaos. By the early 1990s Peru was politically polarised and suffering one of the worst economic crises of its history. The terrorist movement Shining Path had taken over entire regions in the country's interior and violence was at its peak in Lima. Thousands of Peruvians had to flee overseas for security and work reasons.

This context impelled Yuyachkani to turn their gaze inwards – towards their repertoire, venue and individual lives. The product is a piece that explores the idea of endurance through hardship. In the words of director Miguel Rubio:

This was a time when we felt that our trade, our home and our place were all threatened. [The show] vindicates the utopia of one's own dreams; it is a way of



saying “it is here where we will crystallise our dreams”. It is a group ritual to reassert our perseverance; it is an act of resistance.<sup>31</sup>

Here, I want to examine the ways in which this production captures the moment that both Lima and Yuyachkani were experiencing in the early 1990s. I will argue that the nature of the phase the city was undergoing – a moment of deep instability and fear – permeates in the ways in which time is showcased in *Hasta cuándo*. A non-continuous time is displayed; one that is intensely subjective as it fuses past, present and future, metaphorically compressing them into the intimate space of the house.

After a brief description of the production, I shall move on to delineate the political and social context in Lima that framed and shaped the devising process of *Hasta cuándo*. I shall then analyse how Yuyachkani’s need to come to terms with these social developments and their impact on life in the city led them to explore the space of the house as the metaphor for the community’s dreams. Finally, I will examine the temporal qualities that this spatial exploration takes on.

### ***The show***

With very little text and no linear narrative or time, *Hasta cuándo* is structured in three sections that give the spectator a tenuous sense of a plot as they each unfold. There is no explicit transition or reference to these parts in the show. Functioning rather as scenes dominated by a certain action, the troupe referred to these with the working terms: Spoken Heart, Danced Heart and Dreamed Heart.

Once the characters have stripped down to their underwear, in the first scene, one by one they enter the patio of their tenement house with slow, unsteady steps. Seemingly exploring the space for the first time, they touch the walls, look around in surprise and gaze into the distance. It is as if they are looking beyond the audience, to see if someone has arrived.

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<sup>31</sup> Miguel Rubio, Interview by Michelle Nicholson-Sanz on the work done by Yuyachkani (Lima, March 2012).

Sudden strains of a Peruvian waltz add speed and rhythm to the scene. A type of waltz originating in the mid-nineteenth century, this genre evolved through the infusing of Afro-Peruvian musical elements into the European waltz – brought to the Americas by Spaniards during colonial times. With a more syncopated cadence than the European waltz, it was consolidated in the first half of the twentieth century, and subsequently became symbolic of national culture.<sup>32</sup> Also known as creole waltz (*vals criollo*), it is associated with the coast and, in Lima, to a time (before the 1950s) when immigration from the highlands had not influenced the city's self-proclaimed white heritage.

Stopping and resuming repeatedly, the waltz punctuates a series of successive monologues. This is the section called 'Spoken Heart'. With frequent hints of suspicion towards the others, each character explains who they are. The Matador thus states:

Twenty-five years here. Twenty years are nothing. Twenty-five are too many. Too many. (...) But no one is going to kick me out of here. By what right would they? Living here or anywhere else is exactly the same for the *serrano* [highlander] from next door. As for the professor, as long as he has the company of his birds he can live in any hole. But not me. I need my cape and to stand tall in front of the mirror.<sup>33</sup>

As the monologues come to an end, the music gets louder, giving way to a frantic party atmosphere. All neighbours dance a *marinera* with uninhibited, sensual gestures and moves. The 'Danced Heart' begins. A local dance associated primarily with the coast, *marinera* blends Afro-Peruvian, Spanish, and indigenous rhythms.<sup>34</sup> From around the mid-nineteenth century, it re-enacts a courtship, with the man and the woman playing very specific roles – she holds her dress up to her waist, thus showing her petticoat, and responds to the man's approaches in echoing, evolving movements. Welcoming the man's advances and avoiding them, inviting them and again distancing herself from them, when performed in formal settings and by the upper classes this is an evoked, stylised flirtation. In *Hasta cuándo*, though, it is performed as in a *jarana popular* –

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<sup>32</sup> William D. Tompkins, *Las tradiciones musicales de los negros de la costa del Perú* (Lima: CEMDUC, 2011), p. 46.

<sup>33</sup> 'Veinticinco años aquí. Veinte son nada. Veinticinco son muchos. Demasiados. (...) Pero de aquí nadie me saca. Con qué derecho. Al serrano del costado le da lo mismo vivir aquí o en cualquier otro lugar. Al profesor, con que lo acompañen sus pájaros puede vivir en cualquier hueco. Pero yo no. Yo necesito mi capilla. Necesito plantarme frente al espejo.' Yuyachkani, *Hasta cuándo corazón* (unpublished script, 1994).

<sup>34</sup> Tompkins, pp. 108-10.

creole parties that often take place in tenement patios, with less well-to-do neighbours dancing in visibly intimate ways.<sup>35</sup>

*Hasta cuándo*'s party soon heats up. Reversing habitual gender roles, the Matador dons a nightdress and the Laundress wears trousers. They dance together with overtly sexual undertones while the other characters clap, dance and kiss. Suddenly, the frenzy is sharply broken by the sacred presence of a Christ-like figure played by performer Amiel Cayo, who also plays the Actor. Wearing a crown of thorns and washed in red light, this Christ figure enters the stage, carries the actor playing the Ornithologist, Augusto Casafranca, and nails the latter's hands evoking a crucifixion. With this symbolic act, Casafranca becomes transformed into a second Christ. In slow, delicate movements Cayo then dresses himself up as a 'scissors' dancer'.

Scissors' dancing is a highly codified Andean dance in which performers (*danzaks*) embody the spirits of the mountains and re-enact a ritual battle through elaborate gymnastic-like steps. Wielding a set of two metal plates in each hand, which look like scissors as they clash, making acute rhythmic sounds, dancers move to the music of a violin and a harp. Although the earlier notice of this tradition dates back to the mid-nineteenth century, it is believed that its origins can be traced back to pre-colonial times.<sup>36</sup>

As the character of the actor dresses up like a *danzak*, it becomes apparent that he is fulfilling in dreams what he had been waiting for – his father's costume so he could follow his father's trade as a dancer. Elegantly, Cayo leaps and bends, performing the difficult codified movements of this ritual. Slowing down, he then invites Casafranca's Christ to a fight. The struggle becomes one between an Andean deity and a Christian, colonial one. This is hinted through the mutation of Cayo's initial role (the Actor) into a *danzak* – an eminently Andean figure. Furthermore, both performers, Cayo and Casafranca, are of Andean origins, immigrants in Lima and the only two Quechua speakers in the troupe. Cayo, with unmistakable indigenous features, and Casafranca, a

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<sup>35</sup> Tompkins, p. 40.

<sup>36</sup> Hiroyasu Tomoeda and Luis Millones, 'El mundo del color y del movimiento: De los takis precolombinos a los danzantes de tijeras', in *Historia, religión y ritual de los pueblos ayacuchanos*, ed. by Luis Millones, Hiroyasu Tomoeda, Tatsuhiko Fujii (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 1998), pp. 129-42 (pp. 133, 139).

*mestizo*, perform two roles which seem to embody the old-time Peruvian conflict between, on the one hand, indigeneity and the highlands, and on the other hand, miscegenation and the coast.

Violence spreads over the stage. All the neighbours fight with one another, venting long-contained anger, fears and frustrations. A loud, abrupt howl strikes and suffocates the clash. The Rebel Woman weeps, deeply saddened and sick of all the violence. In a soft, quiet voice, she begins to sing a well-known Peruvian waltz and is soon followed by all the characters at unison:

Laughing? Who can speak of laughing? Everything in life has only been crying, suffering. Happiness is a fool's dream, an impossible reality. (...) My heart, until when will you be suffering? Until when will you be crying? Until when, my heart? I trust this is a test, my heart. One of the many tests God puts us through. My heart, we have suffered enough already. Life has been full of hardships, my heart. One day there won't be more misfortunes and we will be joyful then, my heart.<sup>37</sup>

This is of course the creole waltz that gives the show its name. Stinging and precise, the lyrics cut right through the distress and hopelessness that were so prevalent in Lima during the early 1990s. The fight comes as the climax of anxieties and concerns at the impending eviction that were expressed in the monologues. The soft, nostalgic tunes in which this dismay is voiced are a fine counterpoint to the unruly frenzy of the party and the violent altercation that follows.

'Dreamed Heart', the last section of the production, then ensues. The neighbours fall asleep, each sat on a chair in the patio. Slowly, they suddenly stand up and joyfully start to enact their dreams on stage. The Matador has the bullfight he was waiting for; the Rebel Woman burns incriminatory documents she had been keeping, thus renouncing the burdensome commitment to remain faithful to her lover and the terrorist movement they were both involved in; the Opera Singer finally sings; the Ornithologist meets his professor; the Actor receives a parcel containing his father's dancing costume; the

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<sup>37</sup> 'Reír. ¿Quién habla de reír? Si en la vida todo es solo llorar, solo sufrir. Creer en la felicidad solo es un sueño loco, imposible realidad. (...) Corazón, ¿hasta cuándo estás sufriendo? ¿Hasta cuándo estás llorando? ¿Hasta cuándo corazón? Yo confío que esta ha sido una prueba, corazón. Una de las tantas pruebas que nos suele mandar Dios. Corazón, ya bastante hemos sufrido. Ya la vida nos ha dado muchos golpes, corazón. Y confío que algún día no habrá más fatalidad y ese día gozaremos corazón.' Waltz *Corazón*, music and lyrics by Lorenzo Humberto Sotomayor.

Laundress is pregnant; and the Pious Woman is able to see God. What seemed like impossible expectations become true in their dreams; but only in their dreams. The oneiric fulfilment of their hopes – the fact that they become real only in dreams – seems to stress the futility of their waiting; how inaccessible their aspirations seem in reality.

One by one the characters return to their rooms in the building. Undoing the show's first scene, which had given way to their dream world, they get dressed once again, in silence, while the music of the waltz 'Hasta cuándo' resonates again. As if returning to conscious reality, each neighbour repeats a line from their monologues, until the last one, the Opera Singer exclaims, 'What do we do here? We hold up. And in the meantime, while I abide, the best I can do is to cultivate my talent.'<sup>38</sup> Her words, conveying the idea of turning to your craft as a means to resist sustained hardship, emerge as a symbol for the troupe's endeavours during the early 1990s – a particularly difficult time for Lima.

### ***1990s Lima: Contextualising Hasta cuándo***

Politically, the decade of 1990 kicked off in Peru with the newly elected president Alberto Fujimori. He was the first Peruvian president of Asian (Japanese) descent. With the motto 'Honesty, technology and work',<sup>39</sup> an imprecise governance plan, and a discourse targeted mainly at the popular classes, he triumphed unexpectedly over his nearest rival, the novelist Mario Vargas Llosa, who would later become a Nobel literature laureate. A newcomer in politics and former chancellor of a reputed local university (Universidad Agraria La Molina), Fujimori succeeded claiming that, as his motto asserted, his government would be marked by incorruptibility, modernisation and endeavour. He also reassured the electorate that he would not implement the drastic economic policies Vargas Llosa advised the country urgently needed in order to decelerate a staggering hyperinflation.

Less than a month after the start of his first term in office, he enacted radical neoliberal reforms. Known as 'the Fujishock', these policies were so drastic that the then Secretary

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<sup>38</sup> '¿Qué hacemos aquí? Aguantamos. Y mientras tanto, mientras me quede, lo mejor que puedo hacer es cultivar mi don.' Yuyachkani.

<sup>39</sup> 'Honestidad, tecnología y trabajo.'

of Treasury finished announcing them in a nationally broadcast speech uttering the phrase ‘may God help us’.<sup>40</sup> Ten years later, and after three consecutive periods in office (although the Constitution in operation when he was first elected did not allow for successive re-elections), Fujimori left the presidency and fled the country.

On a more positive balance, his government had also done what seemed impossible at the time – pacifying a country deeply weekend by internal conflict and stabilising a severe economic crisis. Crucially, however, this was achieved through favouring military and economic efficacy to the detriment of civil and labour rights. This realpolitik approach undermined both the state and civil society as power was increasingly concentrated in the presidency. After a self-imposed exile of five years, he was arrested in 2005 and convicted to 25 years in prison for bribery and crimes against human rights.<sup>41</sup>

The fragile situation Peru was experiencing in the 1990s was the aftermath of the shattering decade that preceded it. By the end of the 1980s (under president Alan García’s regime – 1985-90), the country boasted a monthly hyperinflation rate of 60%; a falling of real wages of 50% between July 1985 and the end of the decade; squalid international reserves of merely 107 million dollars; and an external debt of over 22 million dollars that had more than doubled the country’s obligations in 1980.<sup>42</sup> Such a financial disaster had been paved by governmental policies that had isolated Peru from the international economic community. These included price and foreign exchange controls as well as the refusal to pay back the country’s external debt.<sup>43</sup>

Besides this economic situation, Lima also had to endure a harsh increase in violence and insecurity from 1989. This was the year when, and as part of their plan for a

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<sup>40</sup> ‘Que Dios nos coja confesados’, Juan Carlos Hurtado Miller, 8 August 1990.

<sup>41</sup> For more details on Fujimori’s administration and how it became an elected authoritarian regime, Catherine M. Conaghan, *Fujimori’s Peru: Deception in the Public Sphere* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005); *The Fujimori Legacy: The Rise of Electoral Authoritarianism in Peru*, ed. by Julio F. Carrión (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

<sup>42</sup> Comisión de la Verdad y la Reconciliación [CVR], *Informe Final* (Lima: CVR, 2003) <<http://cverdad.org.pe/ifinal>> [accessed 2 February 2015] (p. 460).

<sup>43</sup> Carlos Contreras and Marcos Cueto, *Historia del Perú contemporáneo: Desde las luchas de independencia hasta el presente* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 4th. ed., 2007) pp. 356-7.

people's war, the Shining Path agreed to redirect their forces from the countryside into urban centres, hoping this new strategy would make an impact on a national scale.<sup>44</sup> As the capital city, Lima was of course the preferred target: between 1982 and 1987 it received more subversive actions than Ayacucho, the region that had been, until that point, the target of sustained terrorist violence.<sup>45</sup> In this context, the position of security guard was one of the few jobs that did seem to be on offer. As Peruvian economist Carlos Contreras and historian Marcos Cueto claim, in the early 1990s the country's economically active population could be divided into those who had a job, those who were looking for a job, and those who looked after the people who did have a job.<sup>46</sup>

Such levels of insecurity, violence, unemployment, and economic and political unpredictability forced thousands of Peruvians to leave the country in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The number of expatriates between 1981 and 1992 trebled. Emigration reached a peak in 1989, one year before general elections, with almost 80,000 people leaving that year, particularly towards neighbouring Latin American countries and the United States. This was both a voluntary migration – mainly due to unemployment and insecurity – and a forced one as one in four migrants were political refugees.<sup>47</sup>

Such stark emigration is poignantly referred to in the first part of *Hasta cuándo*. In his monologue, the Matador looks at the spectators and claims: 'Some people leave during bad times, although they had sworn they would stay with you until the end'. All other neighbours, who had been sitting with their backs to the audience, turn around and repeat incriminatingly, 'Some people leave during bad times, although they had sworn they would stay with you until the end'. The Matador resumes his monologue: 'They get lost when winds change. I may have some defects but am not like that. I've never been like that. I stay put, without dodging anything. Like it should be!'<sup>48</sup> But his words

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<sup>44</sup> CVR, p. 71.

<sup>45</sup> For an analysis of the ways in which Yuyachkani have explored terrorist violence in Ayacucho, see Chapter 2, section 2.1: 'Witnessing Forced Internal Displacement towards Lima'.

<sup>46</sup> Carlos Contreras and Marcos Cueto, p. 360.

<sup>47</sup> Teófilo Altamirano, *Liderazgo y organizaciones peruanas en el exterior. Culturas transnacionales e imaginarios sobre el desarrollo* (Lima: PromPerú; PUCP, 2000) p. 26.

<sup>48</sup> 'Hay gente que se larga en las malas épocas. Que juran quedarse contigo hasta el final. Y que sin embargo se mandan mudar cuando los vientos cambian. Yo tendré mis defectos pero no soy así, jamás he sido así. Yo me quedo en mi lugar, sin quitar el cuerpo. Como tiene que ser!' Yuyachkani.

only meet with the ridicule of his neighbours, who laugh derisively as they put down his burst of courage.

In Lima, the 1990s also marked the consolidation of internal migration. Urbanisation had started in the 1950s, and by 1993 more than half of the country's population was non-rural. The capital harboured almost a third of city dwellers — 6.5 million people — , and almost 40% of them had arrived there from the provinces. People coming from the country's interior established themselves mainly in shantytowns (*asentamientos humanos*). By 1990 these lodged almost half of the city's inhabitants.<sup>49</sup> Lima's city centre was one of the preferred settlement areas for these migrants, where they resided in subdivided run-down mansion houses and tenements. By mid 1980s, 80% of the city's total area was occupied by shantytowns and slums, and only 20% by middle and upper class neighborhoods.<sup>50</sup>

Terrorist groups did not discriminate which areas of the city to attack. They focused equally on wealthy and poor neighbourhoods. Bloodshed in Lima was particularly severe during 1992 and 1993 – two years before *Hasta cuándo*'s premiere. Fujimori's government intensified intelligence actions, including selective murders. It was clear that indiscriminate violence was springing both from terrorist groups and the state.

In 1991, the so-called Colina Group – not a paramilitary cell but a section within state intelligence<sup>51</sup> – shot and killed fifteen terrorist suspects in Barrios Altos, a poor neighbourhood in Lima's city centre. An eight-year old child was among the murdered. The victims were having a party in a tenement house when they were rounded up and told to lie down, only to then receive bursts of gunfire in the back.<sup>52</sup> In April of the next year, Fujimori dissolved parliament illegally and called in a constituent assembly that modified the constitution allowing for successive presidential elections. In February, Shining Path killed María Elena Moyano, an influential energetic community leader from a well-organised shantytown. In a characteristically cruel act, the terrorists blasted her corpse with dynamite after shooting her. In June, a car bomb destroyed the facilities

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<sup>49</sup> CVR, p. 400.

<sup>50</sup> CVR, p. 401-2.

<sup>51</sup> Human Rights Watch, 'Presunción fundada. Pruebas que comprometen a Fujimori', *Human Rights Watch*, 17.6B (2005), p. 9.

<sup>52</sup> CVR, p. 475.



of a television channel and killed three workers. One month later, another car bomb consumed a residential building in the upper-class neighbourhood of Miraflores, killing fifteen people.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, in July, the Grupo Colina death squad kidnapped nine students and a professor from a state-funded university. One year later, their remains were found in a clandestine mass grave. The perpetrators of this crime were found guilty and imprisoned, but then they were granted amnesty following Fujimori's re-election in 1995.<sup>54</sup> Abductions, selective murders, wiretapping and the surveillance of politicians, journalists and regular citizens were all government-supported intelligence tactics during the 1990s.<sup>55</sup>

Yuyachkani too were under state and terrorist surveillance in the early 1990s, while devising *Hasta cuándo*. In the following section I hope to show how *Hasta cuándo*'s house becomes a safe space, a shelter where its characters could dream. They could elaborate their feelings toward the present and future, as well as recall their past.

### ***Looking at your house anew: Making theatre on unstable grounds***

By the early 1990s both the homes of Yuyachkani's families and the group's venue became spaces surrounded by intimidating forces. The troupe's overtly political theatre had gained them divergent reputations. Among right-wing sectors and the government, they were categorised as terrorist sympathisers due to their undisguised militancy against social injustices in the country. Left-wing groups, on the other hand, criticised the troupe for not overtly supporting a radical, violent revolution. The cast received threat notes in the building where most of them lived with their families. In addition, outside Yuyachkani's venue, state intelligence had posted two agents in order to permanently monitor their activities.<sup>56</sup>

Additionally, they had to constrict their work to their venue while devising *Hasta cuándo*.<sup>57</sup> The government had declared a state of emergency in Lima and mobility was

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<sup>53</sup> CVR, pp. 416-7.

<sup>54</sup> Human Rights Watch, pp. 11-2.

<sup>55</sup> Human Rights Watch, pp. 2-3.

<sup>56</sup> Rubio.

<sup>57</sup> Ana Correa, Interview by Michelle Nicholson-Sanz on the work done by Yuyachkani (Lima, March 2012).

hindered. This prevented the troupe from offering workshops and shows in the city's shantytowns and squares, as well as in the country's interior – something they had done regularly until this point and a practice that had inspired their work. The company were still performing the season's show, *Contraelviento* [Against the Wind]. Premiered in 1989, the piece is inspired by a peasants' massacre that had occurred in Ayacucho three years earlier. It depicts a country torn between radical political violence and forms of activism that favour the preservation of human life. Although *Contraelviento* kept the troupe in touch with their public, in general the early 1990s was a period of spatial isolation for them. Furthermore, actress Ana Correa remembers this period as one in which audience numbers decreased for Yuyachkani because of wide-spread concerns regarding insecurity.<sup>58</sup>

During this time, confined almost exclusively to their house, Yuyachkani initiated an exercise in introspection and reflected on a series of issues. Their commitment to making group theatre began to seem like a ludicrous dream amidst Fujimori's neoliberal reforms. Emphasis on the market, privatisations and the deregulation of labour rights were a stark contrast to Yuyachkani's non-profit orientation and their aim of devising theatre in a collaborative way.<sup>59</sup>

Their relation to the city was also under examination. Thoroughly urban, on the coast and the country's epicentre of political power, Lima had only attracted the troupe's attention sporadically. Within a repertoire of fifteen productions by the time *Hasta cuándo* was premiered (1994), Lima had been an explicit setting in only three shows: as a desired destination for internal migration in *Músicos ambulantes* [Traveling Musicians, 1983] and *Adiós Ayacucho* (1990); and as the devastated city where two dead nightclub performers meet again in *No me toquen ese vals* [Don't Play that Waltz for Me, 1990]. Contrastingly, their ideological and aesthetic concerns had revolved much more around the history, myths, and social situation of Peru's Andean countryside. This is rather paradoxical considering that the troupe's house is not only based on a coastal city but within very close proximity to the sea. Peruvian academic María Rostorowski – a specialist in pre-colonial Andean history, whose research and expertise the company have drawn on in their productions – used to point out this

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<sup>58</sup> Correa.

<sup>59</sup> Correa.

paradox to the troupe saying they were effectively Andeans living just a couple of blocks away from the sea.<sup>60</sup>

Political violence had estranged the troupe from the city because it had transfigured it into a ravaged, dangerous place. It had also force them to remain in Lima and explore the cast's relationship to it. They thus needed to look at their house anew in the sense that they had to go back over their personal ties to both the city – where they had lived and a birthplace for most of them –, and their repertoire – the symbolic edifice of their work, built over the past 23 years. Director Miguel Rubio explains:

Each of us revised our individual conditions. For some it was their being immigrants; for others, their faith, their militancy, their trade. The idea of threat was also important: the notion of a non-place, of not knowing until when. We had received threats from the Shining Path and had also been under suspicion of supporting them. The city was so polarised that if you had a discourse that did not openly support one side or the other, people cornered you against one of the two poles. The show is the first approach that we had as a group towards refraining from grand political and social discourses, and instead building a metaphor departing from our individual circumstances as artists. Thus, the building, the tenement house, becomes the metaphor of your dreams, your interior home, the home from which you are threatened with eviction.<sup>61</sup>

New dramaturgical languages were needed in order to express the group's novel situation – fresh means of expression with which to look at themselves beyond familiar ways.<sup>62</sup> Leaving behind a more overtly political discourse on the stage, they opened up a space for the cast's personal experiences as individuals and practitioners in a country marked by conflict.<sup>63</sup> With *Hasta cuándo* they sought to explore this subjective component. Actress Ana Correa remarks:

In previous shows, I was playing a role. It was 70% the character and 30% me [as a person]. Then we moved forward to the idea that the character was like a thin film in front of the actor. For the first time we were really working with

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<sup>60</sup> Rubio. For more details on this preference for the Andes, see Chapter 1, section 1.2, part B: 'Lima and Yuyachkani'.

<sup>61</sup> 'Cada uno revisó su propia condición de migrante, de fe, de militancia, de oficio. También la noción de amenaza fue importante; de no lugar, de no saber hasta cuándo. (...) Hemos tenido amenazas de Sendero [Luminoso] y también hemos sido sospechosos de ser simpatizantes de Sendero. Porque la ciudad estaba tan polarizada que si tú tenías un discurso que no estaba abiertamente con un lado o con el otro, la población te arrinconaba a uno de los polos. La obra es un primer acercamiento de todo el grupo (...) a no tener el gran discurso político y social sino construir una metáfora a partir de nuestra condición de artistas. Y así hacer que el edificio, el solar, sea la metáfora de tus sueños, de tu casa interior, de la que te quieren botar'. Rubio.

<sup>62</sup> Rubio.

<sup>63</sup> For more details on this choice, see Chapter 1, section 1.2, part B: 'Lima and Yuyachkani'.

ourselves; without the bulk of the character in front. We thinned characterisation and enlarged the individual.<sup>64</sup>

Part of this exercise of looking at their craft and the city anew, heightened by the experience of being unable to move freely, led the troupe to give their house a central presence in the show's scenography. The building became a metonymy for the cast's subjective, inner space. A brief examination of the house staged in *Hasta cuándo* reveals the ways in which it constitutes a topography for the production's sense of time. When the characters undress on the hallways, at the beginning of the show, the beating of a heart infuses life into the structure, making it look like a skeleton's torso firmly held up by a spine made out of steps. Vertebrae by vertebrae, step by step, the staircase moves the spectators' gaze upwards, towards the theatre's flyspace, and transversally, farther into the privacy of the troupe's dressing and storage rooms. At stage level, light comes out of the opened door to the stairs, hinting at the interior. The building points to tensions of openness and occlusion, vulnerability and solidity. Such tensions make up the spatial qualities that evoke how time is experienced in the show – alluding to the past but as a trail into the present; routed towards the future but in fearful ways; emphasising the city's present time but only tangentially and with anguish.

### ***Until when: Time in Hasta cuándo***

The sense of time in *Hasta cuándo* does not follow a rational, coherent progression. Rather, past, present and future appear mingled and set against one another. Scenes ensue by juxtaposition and in a dreamlike register. Thus the tenants coincide with a *mestizo* Christ as well as an Andean one and the latter suddenly mutates into a scissors' dancer. One instant the tenants dance a *marinera* insinuatingly, the next they pray with devotion, and the next they engage in a violent fight, which results in their collective singing of a waltz. Time in the show is constituted by a succession of moments that spring up – instants that arise cutting the continuous flow of the plot and adding up to a constellation of coexisting timeframes, which include the fictional time of the characters as well as the moment the city and the troupe were undergoing. The present is given

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<sup>64</sup> 'En espectáculos previos, yo estaba caracterizando. Era un 70% el personaje y 30% mío. De allí pasamos a que el personaje es una película delante del actor. Y por primera vez realmente estábamos trabajando con nosotros mismos. Sin el grueso del personaje delante. Se adelgazó la caracterización y se agrandó la persona'. Correa.

pre-eminence. But it is not always explored in direct, unequivocal ways. Instead, it is shaped and coloured by the memory of times past and apprehensiveness towards the future.

The present is experienced as troubled. Punctuated by several starts – both in the sense of new beginnings and shocks, the quality of time in *Hasta cuándo* is that of being constantly on the brink of something about to happen. Very early, within the section called ‘Spoken Heart’, all allusions to the neighbours’ looming ejection are interrupted anxiously. Talking to God, the Pious Woman claims:

I’ve been bad, mean! How could I have doubted you even in thought? (...) Yesterday some men came with sledgehammers. Instead of tearing down the walls, they began to fight with each other.<sup>65</sup>

During her monologue, her neighbours look bored and uninterested. Yet, as soon as she refers to the forthcoming ejection, a sudden start invades them all. Jumping to their feet, they look into the distance and check if someone new has arrived. Reassured that everything is well, they clap loudly, almost manically, to the beat of a waltz, and silence any reference to their on-going situation.

Another frenzied reaction meets the Rebel Woman’s allusion to the characters’ impending future: ‘For me, these neighbours are strangers. But they want to evict us all equally.’ Standing up in fear, the tenants dance a *marinera* nervously and break off this speech.<sup>66</sup> One by one, all monologues are halted in this way. The fictional present is thus deferred, marked by a future that approaches through menacing signals.

The character’s past is also connected to their current situation and the decision to remain in the house. Their past is evocated in reverie in the first part of the show. The Actor recalls his father in the following terms:

Today I have woken up remembering him. (...) I had dreamed of my father. (...) [H]e looked as if bathed by moonlight, white like patron St. James’s sphere. Making his scissors clash up until the crest of the mountains. (...) If they kick us

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<sup>65</sup> ‘Mala he sido; mezquina. ¿Cómo he podido dudar de ti siquiera con el pensamiento? (...) Ayer vinieron unos hombres con combas. En vez de tumbar los muros, se pelearon entre ellos.’ Yuyachkani.

<sup>66</sup> ‘Los vecinos de aquí son para mí unos extraños. Pero quieren desalojarnos a todos por igual.’ Yuyachkani.

out, where would we go? Where would we receive our parcels [from our families in the provinces]?<sup>67</sup>

Similarly, the Rebel Woman conjures up the time when she and her lover were together:

You used to enjoy lying in bed. Looking. Looking how I combed my hair with the comb you gave me for my birthday. Sometimes, you came from behind. You would show up on the mirror without making a noise and touch my breasts. (...) That is why I haven't moved out yet; why I haven't changed my routine – so we won't keep losing sight of each other.<sup>68</sup>

Days gone by are restored in these sudden gleams of memory. Like the neighbours' future, time past functions as a means to inform the present. It brings meaning to the primary ongoing action, the characters' waiting. Each of them has chosen to remain in the house for individual reasons, abiding for someone from their past and for the inevitable eviction. It is as if their right to abode was grounded in their current abiding, their waiting, and simultaneously put into question by it.

Most significantly, the aesthetics used throughout the show in order to convey the characters' present was outmoded already by the 1990s. Peruvian waltz and *marinera*, which dominate the musical score and accompany most of the dances, belong to the repertoire of 'creole music' (*música criolla*). The genre animated creole parties (*jaranas*) – like the one that inspires the first part of the show – throughout the first half of the twentieth century. With the advent of Andean immigration to the capital since the 1950s, it came to epitomise an aristocratic, white Lima – one not yet influenced by Andean culture.<sup>69</sup> Although it lost its popularity since the 1960s and 70s (over rock, pop and salsa), it remained as one of the main expressions of Peru's national identity.<sup>70</sup>

Critic Enrique Sánchez Hermani commented soon after the show was premiered on the use of this musical genre in *Hasta cuándo*:

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<sup>67</sup> 'Hoy me he despertado con su recuerdo en la cabeza. (...) [H]abía soñado con mi padre. (...) [S]e veía como en un claro de luna, blanco como la esfera del patrón Santiago. Haciendo sonar la bulla de sus tijeras hasta la cresta de los cerros. (...) Si nos sacan, a dónde nos estaríamos yendo. Dónde nos llegarían nuestras encomiendas.' Yuyachkani.

<sup>68</sup> 'A ti te gustaba quedarte echado en la cama. Mirando. Mirando cómo me peinaba con la horquilla de cabello que me regalaste por mi santo. A veces te acercabas por detrás. Sin hacer ruido aparecías en el espejo. Los senos me examinabas. (...) Por eso no me he mudado todavía. Por eso no he cambiado mi rutina. Para que no sigamos perdiéndonos de vista.' Yuyachkani.

<sup>69</sup> José Antonio Lloréns, *Música popular en Lima: criollos y andinos* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1983), pp. 26-7, 62-3.

<sup>70</sup> Lloréns, pp. 93-4.

It is enlightening that the characters in the show acknowledge themselves as a community on the basis of the waltz ('Until when are you suffering, until when my heart...'). They all celebrate it and to a certain extent it unifies them. What is paradoxical is that the waltz, the genre that at one point signified Lima's essence, today has lost its unifying capacity. People no longer gather in parties and listen or dance to waltzes. Peruvian expatriates still listen them with nostalgia because it remains the uniting National Genre. Adopting the waltz, the characters in the show choose to merge with the city by the side it is already abandoning.<sup>71</sup>

I would argue that creole music, an essential part of the city's past, functions in the show as a looking glass into the city's present. By the 1990s Lima had long ago left behind its past colonial glories. People living in the city were no longer mostly white and with decades- or even centuries-long ties to it. Creole music's celebrations of colonial Lima is a stark contrast with the city's current present, deeply metamorphosed by immigration, violence and economic deadlock. I would claim that such a contraposition gives this musical genre a distancing effect in the show. It impregnates *Hasta cuándo* with a patina of former times that allows the spectator a critical examination of Lima's crumbling ongoing situation.

Peruvian cultural critic and political scientist Mirko Lauer describes well the connections between the show and the city's present:

Half a dozen 'average outcasts' – a sort of microcosm of what a crisis such as the Peruvian one is throwing to the sides of the road in the name of modernisation – interact (for want of a better word) on an austere stage where conventional time and space have been suspended for one night. (...) What the actors express is, more than individual people, a situation that is historically, socially, economically and culturally besieged. Women and men, creoles and highlanders, devotees and scientists, the hopeful and the disillusioned, they all have arrived to an identity impasse, one in which what one does (in this case daydreaming, or living asleep, if you prefer) replaces the person who does it. This is the 'solitary multitude' in Lima's history and society.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> 'Resulta aleccionador que los personajes de la obra se vayan reconociendo como colectividad a partir del vals ('Hasta cuándo estás sufriendo, hasta cuándo corazón...'), que todos celebran y que de alguna manera los une. Lo paradójico es que el vals, ese género que en algún momento significó la limeñidad, hoy ha perdido su poder de convocatoria; ya nadie se reúne en una fiesta para oír valsos o bailarlos, pero sí los oyen con nostalgia quienes han marchado fuera del Perú, porque de alguna manera todavía sigue siendo el Género Nacional, unificador. Los personajes de la obra, al preferir el vals, eligen integrarse a la ciudad por el lado que ésta va dejando.' Enrique Sánchez Hernani, 'Gran montaje de Yuyachkani. *Hasta cuándo corazón*', in *Semanario Sí*, 380 (20 June 1994), p. 43.

<sup>72</sup> 'Media docena de "marginales promedio", una suerte de microcosmos de lo que una crisis como la peruana viene lanzando a un lado del camino en nombre de la modernización, interactúan (no tengo una palabra mejor) sobre un escenario austero en el que tiempo y espacio

In the show, the city's present is symbolically staged through the prism of past and future. Lima's here and now is invoked only tangentially. This happens through the Rebel Woman's allusions to terrorist activity and the Matador's reference to people leaving when things turn bad (a clear hint to the emigration waves of the period). It is also present in the characters' group singing 'Until when my heart', which feels like a plea and a demand to the spectator to face the insanity of the city's current moment. Early-1990s' Lima, debilitated by an appalling economy, transformed by internal migration and weakened by emigration, was effectively put under the company's scalpel. 'Until when', the show's title, puts forth the question – until when will we be able to endure the current situation? Will we have to wait until this surreal experience becomes actual madness?

The characters' waiting for better days to come does seem hopeless, for it is staged as something that only comes true as an enacted dream. The show, however, also stresses Yuyachkani's commitment to abiding as a means to defend their right to abode, *i.e.* their right and decision to remain in the country and in Lima, making group theatre despite the hard times the members find themselves suffering. Hence the Opera Singer's words, at the end of the show, 'What do we do here? We hold up. And in the meantime, while I abide, the best I can do is to cultivate my talent'<sup>73</sup>. Time here is a convoluted experience in which the present is assumed as the duty to abide.

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convencionales han sido suspendidos por una noche. (...) [E]n realidad los actores más que a personas expresan a una situación histórica, social, económica, y culturalmente acosada. Mujeres y hombres, criollos y serranos, cucufatos y científicos, esperanzados y desencantados, han llegado todos a un punto muerto de la identidad en que aquello que se hace (en este caso soñar despierto, o vivir dormido, como se prefiera) sustituye a quien lo hace. Es la "multitud solitaria" en la historia y la sociedad de Lima.' Mirko Lauer, 'Yuyachkani. La multitud solitaria', in *Semanario Sí* 384 (18 July 1994), p. 41.

<sup>73</sup> '¿Qué hacemos aquí? Aguantamos. Y mientras tanto, mientras me quede, lo mejor que puedo hacer es cultivar mi don.' Yuyachkani.



### 3.3 Ancestral Time [*Bença*, Bando de Teatro Olodum, 2010]



(Scene from *Bença*, Bando de Teatro Olodum's archive)

Bando de Teatro Olodum turned twenty in 2010. To mark the occasion, they premiered *Bença*, an intermedial production aimed as 'a homage to time and the elders'.<sup>74</sup> Especially significant, the show's name encapsulates these two aspects of its subject matter; *i.e.*, time and the accumulation of experience over the years. Short for *bênção* [blessing], a *bença* is a traditional, increasingly rare form of greeting one's elders among Afro-Bahians. One of Salvador's most respected *candomblé* elderly authorities, *Makota* Valdina, explains in a video projection that forms part of the show's fabric:

[T]he blessing [*bença*] benefits the one who is being blessed, not the one who blesses. If every father and mother knew this, they would bless their sons and daughters even before wishing them good morning. [In giving a *bença*] one imprints a mark – something good, a good energy or vibration. That's why people bless so much in *candomblé*. (...) The elders give their blessings to the younger. The former bless the latter because it's good. It's good to give a blessing. It's good to receive a blessing.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>74</sup> 'Uma homenagem ao tempo e aos mais velhos.' Bando de Teatro Olodum, '*Bença*', 22 November 2010 <[http://bandodeteatro.blogspot.co.uk/2010/11/benca\\_22.html](http://bandodeteatro.blogspot.co.uk/2010/11/benca_22.html)> [accessed 10 August 2015].

<sup>75</sup> '[A] *bença* serve para quem é abençoado, não quem põe a *bença*. E se todo pai, se toda mãe soubesse, não abria mão de fazer com que seus filhos, antes de dar o bom dia, tomassem a *bença*. Que tá imprimindo a marca. Alguma coisa boa, uma energia boa, uma vibração boa. Por isso é que a gente toma tanta *bença* no *Candomblé*. (...) O mais velho toma *bença* ao mais novo. Um abençoa o outro. Por que é bom. É bom tomar a *bença*. É bom ser abençoado'. Márcio

Seen from this viewpoint, a *bença* is a gift, a donation of well-wishing and good fortune. Asking for a blessing is a token of respect towards the old, an implicit acknowledgement that the longer course of time they have lived earns them knowledge and authority. It is an intergenerational exchange – one between the young and the old, but also between junior and senior *candomblé* practitioners.

Valdina's is one of a number of testimonies on aging and time that celebrated Bahian black elders deliver in the show from staged video projections. These testimonies come from an elapsed time. They do so not only in the sense that their enunciators are old enough to have lived lives whose past is larger than their future, but also in that these words were uttered and recorded before the show's premiere. Gathered by O Bando's cast during the year-long period of research for this piece, the pre-recorded and edited footage of these interviews bring time past into the liveness of performance when displayed on screen.

In what follows I will examine the ways in which this production explores time both as experienced by Bahia's black elders and as conceived of in *candomblé*. Emphasising the occasion marked by the show's premiere – O Bando's twentieth birthday –, I will argue that by delving into these lived and conceived ontologies of time, the dramaturgy of this piece creates a theatricalised ritual that has worked as a rite of passage for the group. Indeed, the show has marked O Bando's recognition as one of the most important theatre groups in the history of black theatre [*teatro negro*] in Brazil.<sup>76</sup>

In *Bença*, the encounter between audience and actors is not necessarily marked by a specific time on the clock. Thirty minutes before the start, doors are opened to allow for early arrivals, so spectators find the show already underway as they enter the auditorium. Those audience members appearing just on time for the show will be

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Meirelles, Script of *Bença*, in *Bença*, Márcio Meirelles and João Milet Meirelles (Salvador: João Milet Meirelles, 2012), p. 273.

<sup>76</sup> In the Brazilian context, 'black theatre' designates theatre productions that are directed, performed or produced by Afro-Brazilians; or ones whose central topic deals with this population's history, culture or socio-political concerns. Christine Douxami, 'Teatro negro: a realidades de um sonho sem sono', *Afro-Ásia*, 25-26 (2001), 313-63 (p. 313). For a more detailed approach to the genre, see Chapter 1, section 1.2, part C: 'Salvador and Bando de Teatro Olodum'.

unaware that *Bença*'s cast of nineteen performers have been playing Afro-Brazilian drums [*atabaques*] for the past half hour. Over this time, the actors' drumming and their swinging dance movements become increasingly relaxed and somewhat weary too. Cell Dantas, one of the actors in the show, describe the qualities obtained by the actors' bodies during this initial period:

I think (...) [the body] gets into that spirit, it gets into the show's speed, into that metronome. We might be agitated and busy, but when we enter the stage, those minutes there, those thirty minutes when we are playing seem to give us that rhythm. One begins to feel tired. I have to confess that I feel tired after the first twenty minutes (...). Perhaps this fatigue is what we need in order to be able to do what we do on stage. The body is getting ready for that. [The body in *Bença*] is not a sweaty or lively one. It is a relaxed body.<sup>77</sup>

The sedate quality of the bodies staged in this production gets accentuated as the show progresses without intervals and with no actors exiting the stage during the approximately one and a half hours of total running time. In a piece about old age and time, this fatigued atmosphere proves effective as a means of exploring the bodily effects of minutes becoming hours and, crucially, allowing the audience to experience the duration of this process. Very early in the devising process, Márcio Meirelles, the director of the piece, encouraged the actors to 'perceive and bring onto the stage the "energy" of being elderly'<sup>78</sup>, rather than seeking to create characters with specific contours.

With no defined characters, no linear narrative, no unity of time, and no particular setting, what give *Bença* a structure and a sense of progression are its acoustic music and the testimonies it screens. Around fifteen minutes after the audience is allowed into the auditorium and the performers have started playing the drums, a smooth but clear change in the drumming marks a beginning of sorts to the show. The *candomblé* devotee easily recognises the newly introduced rhythm. It is *avaninha*, the tune played

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<sup>77</sup> 'Eu acho (...) que [o corpo] entra no espírito dali, entra no speed desse espetáculo, desse metrônomo. A gente tá aqui, tá brincando, tá fazendo, mas quando entra, aqueles minutos ali, aqueles 30 minutos ali que a gente fica tocando, parece que ele já vai dando esse ritmo. Vai sintindo o cansaço, eu confesso que sinto o cansaço nos primeiros 20 minutos (...). E talvez esse cansaço é o cansaço que é necessário para gente tá fazendo aquilo ali. O corpo tá preparando para aquilo. É não o corpo suado, não um corpo vivo, é um corpo relaxado.' Vinicius da Silva Lirio, 'Bença. Às teatralidades híbridas: O movimento cênico transcultural do Bando de Teatro Olodum' (unpublished master's thesis, Universidade Federal da Bahia, 2011), p. 170 <<https://repositorio.ufba.br/ri/bitstream/ri/9637/1/Vinicius%2520Lirio.pdf>> [accessed 1 August 2015].

<sup>78</sup> Silva Lirio, p. 54.

in *candomblé* temples at the beginning of a ritual ceremony.<sup>79</sup> As in *candomblé* festivities, the changes in the drumbeats will determine the sequence of sections within *Bença*. Perhaps the uninitiated local spectator would not be able to name these drumbeats nor recognise their ritualistic functions, but she will surely associate this music with *candomblé*. Seven different drumbeats will follow throughout the show with no clear gaps. Instead, transitions between them will flow fluidly and organically.

Only through the show's script, included in the programme, does the spectator become aware that each of these drumbeats punctuates a motive. Between the overture (in synch with *avaninha*) and the finale, *Bença* explores the following in a sequence: time – performed to the beat of *ibi*, the tune played for Oxalá, the most peaceful and eldest of the Afro-Brazilian deities; the elderly; respect; children; and death. Clearly, *Bença*'s acoustic music functions much more than just musical background. It is one of the central elements in the show that help conjuring up an 'ecosystem'<sup>80</sup> favourable to the exploration of the cycle of life according to *candomblé* and to Bahia's black elders.<sup>81</sup>

The role assigned to acoustic music in the production evokes the function of drums in *candomblé*. *Atabaques* are no mere objects there. *Candomblé* followers name and feed these instruments, and garnish them with laces for ritual celebrations. Once consecrated, only initiates with the appropriate authority can touch and play them.<sup>82</sup> These diligent cares are carried out because *atabaques* are one of the means through which the various deities of the *candomblé* pantheon acquire material form in the human realm. The drums' music is a highly codified language essential in any public and intimate ritual and it serves a number of purposes: it invokes the *Orixás* [gods], announces the sections of a ceremony, and provokes and responds to dance choreographies. Music in this creed goes far beyond the purely formal. Brazilian *candomblé* musician Angelo Natale Cardoso, describes its significance:

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<sup>79</sup> Ângelo Nonato Natale Cardoso, 'A linguagem dos tambores' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Universidade Federal da Bahia, 2006), p. 261  
<<https://repositorio.ufba.br/ri/bitstream/ri/91112/2/Tese%20Angelo%20Cardoso%20parte%202.pdf>> [accessed 20 August 2015].

<sup>80</sup> Andy Lavander, 'Mise en Scène, Hipermediacy and the Sensorium', in *Intermediality in Theatre and Performance*, ed. by Freda Chapple and Chiel Kattenbelt (Amsterdam; New York; Rodopi, 2006), pp. 55–66 (p. 56).

<sup>81</sup> For details on the role of *candomblé* in the formation of an Afro-Bahian identity, see Chapter 1, section 1.2, part C: 'Salvador and Bando de Teatro Olodum'.

<sup>82</sup> Natale Cardoso, p. 55.

It becomes a systematic means of transmitting messages through agreed audible signs. In other words, *candomblé* music is, in any way it may be presented in rituals, a form of language; a means of communication whose sounds contain culturally established meanings.<sup>83</sup>

In rituals, dancers are probably the closest interlocutors of these drums. *Atabaques* invite *candomblé* initiates to perform choreographies especially dedicated to each god. Their rhythm, speed and strength change according to the qualities and myths of the deity they invoke. When the moment is ripe in a ceremony, drumming enables possession. It favours the materialisation of the *Orixás* in the bodies of those initiates capable of entering trance. During trance, the initiate's body dances choreographic sequences which evoke the deities' myths and their characters. The dancer is no longer the initiate but the *Orixá*: the human body becomes a support for the materialisation of the divine. The French photographer and ethnographer Pierre Verger, himself a *candomblé* initiate, gives an account of this ritual interplay between drums and dancers:

The gestures and steps [of the dancers] imitate the gods' characters which, following the rhythm of the *atabaques*, are alternatively soft, frenzied, aggressive, majestic, undulating, or painful. For the congregation, these dances and songs are ways of greeting the deities. For the initiates consecrated to a specific *Orixá*, when their god is evoked dance acquires a deeper nature. The rhythms provoke resonances in them because the *atabaques* not only call and greet the gods (...). [They] are the god's voice, a kind of aural imperative through which the *Orixá* demands the body of his follower in order to manifest himself through it.<sup>84</sup>

Most signs performed during a ceremony – whether through music, dance or otherwise – will be interpreted by all participants. However, since *candomblé* is a religion of initiates (in which training is done gradually and over several years), not all devotees will be equally equipped to decode all signs. Increasing the signs' partial decipherability

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<sup>83</sup> 'Ela se torna um meio sistemático de transmitir mensagens através de signos sonoros convencionados. Em outras palavras, música de *candomblé* é, em qualquer forma que esta se apresente em seus rituais, uma forma de linguagem; um meio de comunicação, cujos sons contêm significados culturalmente estabelecidos.' p. 185.

<sup>84</sup> '[Os] gestos e passos [das *filhas-de-santo*] imitam os caracteres dos deuses que, seguindo o ritmo dos *atabaques*, são alternadamente suaves, arrebatados, agressivos, majestosos, ondulantes, dolorosos. Para o conjunto dos fiéis, essas danças e cantigas são maneiras de saudar as divindades. Para as *iyawo* consagradas a determinado *Orixa*, ao chegar o momento de evocar esse deus, a dança adquire um carácter mais profundo. Os ritmos provocam nelas ressonâncias, pois não somente os *atabaques* chamam e saúdam as divindades (...). [O]s *atabaques* são a voz do deus, uma espécie de imperativo sonoro, mediante o qual o *Orixa* exige o corpo de suas *iyawo* para nele manifestar-se'. *Notas sobre o culto aos orixás e voduns na Bahia de Todos os Santos, no Brasil, e na antiga costa dos escravos, na África* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 1999), p. 29.

further, during public rituals *candomblé* temples allow non-initiates and these sporadic spectators will understand even less of what is being ‘said’ in the ceremony.

*Bença* too is an event whose interpretation will largely depend on the spectator’s familiarity with the codes it performs. The closer one is to *candomblé*, the more one is able to decipher the staged languages. Márcio Meirelles wanted to work with a language shared by a community of initiates: ‘*Candomblé* ritual (...) is like an Oriental opera... The choreographic gestures are codes from a narrative. (...) This was what concerned me; what I did along the years and also in *Bença*’.<sup>85</sup>

Standing somewhere in between a ritual celebration, a theatre show, and an opera – progressing in time thanks to the unwrapping of a musical score – the piece evidences critical distinctions between art and ritual. When staged in the show, *atabaques* and dances are clearly used in a non-ritual way. With no garnishes at all, bare drums are played by the lay hands of O Bando’s cast. None of the actors play drums professionally and only some of them are *candomblé* initiates. In fact, intensive dance and drumming workshops were part of the required training during the devising period.

Costumes too touch lightly on this religion’s aesthetic. The actors wear clothes reminiscent of the white ritual attire used by some *candomblé* priests [*mães* and *pais de santo*]. There is no mere reproduction here. *Bença*’s costumes are still rigorously white but they lack the refinement of Afro-Bahian ritual clothes – usually, a delicate lace trimmed blouse or shirt; an ankle-length floaty skirt or trousers; and beaded necklaces.<sup>86</sup> In contrast, both male and female actors use white tops, long skirts and head wraps, with no necklaces or any other accessories. Instead of lace trims, their tops bear crisscrossed strings forming geometrical patterns. As with the use of *atabaques*, the show’s stylisation of the original clothes of *mães* and *pais de santo* evokes *candomblé* ritual while simultaneously keeping a respectful distance from the sacredness of its signs.

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<sup>85</sup> ‘O ritual do candomblé (...) é como uma ópera oriental... Os gestos coreográficos são códigos de uma narrativa. (...) Era essa a minha inquietação e o que fiz ao longo dos anos e com “Bença”’. Val Benvindo, ‘Tempo de reafirmar. O Bando de Teatro Olodum celebra 20 anos com “Bença”, uma articulação entre seus passado e presente’, <<http://bandodeteatrogaleria.blogspot.co.uk>> [accessed 20 August 2015].

<sup>86</sup> Cheryl Sterling, *African Roots, Brazilian Rites. Cultural Identity in Brazil* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 67.

Victor Turner's distinction between the liminal and the liminoid helps to explain the tension maintained in the show between the sacred and the staged, the invoked and the evoked, ritual and theatre.<sup>87</sup> Rather than aiming to produce a liminal situation by performing a socially-mandated rite of passage, *Bença* invites audience members to gather in leisure and watch actors conjuring up an environment waded with a variety of codes that are evocative of Afro-Brazilian rituals. As a liminoid event, the show does not intend to have a deeply transformative effect. Instead, it aims at producing a sense of *communitas*: a feeling of shared experience yielded by an encounter between actors and audience that is mediated by languages shared by Afro-Brazilians and those familiar with this culture. Such a feeling of common belonging is further augmented by the show's subject matter – its exploration of time as it is understood in *candomblé* and as it is lived by Bahian black elders.

I would claim that this distinction between the original liminal religious celebration and *Bença* as a liminoid event has been critical for the reception of the show in Bahia. The role of *candomblé* as one of the most important strongholds of Afro-Bahian culture means that its ritual signs and meanings cannot be adapted carelessly. Earlier unsuccessful attempts constitute real warnings. Notably, in 1983 the theatre director Antônio Jorge Victor dos Santos (Godi) staged *Ajaka, iniciação para a liberdade* [Ajaka, initiation for freedom], written by the *candomblé* priest Mestre Didi, the Brazilian film and theatre director Orlando Sena and the Argentinian anthropologist Juanita Elbein. *Ajaka* adapted an African legend for the local stage but it was soon discontinued as, according to Mestre Didi, 'it aimed to stage the *eguns* (the spirits of the ancestors in Afro-Brazilian creed), and this was disrespectful to the religion'.<sup>88</sup> Although most practitioners of black theatre in Brazil agree that utilising *candomblé* is a necessary requisite for making this genre, staging the religion's rites and beliefs is always problematic and requires a thorough consideration of adequate forms of adaptation for the stage.<sup>89</sup> *Bença*'s reception was strikingly different. The show has been praised by local critics and, most significantly, it received the approval of

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<sup>87</sup> Victor Turner, 'Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbolology', *The Rice University Series*, 60.3 (1974), 53-92.

<sup>88</sup> Douxami, 'Teatro negro: a realidades de um sonho sem sono', *Afro-Ásia*, 25-26 (2001), 313-63 (p. 350).

<sup>89</sup> Douxami, p. 350.

*candomblé* practitioners. Indeed, Rejane Maia, one of the actresses in the production, recounts the black community's reaction one evening in Salvador:

(...) did you come to the show on Sunday? Did you see what happened at the end of the show – that some people clapped [normally] and others clapped *paó*? Do you know what is *paó*? It is a *candomblé* greeting that goes... [the actress shows the clapping sequence known by *candomblé* practitioners].<sup>90</sup>

Lighting is another element in the show that helps its distancing from the source languages of *candomblé*. It also enables O Bando's cast to convey the weary energy of the elderly and avoid character portrayal. A series of static white beams angled vertically across an otherwise blacked-out traverse stage light up the actors' faces only partially. Like luminous patches, these spotlights gather around twelve Afro-Brazilian drums positioned along the two largest sides of the stage. Undoubtedly, the goal of this lighting design is not to render visible and individualise actors, but rather to create different focal points centred on the drums. Dressed in white and wearing no make-up, the actors' precise features are barely recognisable from the auditorium as they enter and leave these static spotlights.

Cell Dantas reflects on the reaction of an acquaintance of his after a performance:

'[my neighbour] said, "Gosh! Were you in the show? I didn't see you! (...) The thing is that the costumes look alike and everything is similar" (...). So, I suppose the spectator must find it very hard even to identify [our] gender'.<sup>91</sup>

Rather than aiming at representing particular people, the black bodies of the performers dressed in pristine white and moving around dark and bright stage-spaces evoke the aesthetic of old black-and-white film recordings. Adding to this aesthetic, black-and-white edited footage of the interviews with Salvador's black elders are projected on two large screens set at both ends of the traverse stage. Centre-stage, the floor provides a third blank surface to project these interviews as two inverted mirror images of the same footage. These three projection areas not only bring celebrated black Bahians into the show, they also break up the stage in two halves that mirror each other. In both halves,

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<sup>90</sup> '(...) você assistiu domingo? (...) Você viu o que aconteceu no final? Que algumas pessoas bateram palmas e outras "paó"? Sabe o que é "paó"? É uma saudação que tem no *candomblé* que faz... [a atriz mostra a sequência de palmas conhecida pelos adeptos do *candomblé*]. Quoted in Silva Lirio, p. 21.

<sup>91</sup> 'e falou assim: "Poxa, você tava lá na peça? Que eu não te vi (...). É que as roupas são parecidas, é tudo igual" (...). Então eu fico imaginando que para quem assiste não deve ser fácil identificar até sexo mesmo'. Silva Lirio, p. 171.



the same disposition of objects and lighting accentuates this mirroring effect: a centre-stage floor projection facing a large screen standing at the opposite end of the stage and, on the other two sides, a row of Afro-Brazilian drums meet the audience. Soon after, the three projection surfaces screen photos of well-known black Brazilian theatre actors as well as photos of the grandparents of O Bando's performers. The projections are sites from where living old people and the dead take part in the show.

I would argue that the show's scenography is the visual spatialisation of *candomblé's* conception of time. This religion perceives time not as linear progression towards an unknown future, but as the permanent influence of the past in the present. Influenced by the cosmology of the Yorubas – the Western African community that has impacted most in *Bahia* –, *candomblé* devotees believe there are two planes of existence: the *Aiê* – the present time and the realm of human beings –; and the *Orum* – the remote past, inhabited by the ancestors and the *Orixás*.<sup>92</sup> These are two parallel spaces constantly informing and influencing each another. After dying, human beings are reborn in this world, the *Aiê*. However, if the deeds and character of the dead are such that they transcend immediate family ties and influence a wider community, they rise above this world and become *egungums* – immortalised ancestors who live in the *Orum*. Being remembered by a community is what guarantees the dead eternity and continued influence on human lives. As the memory of respected ancestors was revered beyond their community of origin, they become *Orixás*, archetypal deities who live in the *Orum* and govern the destinies of each and every human being. Collective memory ensures the endurance of the past. And the past informs the present to such a degree that the *Orixás* are said to 'own the head' [*dono da cabeça*] of each living person. The devotees are thus instantiations of the gods. The outreach of the ancestors' power makes them eternal and divine. When the various Western African deities crossed the ocean – transported by their devotees' cultures and belief systems during the African diaspora –, their power of influence expanded. Ironically, as the enslaved Western-Africans re-settled in the eastern coast of the Americas, their forced migration further empowered their gods and culture.

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<sup>92</sup> Reginaldo Prandi, 'O Candomblé e o tempo. Concepções de tempo, saber e autoridade da África para as religiões afro-brasileiras', *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais*, 16.47 (2001), 43-58 (pp. 49-51).

Since, within this cosmology, memory keeps the past alive in the human present, the dead can affect human lives through the power memory has invested in them. When the *candomblé* devotee enters a trance state, her body becomes the support for the *Orixá* – it is transfigured into the form through which the *Orixá* comes from the remote human past (the *Orum*) into the human present (the *Aiê*) and dances her myths. In this sense, ‘the ritual trance repeats the past in the present in a bone and flesh representation of collective memory’.<sup>93</sup>

*Bença*’s traverse stage, divided in two halves mirroring each other, seems to be the spatialisation of these two parallel worlds – present human lives and the realm of the dead and divinity, which is kept alive through acts of memory. The actors practise the halved stage as if it was one, entering and leaving the spotlights as they dance and walk across both sides. The relaxed bodies of the performers interweave the two halves of the stage and activate the ecology of signs that make the dead and the living as well as the past and the present converse in the show.

The two elements that give *Bença* a certain structure and a sense of progression – the screened testimonies and the *atabaques* – are also the ones that structure stage space into two mirrored halves. *Atabaques* and video footage are the material support through which past and present are materialised as a mirrored scenography. In turn, the actor’s bodies – moving across the stage, filming the audience in real time, chanting, speaking, dancing – become the support for the energy of the elder. It is this general, abstract energy of the elder that activates interactions between past and present, old and young.

As the show begins, one of the actresses enters the stage, touches the floor and claims, ‘this floor here has an owner. pray to god and leave’. And then Valdina, from the screens, expands the actress’s live gesture, seemingly addressing both actors and audience: ‘Don’t think that when you are on stage, acting, you are alone. Of course not... Of course not. People don’t die because essence is eternal.’ And, a few minutes later Valdina explains, ‘Since they arrived beforehand, they are ancestors. We are the result of all that nature previously created that we only found [existing already]. And

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<sup>93</sup> Prandi, p. 49.

that time [the ancestor's time] is a time that exists today too. That's the quid of the question: that time which is ancestral is also the present time'.<sup>94</sup>

In contrast with the absence of well-defined live characters and performers, the elderly who speak from the screens are strikingly visible. Their faces appear in full close-up in the edited footage of their interviews, laying bare their every feature, wrinkle and gesture. Márcio Meirelles rightly refers to them as 'big talking heads' [*grandes cabeças falantes*]. In calm, suave voices they deliver brief comments on the consequences of old age in their own minds and bodies; on their hopes and fears regarding the lived experience of growing old; and on the ontology of time as it is conceived of in *candomblé*. Some of these short audio segments are repeated over and over again at various moments in the show until their reiteration acquires a cadence that overlaps the rhythmic pulse of the drums. These repetitive iterations intertwine the liveness of the performers' drumming and swinging movements with the filmed statements of these black elders as they bring the past into the liveness of the show.

Speaking from the screens are Valdina, whose position as *makota* makes her a close adviser to the priestess of her temple – the *terreiro* Tanuri Junsara –; Ebomi Cici, a storyteller [*griot*] of Afro-Brazilian myths and former assistant of Pierre Verger [the French ethnographer and photographer who studied the connections between Bahia and the West coast of Africa]; the composers and performers of traditional Bahian music Bule Bule and Cacau do Pandeiro; and Dona Doni, priestess [*mãe de santo*] of the temple Casa das Minas, from the northern state of Maranhão].<sup>95</sup> As Meirelles explains, the idea of screening this footage was 'to build a dialogue between the actors and these enlightened, incorporeal people – big talking heads. Time was there too; in the dialogue between the present moment of the time when those interviews were recorded and the now of the staging and the actors'.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> 'ARLETE: esse chão de aqui tem dono. chama por deus e vomhora. (...) VALDINA: Não pensam que quando vocês estão no palco, representando, vocês estão sozinhos. Claro que não... Claro que não. A gente não morre, porque a essência é eterna. (...) VALDINA: E aí, porque eles chegaram antes, são ancestrais. A gente é o resultado de toda essa natureza criada antes e que a gente encontrou. E esse tempo (...) é um tempo que é hoje também. Aí é que tá, que é o x da questão. Esse tempo ancestral é o tempo de hoje também', Meirelles, script, pp. 234-5, 239.

<sup>95</sup> Meirelles and Milet Meirelles, pp. 230-2.

<sup>96</sup> 'Queria construir um diálogo entre os atores e aquelas pessoas de luz, incorpóreas. Grandes cabeças falantes. Aí também estava o tempo. O diálogo do agora em que aquelas falas foram gravadas e o agora do palco, dos atores.' Márcio Meirelles, 'Tempo senhor soberano',

The actors' live performance converses with these recorded testimonies through a number of forms. As *Bença* is a show without individual characters, the actors deliver sequences with short dialogues, fragments of poems by Afro-Brazilian writers and *candomblé* songs. In one scene they may sing in Yoruba, 'Nanã issulê omonilê furajô / Furajô furajô / Afulalé furajô'<sup>97</sup>, honouring Nanã, the *Orixá* of fecundity, life and death. Later on, an actor speaking in Portuguese tells a story about this goddess:

Nanã, the earth lady who kills. Nanã, the earth lady who kills. Ogum [the god of war and metallurgy] was walking when he saw a fire field that belonged to Nanã. When he tried to cross it, he heard a voice: 'This field has an owner. Ask for permission in order to cross it.' Ogum replied: 'Ogum doesn't ask, he takes.' And he began to walk across the field. The flame instantly covered his body; it was a desperate struggle. When he managed to put down the fire, Ogum said to Nanã: 'You almost killed me. I wasn't able to cross your field but I'll leave bits of metal in this soil'.<sup>98</sup>

Another scene is only composed by the exchange of what seems like random remarks: An actor says, '[a]n image: a flame hill sparkling. Nanã. Fire is change.' And an actress responds, '[f]or some people, that moment is the final leg; oblivion. But no! To perceive that the world actually spins around and that everything returns so that it can get resolution'.<sup>99</sup>

An actress performing an old woman comments from the stage:

I wanted more time. The time that remains for me is little. I suffer from different illnesses and have already had three heart attacks. It isn't easy. I resist and continue to resist each blow...I don't want to die. If dying is rest, I'd rather continue living feeling tired. This is what my grandmother Boni used to say, may God rest her soul.<sup>100</sup>

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<http://bandodeteatro.blogspot.co.uk/2010/11/tempo-senhor-soberano.html>> [accessed 5 August 2015].

<sup>97</sup> Meirelles, script, p. 246.

<sup>98</sup> 'Nanã, a senhora da terra que mata. Nanã, a senhora da terra que mata. Ogum estava caminhando, quando avistou um terreno de lama que pertencera a Nanã. Ao tentar atravessar o terreno, ele ouviu uma voz: "Este terreno tem dono. Peça licença pra atravessar." Ogum respondeu: "Ogum não pede, toma." E começou a atravessar o terreno. Nesse momento, a lama começou a cobrir seu corpo, foi uma luta desesperada. Quando conseguiu se livrar da lama, Ogum falou para Nanã: "Quase me matou. Não consegui atravessar seu terreno, mas vou deixar pedaços de metal nesta terra.'" Meirelles, script, p. 292.

<sup>99</sup> 'LENO: Uma imagem: um monte de lama começando. Nanã. Lama é mudança. REJANE: 'Para alguns esse momento é a reta final, o esquecimento. Mas não! Perceber que o mundo realmente dá voltas e que tudo volta para se resolver'. Meirelles, script, p. 276.

<sup>100</sup> 'queria mais tempo. o tempo que me resta é reduzido. sofro de várias doenças e já sofri três enfartos. não é fácil. a cada um eu resisto e continuo a resistir...não quero morrer. se morrer é

And a fragment from a poem by Jônatas Conceição da Silva (Bahian writer and activist for the Brazilian black movement) is delivered live with the same weary, calm pace:

I offer you the remains of all that love of ours: it is the present I want to give to you (now, it is the best of me). Without eyes, ears and mouth, but with the best of me and the best of you: our disaffection. (...) I too was looking for you all around life. I was lacking your presence; lacking everyone's present which memory always revolves in search of permanent infinites.<sup>101</sup>

All these are sections from larger unities – a book of poems, longer scenes devised during rehearsals, complete *candomblé* chants and myths. Only fragments are staged in the show and they work like particles that accumulate one after the other, overlapping with yet other particles: repetitive electronic music, and the video testimonies which are also occasionally repeated. Live footage of audience members filmed by the actors on stage is also projected. Running through all these, like a guiding thread, the different drumbeats continue from the show's beginning to its end and mark a certain progression amidst the echoes of simultaneous repetitions of fragments.

These fragments of texts delivered live, the qualities of the performing bodies, the show's scenography, its lighting and costume, its screened recorded footage, and the live footage of audience members are the elements that create an ecology for the exploration of time in *candomblé*. The effect is one of hypermediacy, *i.e.* the presence and visibilisation of multiple 'acts of representation'. As Andy Lavender explains it, hypermediacy 'is not simply a question of the multiplicity of sources, images, or image systems. It is expressed through *simultaneity*: two or more sources, images, systems and effects in play at the same time in a shared ecosystem'.<sup>102</sup> This is precisely what *Bença* conveys – a simultaneity of sources that form an ecosystem. The show makes visible the act of representation by avoiding character portrayal, by having the actors filming the audience from the stage; and by screening the live footage of spectators watching the stage action. The show's hypermediacy – its staging of various sources at the same

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descanso prefiro viver cansada isso quem dizia era minha avó boni, que deus a tenha em seu bom lugar.' Meirelles, script, p. 264.

<sup>101</sup> 'O que ficou de todo nosso aquele amor ofereço-te: é o presente que quero dar-te (agora é o melhor de mim). Sem olhos, ouvidos e boca mas com o melhor de mim e de ti: o nosso desamor. ...também andei à tua procura pelos arredores da vida. Carecia da tua presença. Do presente de todos. Que a memória sempre revolve. À procura dos infinitos permanentes.'

Jônatas Conceição da Silva, 'Todo nosso desamor', in Meirelles, script, p. 252.

<sup>102</sup> p. 56.

time and its acknowledgement (rather than the erasing) of the act of representation – calls attention to O Bando’s craft and the twenty years of work *Bença* celebrates.

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In this chapter I have sought to demonstrate the ways in which Yuyachkani, Catalinas Sur and Olodum explore notions of time that run against modernity’s linear progression towards ‘development’ and ‘reason’. All three of these productions accentuate the key role of memory in any understanding of the present and the future. *Carpa Quemada* favours a look into the past as a way to tell Argentina’s early republican years from the perspective of those peoples who were left out of sanctioned accounts of national history. In *Hasta cuándo*, Yuyachkani explores the role of the past as an anchor to the present. Focusing on the unstable period that Lima underwent between the 1980s and the early 1990s, this production stages present time as a crisis: one that resulted from the failure of the Peruvian state to provide security, justice and equality to all the country’s citizens. In turn, *Bença* considers the blessings of considering time in ways that give priority to ancestry, community and old age.

In all these instances, social memory functions as a tool to comprehend how current representations of race, place and nation have been historically constructed. This way of considering social memory is also revisited by these companies in their explorations of space.

## Chapter 4

### Space

#### 4.1 The Community Club

[*El Fulgor Argentino, Club Social y Deportivo* (The Argentine Flare. Social and Sports Club), Catalinas Sur, 1998]



(Scene from *Fulgor*, Catalinas Sur's archive)

Eighty years of Argentine history, plus another twenty years of a hypothetical future, are staged in Catalinas Sur's *El Fulgor Argentino, Club Social y Deportivo* [*The Argentine Flare, Social and Sports Club*]. Beginning in 1930, the show's diegetic time moves forward within the same setting – the dance hall of a community social club. Time is a variable; space remains a constant. Over these years the dance hall is witness to a series of parties constantly interrupted by social conflicts and military dictatorships.

In choosing to present the country's twentieth-century history in a social club, *Fulgor* capitalises on the significance that community social clubs had in the constitution of the nation. Clubs have been important socialising and networking spaces in the country. For nineteenth-century European immigrants, they were ethnic and regional associations that facilitated their integration into the host country. In the first half of the twentieth century, clubs were sites in which the middle-classes actively disseminated a set of values regarding progress, education, culture and morality.<sup>1</sup> Today, membership to exclusive country clubs and residences in gated communities are important signs of wealth and social prestige.<sup>2</sup>

*Fulgor*'s staged club becomes a metaphor for Argentina. The disruptions to its social life stand for the political turmoil that the country endured through much of the twentieth century and the possible effects of not redressing current social inequalities. First premiered in 1998, the show has aged with the country, undergoing revisions to incorporate new significant events in Argentine life. In this section I examine its most recent rendition, from March 2010. Provocative connections are made throughout this production, illustrating a thread that runs through the so-called 'infamous decade' (1930-43) to the country's socio-political crises of the 1980s and 1990s. These are times characterised by political, economic and social volatility.

What local historians have called the 'infamous decade' began with a coup d'état to democratically elected President Hipólito Yrigoyen in 1928 – the first coup in Argentine modern history. Only two years after inaugurating his second term in office, a coalition of military officers and civilian aristocrats deposed Yrigoyen fearful of his progressive social reforms.<sup>3</sup> Thirteen years of a series of electoral frauds, economic instability, political scandals and general corruption followed. The army put a stop to this period through another coup and ruled for the next three years (1943-6). As one general ousted another, the country's instability was such that the first military president

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew B. Karush, *Culture of Class: Radio and Cinema in the Making of a Divided Argentina, 1920-1946* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), pp. 23, 29-30.

<sup>2</sup> For the evolution of gated communities in Buenos Aires, see Chapter 1, section 1.2, part A: 'Buenos Aires and Catalinas Sur'.

<sup>3</sup> Some of these reforms were the improvement of labour conditions for factory workers, the regulation of working hours, the creation of a state corporation for gas extraction (YPF) and a pension system for the public and private sectors. Thomas E. Skidmore, *Modern Latin America*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 255-6.



of the period, General Arturo Rawson, only lasted three days in office. Democracy returned when Juan Domingo Perón, himself an army man, was elected twice, ruling for nine years (1946-55). Then, after a military regime of three years (1955-8), a series of allegedly fraudulent democratic governments led the country while the Peronist party was proscribed from political participation (1958-66). During 1966-73, a military dictatorship ruled again, only to see Perón be democratically elected for a third term (1973-4). Having died in office, his vice-president and second wife, Isabel Martínez de Perón, succeeded him and was ousted by a military coup that would inaugurate the ‘National Reorganisation Process’. This was the period of almost eight years in which the army, claiming the need for national order and control, led Argentina into one of the darkest periods of its modern history: the political assassinations, illegal arrests and forced disappearances of the Argentine dirty war. Democracy returned to Argentina from 1983 but social and economic instability continued as the country had to default on its international debts and go bankrupt in 2001.<sup>4</sup>

The most iconic moments of these eighty years (1930-2010) are condensed into almost two hours in *El Fulgor*, with music and dance marking the pendulum-like rhythm of democratic regimes followed by military ones. Couples take to the dance floor to the rhythm of a *paso doble* when the club opens its doors for its first carnival dance in 1930. The years go by, fashion changes and the contrasting sounds of tango, twist, *bolero*, rock and *cumbia* animating the club members’ lives during democratic periods are constantly interrupted, marking restrictions to civil liberties during authoritarian regimes.

In this section I would like to examine what representations of the Argentine nation are challenged in *Fulgor*. Early in the show it is clear that one of its main concerns is to question the social exclusions that have pervaded Argentine society throughout its republican history. As the show begins and the chairman of the 1930 ball announces the entrance of the club’s authorities, we hear from politicians, public servants, teachers, businessmen, and a priest. All introduce themselves, singing to the audience from one of the two balconies on each side of the stage. They are followed on stage by their ‘faithful wives’, who make up the club’s Ladies Committee and – they explain – have

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<sup>4</sup> Skidmore, pp. 256-76.

the mission to preserve morality, organise the carnival balls, and keep the club's family-friendly atmosphere by forbidding alcohol, tobacco, loose women, gambling, and a refusal to tolerate unfaithful men. 'Undoubtedly – they claim – prohibition is the standard of this committee.'<sup>5</sup> The group present the Argentine middle and upper-middle classes, who often define themselves as descendants of the nineteenth-century Europeans that migrated into the country. They claim to be 'the children of this nation of self-sacrificing immigrants.'<sup>6</sup> Completing this depiction of the Argentine population, the working classes enter the stage at ground level. Dressed in carnival costumes they complain about their financial situation: 'There's no money; there are no jobs. Not even stale bread for a bite. Coming to this carnival was a tricky business.'<sup>7</sup>

This middle-class versus working-class dualism persists throughout the show as the years pass and government changes hands in a cyclical flow of military and civilian regimes. Special attention is given in *Fulgor* to the collusion between the middle and upper classes with the conservative sectors of the army that seized power from the 1930s, thus stalling the empowerment of the lower classes initiated by President Yrigoyen. When Juan Domingo Perón was ousted in 1955, this collusion was evident again, with the middle classes taking to the street in support of the coup that would give way to Argentina's Dirty War in 1976.<sup>8</sup> Depicting this alliance, one of the middle-class women from the club's Ladies Committee looks relieved when she sees a tank appearing in a scene that portrays the politically unstable decades following Perón's deportation in 1955. As she explains, the presence of the army represents an end to the chaos brought about by the aspiration of 'the masses'. She concludes: 'Finally the glorious Argentine army has decided to put things in order!'<sup>9</sup>

*Fulgor*'s depiction of a polarisation between the lower classes and the middle and upper sectors of society is not gratuitous. By the 1930s internal immigration, industrialisation development and economic growth from the last quarter of the nineteenth century had favoured upward mobility, consumer culture and the blurring of class distinctions.

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<sup>5</sup> 'Sin discusión, la prohibición es el estandarte de esta comisión'. Catalinas Sur, *Fulgor argentino. Club social y deportivo* (unpublished script, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> 'Hijos de esta patria de inmigrantes abnegados'. Catalinas Sur.

<sup>7</sup> 'No hay plata ni laburo. No hay pan duro pa' morfar. Fue un asunto peliagudo salir este carnaval'. Catalinas Sur.

<sup>8</sup> Karush, pp. 218, 223.

<sup>9</sup> 'Por fin el glorioso ejército argentino ha decidido poner las cosas en orden!' Catalinas Sur.

Thanks to internal migration, the population of Buenos Aires increased from 1.5 million in 1914 to 3.5 million in 1935. However, industrialisation and the newly emerged urban workforce it brought about did not introduce a more differentiated social stratification than the broad idea of ‘el pueblo’ (the people) standing in contrast to a landed oligarchy largely in control of the economy and the political field.<sup>10</sup> The local mass media constructed a different representation of the nation.

Indeed, in the 1920s, one decade before *Fulgor*’s historical point of departure, locally produced films and radio programmes faced with the necessity of competing for audiences with foreign (particularly North American) films and music, resorted to ideas of local ‘authenticity’. The media also embraced and disseminated prevailing fantasies of upward social mobility and consumerism. But they did so while simultaneously striking an ‘authentic tone’ that relied heavily on popular genres such as *sainetes*, tangos, and the thematic conventions of melodrama.<sup>11</sup> The Manichean vision of the virtuous, solidary poor and the selfish, immoral wealthy of melodrama had captivated the national taste.<sup>12</sup> As historian Matthew Karush contends, Perón and his wife Evita (herself a former radio and film actress) would capitalise on the Argentines’ inclination for this genre in order to gain the favour of ‘the masses’. They appropriated a melodramatic rhetoric and framed their political project in terms of the opposition between workers and oligarchs. In so doing, they indirectly influenced the production of a chasm between workers and a sector of the population that for the first time in the country’s history identified itself as middle class. Critically, such identification was constructed in order to differentiate the middle classes from the workers supporting Peronism.<sup>13</sup>

The old opposition of the oligarchy versus the people had given way to a new tripartite view of society made up of the oligarchy and two new clearly defined players. On the one hand, there was the working class, empowered by Peronism and identified with migrants from the interior. On the other, the middle class who, by articulating their

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<sup>10</sup> Karush, pp 34-5.

<sup>11</sup> For an explanation of the appropriation and adaptation of the Spanish *sainete* within Argentine culture, see Chapter 2, section 2.1: ‘Transnational Routes and the Limits of Hospitality in Buenos Aires’.

<sup>12</sup> Karush, p. 84.

<sup>13</sup> Karush, p. 216.

social status through a racialised gaze in opposition to the working class, positioned themselves as white and heirs to the nineteenth century project of transforming the nation's ethnic landscape through European immigration:

The Peronist plebeian masses had no place in a nation imagined as civilized, European, and culturally homogenous. (...) A middle class would preserve a good deal of what had been previously considered features of the whole nation but were now increasingly perceived as belonging to only a part of it.<sup>14</sup>

Peronism's appeal to the workers in the late 1940s and 1950s gave a new visibility to the social distinctions that had remained invisible through the promises of upward social mobility and economic growth of the 1920s and 1930s. Such distinctions acquired racial connotations very early in the process. Opponents to Perón's regime portrayed it as fascist, totalitarian and barbaric whilst positioning themselves as 'representing both civilisation and the whole nation'.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, when Peronist followers took to the streets in support of their arrested leader in 1945, they were called 'human scum' and a 'zoological flood' by conservative media and politicians, replicating the deep-rooted opposition of civilisation and barbarism present from the country's early republican days.<sup>16</sup>

According to local newspaper *Crítica*, the protesters 'offended the good taste and the aesthetics of the city, made ugly by their presence in our streets'.<sup>17</sup> They were referred to as a 'mob' whose protests could 'degenerate into *murga* and *candombe*'. The former, *murga*, is a street musical theatre with Spanish origins performed during carnival. The latter, *candombe*, is a musical form created by the descendants of African peoples in the Río de la Plata region. Allusions to these genres bring forward social and racial connotations for their links to the supposed frenzy of carnival and Afro-Argentinean culture. Even though these 'others' constructed by the media and the politicians of the

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<sup>14</sup> Garguin, Enrique, "Los argentinos descendemos de los barcos." The Racial Articulation of Middle-Class Identity in Argentina, 1920-1960', in *The Making of the Middle Class. Toward a Transnational History*, ed. by A. Ricardo López and Barbara Weinstein (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012), pp. 355-76 (p. 367).

<sup>15</sup> Garguin, p. 368.

<sup>16</sup> Kristin Ruggiero, 'The Legacy of Sarmiento's Civilization and Barbarism in Modern Argentina', in *Sarmiento and His Argentina*, ed. by Joseph T. Criscenti (Boulder, CO.; London: Lynne Rienner, 1993), pp. 1, 5. For more details on this opposition, see Chapter 1, section 1.1, part A: 'Argentina: Illusions of Whiteness'; see also Chapter 2, section 2.1: 'Transnational Routes and the Limits of Hospitality in Buenos Aires'.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Garguin, p. 369.

time were not necessarily Afro-Argentines, the fact that they were workers coming from the interior already racialised their social identity:

[T]he political stigmatization of the popular masses and the re-enactment of the opposition between civilization and barbarism (...) helped to consolidate some disparaging chains of signifiers, such as the one that began with Carnival and went through *candombe* to ignorant Negros or *malón*, savages and unrefined Indians. It is clear that in Argentine society poverty darkens just as a dark skin signifies poverty—if not atavistic backwardness or perversion.<sup>18</sup>

*Fulgor* grasps this class confrontation between the middle and the working classes in Argentina and amplifies it using the stylistic conventions of a number of local performative genres. In the tradition of *sainetes*' caricaturised characters, *Fulgor* depicts the manners of the popular classes through fixed social roles – the priest, the conservative politician, the factory worker. Even specific characters such as presidents and well-known politicians are not individualised. There is no need to develop particular motives and psychologies, as roles do not stand for the specific person they are portraying. Characters in this production work rather as signs for a broader political stand – as with the Peronists and the conservatives; or a social class – ‘the wealthy’, ‘the workers’; or a function within society – the army, the teachers, and the media journalists.

The show also draws on *murgas*. This is a choral genre, rehearsed and performed around the living and socialising spaces of the popular sectors – working-class neighbourhoods, social and sports clubs, bars and student unions.<sup>19</sup> During carnival, *murgas* humorously remark on the social and political events of the previous year thus channelling the voice of the popular classes:

In term of its more established symbolism, the *murga* embodies the people as king, divinity, or arbiter, the people making use of the word, expressing their concerns, desires, and struggles, upholding their own interpretations of social experience and the meaning of history.<sup>20</sup>

Stylistically, this is a highly codified genre where the performers parade the streets lining up in a fixed pattern – standard bearers (displaying the standard that identifies a

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<sup>18</sup> *Malón* is a pejorative term used in Argentina to refer to indigenous peoples. Garguin, p. 371.

<sup>19</sup> Gustavo Remedi, *Carnival Theater: Uruguay's Popular Performers and National Culture*, trans. by Amy Ferlazzo (Minneapolis, Minn.; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), p. 96.

<sup>20</sup> Remedi, p. 96.

particular group), a band, and the dancers and actors.<sup>21</sup> In *Fulgor*, when the working classes enter the club as a *murga* group attending the 1930 carnival dance, they adhere to these stylistic conventions, introduce themselves and parody the wealthier members of the club: ‘Here comes this *murga* to cheer you up. We’re all cultivated people. The club has a president who is a man of power. He can shout at anyone, but his wife shouts at him.’<sup>22</sup> Performance genres work in the show as markers of social class. In stark contrast with this defiant *murga* group representing the popular sectors, the club’s authorities and their wives wear elegant three-piece suits, dresses and hats, and sing collectively with a lyricism reminiscent of *zarzuela* and light opera. These music styles were popular amongst European immigrants until the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>23</sup>

This class opposition is embodied in the show in the sentimental relationship between Juan, a young working-class man engaged in union activism, and Irene, a middle-class girl whose family is scandalised by her romance with a ‘commoner’ and her rejection of the romantic advances of a medical student. For Irene’s mother, Juan and the club members from his social class are all ‘cabecitas negras’ – the racialised term that has become synonymous for both the Peronist worker and the immigrant from the country’s interior.<sup>24</sup> Employing melodramas’ recourse to stock characters and their exaggerated polarisation between rich and poor, the relationship between Juan and Irene brings to life the populist rhetoric ubiquitous in the country’s mass culture (radio and cinema) of the 1930s.

*Fulgor* also embraces stylistic traits from *circo criollo*, the genre popularised in the late nineteenth century around the Rio de la Plata region that fused pantomime, circus and theatre.<sup>25</sup> *Fulgor*’s stage was designed to be a transposition of the circular performance space of circus into the single-sided space of the proscenium stage.<sup>26</sup> The result is a

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<sup>21</sup> Silvia Pellarolo, ‘(De)Constructing the “New Argentina”: Popular Theatricalities in the Era of Globalisation’, *Latin American Theatre Review*, 35 (2001), 89-95 (p. 92).

<sup>22</sup> ‘Aquí llega esta murga que los viene a alegrar. Somos todos gente culta (...). El clu (*sic.*) tiene un presidente que es un hombre de poder. Puede gritar a cualquiera pero a él le grita su mujer’. Catalinas Sur.

<sup>23</sup> Raúl B. Gallo, *Historia del sainete nacional* (Buenos Aires: Quetzal, 1959) p. 30ff.

<sup>24</sup> Garguin, p. 358. See also Chapter 1, section 1.1, part A: ‘Argentina: Illusions of Whiteness’.

<sup>25</sup> Manuel Maccarini, *Teatro de identidad popular en los géneros sainete rural, circo criollo y radioteatro argentino* (Buenos Aires: Instituto Nacional de Teatro, 2006), pp. 15, 32. See also Chapter 3, section 3.1: ‘Re-versing Time’.

<sup>26</sup> Adhemar Bianchi, Interview by Michelle Nicholson-Sanz (Buenos Aires, March 2012).

rectangular performance space that faces the audience from two fronts. *Circo criollo* developed primarily in the provinces and came to synthesize the idea of the lower sectors from the interior of the country unified against the corruption of the political elite based in Buenos Aires.<sup>27</sup> The transposition of this genre into the theatre space of *Catalinas Sur* in La Boca adds another layer of meaning to the deconstruction of Argentine society in *Fulgor*; namely, the historical tension between Buenos Aires and the interior. In this tension, ‘the interior is subdued to a state of stagnation (...) under the control of an often small-minded political power that aims to manage culture with (...) its eyes set on Europe’.<sup>28</sup> The predominance of Buenos Aires in relation to the rest of the country has not only constructed a discursively racialised other through the figure of the *cabecita negra*, it has also set the agenda of what is culturally relevant, and it has done so looking at Europe for patterns and trends.<sup>29</sup>

The adaptation of the proscenium stage to introduce the spatial configuration of *circo criollo*, thus bringing to the show the regional conflict between Buenos Aires and the interior, is an effective backdrop for the relationship between Juan and Irene – the middle class *porteña* and the working class immigrant. The couple become a guiding thread in the show, binding together different epochs. The initial romance originally set in the 1930s then evolves to Juan becoming an active Peronist in the 1950s. His political affiliations become clandestine when Perón is exiled and his party is outlawed (1955-73). And he concludes as the husband of a Mother of the Plaza de Mayo when Irene appears on stage with a white headscarf in the 1970s.

As time progresses in this representation of Argentine social memory, the audience see how the return to democracy in 1983 – with all its potentialities and expectations – is met by the end of the decade with an economic, political and social instability comparable to that of the 1930s. *Fulgor* is particularly critical of the two consecutive terms in office of President Carlos Menem (1989-99). It depicts a series of vignettes that

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<sup>27</sup> Maccarini, p. 44.

<sup>28</sup> ‘El interior está sometido a un estado de letargo bajo el control de un poder político (...) muchas veces mezquino y que pretende manejar la cultura con (...) la mirada puesta en el exterior’, Maccarini, p. 8. For more details on the opposition between Buenos Aires and the interior, see Chapter 1, section 1.1, part A: ‘Argentina: Illusions of Whiteness’; and also Chapter 3, section 3.1: ‘Re-versing Time’.

<sup>29</sup> For information on cultural trends in Buenos Aires, see Chapter 1, section 1.2, part A: ‘Buenos Aires and Catalinas Sur’.

show how the regime turned politics into spectacle as it established connections to local media celebrities; gave impunity to the former leaders of the 1970s military regime; implemented an extensive neoliberal policy that led to the privatisation of state-owned companies (the national airline, the telephone services, electricity, coal, gas, subways and shipping); and, most significantly, precipitated the fall of the middle class, with unemployment increasing from 6.5% in 1991 to 12.2% only three years later.<sup>30</sup>

In these years *Fulgor*'s social club – a metaphor for the nation – is taken over by the new Argentine middle class who have benefitted from the agro-export and building sectors, while the lower classes, dancing and singing in *murga* style, call attention to the consequences of the 1990s shift in Argentina's national discourse towards modernisation and neoliberalism:

If this is the first world, I'd rather head another way. All the promises became hunger and grief. What happened? Do tell me! Unemployment cropped up and we sold the oil, the telephone services, the gas and electricity. Help!<sup>31</sup>

The urgent cries for help of the group point towards the aftermath of the country's 2001 bankruptcy, which made evident that the country had become politically unviable. But the upper classes in *Fulgor* take no notice of these urgent calls for assistance and the redress of the economic situation. On the contrary, gambling machines are brought to the club and it, like the nation, acquires the atmosphere of a casino, with coins flowing for those in luck. A blonde woman sporting shiny jewellery remarks to her friend: 'Who would have thought it, Susy? There's a casino in our dear club, like in Mar del Plata! SUSANA: Finally a game in which everyone can participate!'<sup>32</sup> But the show makes clear the intended irony: the club, like the country, has become an exclusive game since the late twentieth century, accessible only for those with economic means, political potential and social influence. Contrastingly, those lacking such resources have fallen between the cracks of this imagined community, becoming undesirable and invisible.

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<sup>30</sup> Skidmore, p. 273.

<sup>31</sup> 'Si esto es primer mundo, yo prefiero otro rumbo. Todas las promesas se volvieron hambre y tristeza. Qué pasó? Díganme! Llegó la desocupación y vendimo (sic) el petróleo, el teléfono, el gas y la luz. Socorro!' Catalinas Sur.

<sup>32</sup> Mar del Plata is a coastal city in Argentina that is popular with media celebrities, politicians and the upper classes. 'Quién lo habría pensado Susy! Hay un casino en nuestro querido club. Como en Mar del Plata!' SUSANA: Finalmente un juego en el que todos pueden participar!'



Indeed, if the unemployment rate was already worrying in 1994 (12.2%), by 2002 almost a quarter of the country's entire population was jobless.<sup>33</sup> As Argentine anthropologist Alejandro Grimson explains, the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s and its consequent hyper-unemployment produced 'a remapping of the city's urban landscape, around borders and "foreigners" and suspicious natives, who carefully guard their coveted terrain'.<sup>34</sup> Although Argentine-born, these new 'foreigners' have been estranged from the limits of the nation through sheer poverty. Three new social roles emerged from the failures of the country's neo-liberal policies: *Caceroleros*, middle class protesters who spontaneously took to the streets banging pots (*cacerolas*) in protest of their bank accounts being frozen in 2001; *cartoneros*, who make a living going through the rubbish in streets, recycling bottles and cardboard boxes (*cartones*) thrown away by the urban elite; and *piqueteros* (picketers), unemployed workers who in the mid-1990s began to blockade major roads and bridges in order to cut economically critical access routes as a means of demonstrating against the economic model and demanding work from the state.<sup>35</sup>

All these new social players demanded 'not to be "left out of society"',<sup>36</sup> but through different means and with varied degrees of agency. Whereas middle-class *caceroleros* and lower-class *piqueteros* do have some political influence (the former due to their social class and the latter due to their capacity to block out the right of passage of goods and people), *cartoneros* have no other capability than the impact of their sheer presence in Buenos Aires. Recycling the rubbish of the elite, they visit spaces in the city that are considered 'white'. In doing so, they cross the spatial and symbolic borders that have left them out of the nation's limits and their very presence there questions the fantasy of a European city in the midst of Latin America:

Within discourses commonly heard throughout the city, the *cartoneros* disturb the homogeneity of the urban landscape (...). [They] are often referred to as "negros" by the discriminatory common sense of middle and upper class sectors that racialize class differences (...). This racial discourse exposes the idea that the *cartoneros* are "invading" the capital and disrupting the European spaces of the city, which holds fast to the idea that it represents a piece of Europe in a

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<sup>33</sup> For data on 1994 see Skidmore, p. 273; for 2002, see Alejandro Grimson, 'The Making of New Urban Borders: Neoliberalism and Protest in Buenos Aires', *Antipode*, 40 (2008), 504-12 (p. 506).

<sup>34</sup> Grimson, p. 506.

<sup>35</sup> Grimson, pp. 506-9.

<sup>36</sup> Grimson, p. 512.

darker Latin America. While the *cartoneros* (...) range in phenotype and skin tones, it is simply their being out of place that contributes to their racialization as the darker invader into the lighter skinned domains of the Buenos Aires, European elite.<sup>37</sup>

*Fulgor* distinctly displays on stage the levels of agency and access to a public voice that each of these sectors of the population have. The demands to belong of *caceroleros* and *piqueteros*, and their sense of commonality – bound together by a shared sense of exclusion – are quoted when they appear on stage re-presenting one of the most iconic slogans from their joint protest of 2002 – ‘Picket and pot, the fight is one alone’. In sharp contrast, *cartoneros* never utter a word in the show. They cross the stage silently at interspersed moments in the thick of the country’s turbulent start to this century. Poignantly capturing these figures’ disturbing presence in the city, the actors walk slowly, pushing a trolley where they carry their cardboard boxes and their own children, little helpers in the enterprise of recycling the remains of the city’s wealth. Words would be redundant. Their mere presence already signifies a question mark to the ideal of transforming the country into an enclave run and peopled by descendants of Europeans – an ideal that has accompanied Argentina since its very foundation. Argentines who enjoy the status of fully recognised citizenship object to their presence with calls for security: ‘We are in fear. There are too many jobless and penniless poor. Too many drug-addicts and *cumbia*-fan *negros*. We demand security! Security!’<sup>38</sup>

The use of space on stage throughout the show signals the rigidity and stark class separations that Argentine society has come to acquire. From the very first scene, the audience see the middle classes moving freely around all spaces: two lateral balconies and the stage at ground level. In turn, the working classes of the 1930s and 1950s mainly occupy the ground level, with occasional trespasses into the balconies. The various excluded social players from the 2000s (*piqueteros*, *cartoneros*, and *caceroleros*) only have access to the ground level. The staged lived-space of the club as a metaphor for the country becomes a piercing reminder that a sense of belonging to a nation is critically determined by which, and how much, of the material and symbolic spaces are available for whom.

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<sup>37</sup> Grimson, pp. 506-7.

<sup>38</sup> ‘Tenemos miedo. Hay mucho pobre sin trabajo y sin dinero. Hay mucho negro drogadicto y cumbianchero. ¡Seguridad! ¡Seguridad!’ Catalinas Sur.

*Fulgor* asks these questions as it emphasises the right of all sectors of Argentine society to have a legitimised presence in the country. Towards the end of the show, in a scene set during the first term in office (2007-11) of the country's incumbent president, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, a group representing the Argentine people sings, 'Democracy, here we all are to defend you, which is more than merely voting. If change is yet to come, our country can't wait. Here we are, the Argentine people, attentive and alert.'<sup>39</sup>

The scene is particularly poignant because it is performed by non-professional actors: neighbours from both La Boca and other districts in Buenos Aires who make up Catalinas' cast. In performing the Argentine people these actors become signs that stand for themselves as neighbours-actors. In this role, they send this warning to the audience. All sectors of civil society must remain vigilant so the circumstances that led the country into a rhythmic cycle of democracy and authoritarianism.

#### 4.2 The Arcade [*Hecho en el Perú. Vitrinas para un museo de la memoria* (Made in Peru. Windows for a Museum of Memory), Yuyachkani, 2001]



(Scene from *Hecho en el Perú*, Yuyachkani's archive)

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<sup>39</sup> 'Democracia aquí estamos todos para defenderte, que es más que votar. Si el cambio recién va a empezar, nuestra patria no puede esperar. Alerta y atento el pueblo aquí está'. Catalinas Sur.

The art gallery of Lima's Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes (National School of Fine Arts) housed the first season of *Hecho en el Perú*. This publicly funded institution is located in Barrios Altos, a traditional and run-down neighborhood of the city's historic centre that has now become mainly commercial. Various small shops and arcades lie along the School's street, offering everything from cooked food to clothes, woolen yarns, fruit and fabrics. Car traffic is heavy and people squeeze into the crowded pavements where every so often sellers tout for custom. On this street, among small businesses and arcades cramped with stands, Yuyachkani premiered *Hecho en el Perú* on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2001 for a five-day run.

The troupe hired a 'jalador' (tout) in order to attract spectators into the gallery the same way these figures are used to capture the attention of potential buyers in these commercial areas of downtown Lima. Using a loudspeaker and accompanied by *chicha* music, the tout announces the show in an animated voice:

The cultural group Yuyachkani, in their thirtieth anniversary, presents... *Hecho en el Perú. Windows for a Museum of Memory*. My friends, Sir, Madame, come on in. We invite you to enjoy culture, my friends. Totally free! Let's watch culture, my friends. Culture is for everyone!<sup>40</sup>

In this section I want to examine the ways in which the group explores the arcade in order to stage Lima at the turn of the millennium. I will argue that the show's staged arcade allows spectators to negotiate their presences in a shared space where popular, non-sanctioned Lima is archived. In a city socially and spatially fragmented city lacking in public spaces,<sup>41</sup> *Hecho en el Perú* offers a common ground in which performers and spectators are confronted with the city's recent past and with the co-presence of fellow citizens in a theatrical configuration. I will first give a brief account of the transformations Lima had undergone by 2001. This will lead me to explain the main

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<sup>40</sup> 'El grupo cultural Yuyachkani, en sus treinta años, presenta... Hecho en el Perú. Vitrinas para un Museo de la Memoria. Amigo, amiga, Señor, pasen ustedes amigos. Les invitamos a disfrutar de la cultura, amigos. Totalmente gratis. Veamos cultura amigos, la cultura es para todos'. Yuyachkani.

<sup>41</sup> The scarcity of public spaces in the city will be explained in the second part of this section. For detailed studies on the topic, see Wiley Ludeña, *Lima y espacios públicos: Perfiles y estadística integrada 2010* (Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2013); Pablo Vega Centeno, '¿Dónde somos limeños? Explorando los espacios públicos de la ciudad', in *Lima, siglo XX. Cultura, socialización y cambio*, ed. by Carlos Aguirre and Aldo Panfichi (Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2013), pp. 123-44.

aesthetics that informs this production – *chicha*. Finally, I will analyse the ways in which *Hecho en el Perú* explores the arcade as a space of memory in order to archive the country's momentous 1990s from the perspective of Lima's popular classes.

### ***Troubled times***

The turn of the millennium was rather eventful in Peru. In November 2000, after a ten-year regime and three consecutive elections, President Alberto Fujimori fled the country. Stating he was traveling to Brunei for an Asia-Pacific summit, Fujimori, of Japanese descent, instead headed to Japan, from where he faxed through his resignation. The Congress refused to accept it and declared the presidency vacant on the grounds that the President was 'morally unfit' to govern. This was only one in a series of incidents that seemed to us, Peruvians, one more surreal than the next one.<sup>42</sup>

In December 1999 Fujimori had announced that he would run for a constitutionally illegal third term. Taking advantage of a legal loophole, in May of the following year, he won the presidential election amidst accusations of fraud by national and international independent observers. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2000, while he was being sworn in for office, university students as well as leaders from civil organisations and opposition parties attended a demonstration in Lima's city centre. What was known as the 'March of the Four Suyos' was an event that attracted around 100,000 people protesting against Fujimori's fraudulent victory.<sup>43</sup> The riot soon got out of hand as police contained angry marchers with tear gas and water cannons. Six security guards

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<sup>42</sup> The following summary of Peru's period between 1999 and 2001 is informed by the following sources: Ernesto García Calderón, 'Peru's Decade of Living Dangerously', *Journal of Democracy*, 12 (2001), 46-58; Catherine M. Conaghan, *Fujimori's Peru: Deception in the Public Sphere* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2005); Guillermo Jorge, 'The Peruvian Efforts to Recover Proceeds from Montesinos' Criminal Network of Corruption', in *Making International Anti-corruption Standards Operational: Asset Recovery and Mutual Legal Assistance*, Regional Seminar for Asia-Pacific, 5-7 September 2007, Bali/Indonesia <[http://www.baselgovernance.org/fileadmin/docs/pdfs/Bali/Guillermo\\_Jorge.pdf](http://www.baselgovernance.org/fileadmin/docs/pdfs/Bali/Guillermo_Jorge.pdf)> [accessed 16 September 2015]. The period has been widely documented. For more useful in-depth accounts, see also José Carlos Ugaz, *Caiga quien caiga* (Lima: Planeta, 2014); Sally Bowen, *The Fujimori File: Peru and its President, 1990-2000* (Lima: Peru Monitor, 2000); *The Fujimori Legacy: The Rise of Electoral Authoritarianism in Peru*, ed. by Julio F. Carrión (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

<sup>43</sup> Deborah Poole and Gerardo Rénique, 'Popular Movements. The Legacy of the Left and the Fall of Fujimori', *Socialism and Democracy*, 14 (2000), 53-74 (p. 53). *Suyos* were the four geopolitical regions that comprised the Inca Empire. In naming the demonstration after the *suyos*, the organisers of this march sought to highlight its national impact.

died from explosions that destroyed various official buildings, among them the National Bank. Later on, allegations sprung that the National Intelligence Service, headed by Fujimori's closer adviser, Vladimiro Montesinos, had orchestrated the explosions in order to blame the opposition for inciting violence.

A number of demonstrations against Fujimori's unlawful regime ensued. Almost every week Peru's civil society demanded the President's resignation. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2000, the whole country saw with their own eyes what had been alleged for years – that the Chief of National Intelligence Service, Vladimiro Montesinos, managed a corruption network that proffered bribes to opposition politicians as a means of 'buying' their defection to Fujimori's political party. On that day, a national television network aired footage of Montesinos handing over US\$15,000 in packets of cash to an opposition congressman. If Fujimori's support was already weak, this videotape scandal was his regime's deathblow. Two days later, he proclaimed the deactivation of the National Intelligence Service and called new elections for the following year, announcing he would not stand as a candidate.

Public convulsion against the bribes scandal was patent in the media and the streets. Montesinos went into hiding while Fujimori staged a campaign to detain his former right-hand man. Later it was revealed that this campaign had the sole purpose of distracting public attention so Montesinos could flee the country by sea. Nine weeks after the infamous videotape, Fujimori chose to remain in exile in Japan and presented his resignation from Tokyo. The following year, in June 2001, Montesinos was arrested in Venezuela and was later imprisoned in the same jail as Shining Path leader Abimael Guzmán.

The then head of the Congress, Valentín Paniagua, was sworn in as interim president. In June 2001 he established the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in order to investigate human rights crimes during the period 1980-2000. Additional videos were found, exposing corruption crimes committed by more than one thousand people among politicians, media owners, businessmen, journalists, judges, military officers, and public officials as high-ranked as the country's very Attorney General. All the recovered videos were recorded in Montesinos' office between 1998 and 1999. Such was the Intelligence Chief's compulsion to register his bribes – as potential

incriminatory evidence – that he allegedly possessed a thousand more videotapes that may have been either destroyed or concealed.<sup>44</sup>

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of December, three months after the commissioning of the TRC, Yuyachkani premiered *Hecho en el Perú: Vitrinas para un museo de la memoria* (Made in Peru: Windows for a Museum of Memory). This is a show that explores the idea of archiving the traces left by the last years of the decade under the Fujimori regime. Director Miguel Rubio claims that the concept of the piece sprung up when intellectuals and political activists were discussing the creation of a museum that would house documentation on the country's internal conflict (1980s-90s) as well as on Fujimori's corruption decade. The museum would be built in downtown Lima, on the same site where the National Bank had stood before being burned down following Montesinos' orders during the March of the Four Suyos.<sup>45</sup> The project did not come to fruition but Yuyachkani took up the idea of a memory museum and developed a show where such a place is set in an arcade. Playing with the double meaning of the word *galería* in Spanish – commercial gallery, or arcade, and art gallery – they staged six solo simultaneous performances, each of which was conceived as a window into Peru's recent memory.

### ***An overflowed Lima in the new millennium***

At the opening of the twenty-first century, Peru's capital was home to seven and a half million people, concentrating almost a third of the country's total inhabitants.<sup>46</sup> The city's population growth rate had slowly decreased after a period of dramatic acceleration that began in the 1950s.<sup>47</sup> The escalation of Lima's population since the mid-twentieth century was primarily due to an injection of internal migration that had

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<sup>44</sup> Jorge, p. 9; García Calderón, p. 49.

<sup>45</sup> Miguel Rubio, Interview by Michelle Nicholson-Sanz on Yuyachkani (Lima, March 2012).

<sup>46</sup> Themis Castellanos, Jaime Joseph and Mercedes Ubillús, *Lima: Ciudad cada vez menos pretenciosa* (Lima: Alternativa, 2003), p. 5

<<http://www.alter.org.pe/portal/investigacion/lima.pdf>>. Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (INEI), *Censos Nacionales 2007: XI de Población y VI de Vivienda* (Lima: INEI, 2008), p. 17. These are estimates for Metropolitan Lima in 2000. Exact information is not available. Population censuses closest to this period were carried out in 1993 and 2005.

<sup>47</sup> Comparing national censuses since 1940, the population had grown in the city at the following pace: 1940-1961 = 4.4%, 1961-1972 = 5%, 1972-1981 = 3.5%, 1981-1993 = 2.5%, 1993-2007 = 2%. INEI, p. 21.

gone through various stages. Rural migrants had thus left successive imprints on the city's physiognomy.<sup>48</sup>

Until the 1960s, Peruvians moved to the capital drawn by a growth in the mining and industrial sectors. A decade earlier, a policy of industrialisation by import substitution had attracted people from the provinces to urban centres. Such a model aimed to promote the incipient national manufacturing sectors through tax benefits and stiff import duties for similar foreign products. During this twenty-year period (1950-70), internal migrants in Lima inserted themselves in the formal job market, mainly within the manufacturing industry<sup>49</sup> and through domestic household work servicing the needs of the emergent middle classes.

However, by the beginning of the 1970s, economic development had stalled. A poorly led agrarian reform and a world economic crisis seriously affected state support for national industry, which had been subsidised through the export of natural resources and raw materials. In 1975, economic disaster was patent through inflation, redundancies, the flexibilisation of labour relations and pressures from external creditors. A new migration cycle into Lima started and lasted another two decades, until the 1990s. This influx was forced, marked by the violence of the internal conflict as well as by economic and political crises.<sup>50</sup>

The decade of 1990 saw Lima undergo yet another migration wave. This one was motivated by a deepening of the economic crisis as President Fujimori inaugurated his

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<sup>48</sup> Here, I am following a useful overview by Jaime Joseph *et al.*, 'Lima: "Jardín de los senderos que se bifurcan": Segregación e integración', in *Ciudades latinoamericanas: Un análisis comparativo en el umbral del nuevo siglo*, ed. by Alejandro Portes, Brian Roberts and Alejandro Grimson (México D.F.: Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas and Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 2008), pp. 303-67. For a detailed study (as well as a standard source of reference) on the subject of internal migration to Lima since the 1950s and how it reshaped the city, see José Matos Mar, *Desborde popular y crisis del Estado. Veinte años después* (Lima: Fondo Editorial del Congreso del Perú, 2004). This is a revised edition of Matos Mar's study first published in 1984.

<sup>49</sup> At a national scale, between 1908 and 1940 employment in the industrial sector increased at a higher rate than population growth. This tendency, however, reversed in the second half of the century. Carlos Contreras, 'Política demográfica, crecimiento económico y formación del mercado laboral en el Perú del siglo veinte', *Investigaciones de historia económica*, 13 (2009), 11-41 (p.25).

<sup>50</sup> For more details on the economic and political situation in Peru during the 1980s, see Chapter 3, section 3.2: 'Time to Abide'. For information on internal forced displacement into the capital, see Chapter 2, section 2.2: 'Witnessing Forced Internal Displacement towards Lima'.



first term in office with the so-called *fujishock* – which comprised neoliberal adjustments such as, among others, a further increase of flexible labour relations, more redundancies, and the privatisations of state-owned services (water, electricity, oil, and the rail network).<sup>51</sup>

The fast pace of urban immigration that took place between 1950s and the start of the new millennium caught an already weakened state completely unprepared to incorporate migrants into its formal structures. This situation led the new settlers to build a place for themselves in Lima, both metaphorically and literally. As Peruvian social scientist José Matos Mar has explained in his canonical study on the topic, Lima's new inhabitants devised routes outside the legal system in order to negotiate their way into the city's social, political and territorial structures. Employing their own rural cultural patterns, such as communal work and the support of extended social networks, the successive immigration waves into the capital exceeded the capacity of the state in what he calls a 'desborde popular' (popular overflow):

A state in crisis, unable to meet the needs of the masses, almost without interlocutors, with a serious power vacuum and a weak legitimacy, faces a people that question it and creatively develop multiple survival strategies, contesting and surpassing the established order, the norm, what is legal, official and formal. The state is under the pressure of the many who seek to obtain more participation in national affairs and in the benefits of modernity.<sup>52</sup>

The state's incapability to cope with the demands of, in Matos Mar's words, an 'Other Peru' – made up of rural migrants segregated since colonial times – produced a widely spread informal sector. Generally speaking, this sector comprises businesses with less than five employees who are not necessarily qualified for their jobs and are not entitled to social benefits. Functioning alongside the official economic circuit (that which operates within civil laws), this parallel activity is conducted either outside legality or at its borders. By 1986, 55% of Lima's total employment was covered by informal

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<sup>51</sup> The unemployment rate for Metropolitan Lima remained high in the period between 1980 and 2001: 1980 = 7.1%, 1985 = 10%, 1987 = 4.8%, 1990 = 8.3%, 1993 = 9.9 %, 1996 = 8%, 2000 = 8.5%, 2001 = 9.3 %. Joseph *et al.*, graph 7, p. 347.

<sup>52</sup> 'Estamos ante un insólito y espontáneo proceso de modernización. (...) Un estado en crisis, sin capacidad para responder a la presión de necesidades de las masas, casi sin interlocutor, con un serio vacío de poder y débil legitimidad; que enfrenta a un pueblo que cuestiona y desarrolla creativamente múltiples estrategias de supervivencia y acomodo, contestando y rebasando el orden establecido, la norma, lo legal, lo oficial, lo formal. [Se trata de una] presión de mayorías sobre la estructura del Estado, para obtener una mayor participación en los asuntos nacionales y en los beneficios de la modernidad.' Matos Mar, p. 19.

workers. In 1992 this figure increased to almost 59% and in 2001, when *Hecho en el Perú* was premiered, it reached 61%.<sup>53</sup> As such, more than half of the city's employment was generated by the informal sector. Lima at the beginning of the millennium was a capital growing as if of its own accord, without much state planning.

### ***A city in expansion (But where are the public places?)***

New houses were one of the first signs of the presence of internal migrants in the capital. Precarious constructions that still today dot Lima's peripheries, particularly the hills that surround it. Lack of sustained national housing policies<sup>54</sup> as well as the consecutive immigration waves the city has experienced have been critical for the way in which Lima has expanded since the 1940s. If in 1961 its agricultural area covered 532 hectares against 80 hectares of urban area, in 1993 these figures are reversed, with 105 against 507 hectares.<sup>55</sup>

Originally slums, over the years the newly built areas have become half of the six officially recognised districts that make up Metropolitan Lima. Migrants and their descendants adapted themselves to the city's geography (bathed by the Pacific Ocean on its Westside) and expanded its territory north-, south- and eastwards. Following a river's basin in each sector, they have built entire citadels through self-made constructions that were eventually recognised by the state. By 2004, 61.1% of Metropolitan Lima's population lived in these areas. Today officially called *conos*, these have been such economically and socially dynamic sectors that by 2004 their social composition comprised not only the lower classes but upper and lower middle classes too.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> There are two primary definitions for examining the informal sector in Peru. The traditional concept considers mainly the size of the business, whereas the so-called 'legalist' one considers a benefit-cost analysis for employer and employee within Peru's labour laws. For the sake of consistency, all the information quoted here follows the traditional definition. Jaime Saavedra y Eduardo Nakasone, *Una nota sobre la informalidad y el autoempleo en Lima metropolitana 1985-2000* (Lima: Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo, 2003).

<sup>54</sup> Daniel Ramírez-Corzo, 'Transformación metropolitana y exclusión urbana en Lima: Del desborde popular a la ciudad fractal', *Debates en Sociología*, 31 (2006), 107-17 (pp. 111-12). See also Joseph *et al.*, pp. 308ff.

<sup>55</sup> Joseph *et al.*, p. 308.

<sup>56</sup> Matos Mar, pp. 131, 135.

In spite of Lima's territorial and demographic expansion, it critically lacks public spaces; *i.e.* publicly owned places where people are brought together regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic class or ideology. Properly taken care of and fully opened for the citizens' use, these places can foster a sense of community and respect for difference, constituting democratic urban forums.

In a study published in 2006, Vega Centeno lists the few public spaces available in Lima and their difficulties.<sup>57</sup> Parks, for example, mostly function as scenic landscape or ecological reserves rather than areas where people can walk, play, lie down or eat freely. Either for security or for maintenance sake, behaviour in them is constrained with various council regulations that hinder making a meaningful appropriation by its users. Particularly in well-off neighbourhoods, such activities as playing ball games, having picnics and lying on the grass are forbidden and 'transgressors' are 'invited' to leave, especially if they are from the lower classes since they are often 'perceived as negative for the landscape'.<sup>58</sup> Lima's beaches, which run along the coast could offer more freedom of use but they have a series of inconveniences: they are not serviced by public transport, which limits its accessibility; they are mainly enjoyed during the three summer months; and, more critically, since the 1990s they have undergone a privatising tendency involving the concession of beach terrains for the construction and administration of exclusive restaurants, cafés and yacht clubs.<sup>59</sup> Transit in the streets, in turn, has been increasingly curbed with gates and fences. A practice that began as defence against the spread of violence during the internal conflict, it has now become a naturalised practice against urban crime.<sup>60</sup>

Other social spaces, clearly divided by social class and ethnic origin, are used in Lima. Wealthy 'white' residents usually gather in privately owned locations such as social clubs and shopping malls. On the other hand, in the city's peripheral areas (the *conos*), public places such as playgrounds and sports fields bring together only neighbours from

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<sup>57</sup> 'Lima: Espacio público y ciudad sostenible', *Palestra*, December (2006), 1-7.

<sup>58</sup> '[L]a presencia de personas de otro nivel social son vistas como nocivas para el paisaje'. Vega Centeno, p. 2.

<sup>59</sup> This is even more problematic in some beaches south of Lima, which are not officially privatised but in effect, entrance is restricted only for wealthy residents. For more details on this, see Chapter 1, section 1.2, part B: 'Lima and Yuyachkani'.

<sup>60</sup> For more information on restricted access on streets in Lima, see Chapter 1, section 1.2, part B: 'Lima and Yuyachkani'.

these areas, mainly multiple generations of migrants. But there are no spaces where people from different backgrounds interact. Such a spatial fragmentation not only reproduces Lima's rigid social hierarchies, it also hinders affective and ethical attachments to the city's public spaces. As Vega Centeno observes, people from the peripheries, used to a lack of social spaces for residents from all backgrounds, often perceive public spaces as 'no man's land' and do not commit to care for them. On the other extreme, the affluent classes often expect the council or some other public office to assume responsibility for such spaces.<sup>61</sup> The civic consequences of the capital's shortage of publicly owned places were visible in 2006:

Lima seriously lacks public spaces that allow for the identification of its inhabitants with their city. Spaces where they can exercise their citizenship by participating in the maintenance of the city's public places and making free use of them, as well as tolerating the ways in which 'other strangers' appropriate them.<sup>62</sup>

This deficit of public spaces not only decreases the possibility of exchanges among citizens of various social and ethnic backgrounds in the city, it also reinforces the social order that prevails in Lima. Architect Juan Tokeshi and sociologist Mario Zolezzi, both Peruvians, effectively describe Lima's social and spatial fragmentation. The upper classes, bilingual and well inserted in the formal economic sector and global consumption, live in protected communities. The middle classes, traders, professionals and public servants, often live in neighborhoods that aspire to be upper class. The popular sectors of the population, the majority and made up primarily of various generations of internal migrants, remain spatially and economically separated from the middle and upper classes and are linked with the city's informal economy. These three segments are 'like railway lines [that] never cross nor meet each other'.<sup>63</sup>

Such a lack of social integration was somewhat attenuated when citizens took to the streets during the start of the new millennium, demanding President Fujimori's resignation as well as the full exposure and prosecution of the corruption network.

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<sup>61</sup> Vega Centeno, pp. 2, 6.

<sup>62</sup> 'Lima adolece seriamente de una falta de espacios públicos que aseguren la identificación de los habitantes con su ciudad y, por ende, que ejerzan su ciudadanía. La podrían ejercer participando de su mantenimiento y haciendo uso libre de ellos, a la vez que tolerando las apropiaciones que puedan hacer los "otros desconocidos"'. Vega Centeno, p. 6.

<sup>63</sup> Juan Tokeshi and Mario Zolezzi, 'LIMA PARAquién / LIMA PARAdojas', *Quehacer*, 141 (2003), 1-8 (p. 4).

### *Political activism reemerges from its ashes*

Writing in 2004 – four years after *Hecho en el Perú*'s premiere and three after Fujimori's departure –, Peruvian sociologist José Matos Mar commented on the spring of political participation in the country:

A civil society is now shaping up at a national level. Similar to Peru, this civil society is still weakly organised, heterogeneous. It acts, brows and seeks to consolidate itself in its own way. It brings together indigenous populations from the highlands, the rainforest, Afro-Peruvians and other minorities, particularly [Peruvians of] Chinese and Japanese [descent]. It also mobilises impoverished middle classes, and emergent ones, teachers, university students, public servants, intellectuals, artists, religious leaders, and countless associations, labour unions and federations from all over the country. They all demand full citizenship, participation, strong institutions, authentic democracy, decentralisation, sustainability, justice, a true rule of law, a real national society and, above all, integration, identity and development as bases for 21<sup>st</sup>-century Peru.<sup>64</sup>

Citizens' political involvement was not new in the country as it had been relatively strong during the 1970s and 1980s, during the early years of the country's internal war.<sup>65</sup> In cities, however, the state's inefficient and weak response to the overflow of internal migration had built up a sense that law enforcement and morals were individual decisions.<sup>66</sup> Peruvian civil society was almost fully dismantled in the first part of Fujimori's decade-long rule. First, the President's aggressive discourse against long-standing politicians and their parties struck deep in the minds of an electorate jaded with successive regimes that had been unable to tackle the deep economic and political crises

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<sup>64</sup> '[S]e perfila una sociedad civil en el ámbito nacional, todavía débilmente organizada, heterogénea, como es el Perú, la que actúa, crece y busca consolidarse a su manera y estilo. En ella confluyen desde pobladores indígenas serranos y selváticos, negros y otras minorías, especialmente [descendientes de] chinos y japoneses, hasta sectores medios venidos a menos o en trance de emergencia, profesores, universitarios, empleados públicos, intelectuales, artistas, religiosos y numerosas agrupaciones, asociaciones gremiales y de trabajadores, confederaciones, federaciones, sindicatos y otros, de todos los rincones del país. Todos reclamando ciudadanía plena, participación, institucionalidad, democracia auténtica, descentralización, viabilidad, justicia, un real existencia de un real Estado de derecho, una auténtica sociedad nacional y, sobre todo, que exista integración, identidad y desarrollo como bases para un Perú del siglo XXI.' p. 129.

<sup>65</sup> Philip Mauceri, 'An Authoritarian Presidency: How and Why Did Presidential Power Run Amok in Fujimori's Peru', in *The Fujimory Legacy*, ed. by Carrión, pp. 57-8. See also Joseph *et al.*, pp. 325-31.

<sup>66</sup> Matos Mar, pp. 95, 143.

of the 1980s.<sup>67</sup> As a consequence, most political parties were stripped of their ideological foundations and their activities were primarily reduced to electoral periods. In turn, various independently-led parties emerged that, without any sense of continuity or clear ideological core, expire and are born with every new election.

Furthermore, the scope and influence of critical grass-roots organisations and labour unions were seriously depressed. *Comedores populares* (community kitchens), for example, had been paramount in the survival of destitute families especially during the economic crisis of the 1980s. These groups of people who work collectively, gathering ingredients and cooking for their communities gave visibility to various decisive social leaders. In 1996 these organisations benefited 5% of the country's total population and 7% of Lima's inhabitants. Taking notice of their influence, Fujimori co-opted these associations two years after his election by creating poverty relief programmes that had a significant grip on the resources *comedores populares* received.<sup>68</sup> Unions, on the other hand, were devitalised through the liberalisation of the economy and the privatisation of publicly owned enterprises.

Additionally, the Fujimori-Montesinos corruption web dismantled the judicial system, and the Congress, as well as the media. It has been estimated that the total cost of bribing politicians was around US\$ 300,000 per month, while the monthly cost for bribing judges was US\$250,000, and that of bribing television channels was more than US\$3 million per month.<sup>69</sup> The print media was also bought, particularly for Fujimori's 2000 campaign – between 1998 and 2000 they received US\$3,500,000.<sup>70</sup>

Paradoxically, although Fujimori's administration was instrumental in weakening civil society, the latter played a key role in his removal. Inarticulate riots without much impact had taken place during Fujimori's rule. However, between 1999 and 2000, after

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<sup>67</sup> For a helpful summary on the topic, see Francisco Durand, 'El fenómeno Fujimori y la crisis de los partidos' *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, 58 (1996), 97-120.

<sup>68</sup> *Comedores populares* were particularly affected when the government created the Programa Nacional de Asistencia Alimentaria (PRONAA – National Food Assistance Programme) in 1992. Although these grass-roots organisations still received financial help from NGOs and international cooperation sources, their dependence on the PRONAA's resources undermined their autonomy and community-based structure. Joseph *et al.*, pp. 329-30.

<sup>69</sup> John McMillan and Pablo Zoido, 'How to Subvert Democracy: Montesinos in Peru', Research Paper, Stanford Law School, 2004, 1-33 (p. 9).

<sup>70</sup> Jorge, p. 8.

the evident electoral fraud, various demonstrations and civic strikes (*paros cívicos*) took place in Lima and throughout the country. Labour unions, university students' organisations, war veterans, political parties, NGOs, women's and neighborhood associations and peasant federations, among others, took to the street chanting the slogan 'El miedo se acabó' (the fear is over). The broadcast of the first video showing Vladimiro Montesinos bribing a congressman incited almost daily protests. Political activism had made a come back. Well-established civic organisations advocated for freedom of the press and constitutional rights, and human rights groups campaigned on a national scale against impunity laws and for the full disclosure of human rights crimes.<sup>71</sup>

Besides these traditional organisms, a number of new civil movements sprung up seeking to destabilise the unlawful regime. Created by intellectuals, youth and artists, these movements played a decisive role rendering social outrage visible. One of these, Colectivo Sociedad Civil (CSC – Civil Society Collective) devised performative street actions as civic protests.<sup>72</sup> In particular, one of their interventions preceded *Hecho en el Perú* in bringing into Lima's collective imaginary the links between *chicha* aesthetic and the Fujimori regime.

### ***Enough already! Lima demands cambio instead of cumbia***

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2000, the year before *Hecho en el Perú* was premiered, Fujimori's schemes to remain in power for an unlawful third period became clear. During the country's first electoral round, international observers sent by the Organization of American States and the Carter Center stated that they could not back the electoral results, which favoured the incumbent president. A few days later, the CSC protested, filling Lima's streets with posters featuring the slogan 'change (*cambio*), not *cumbia*'.

The phrase made direct allusion to Fujimori's 2000 electoral campaign, which made

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<sup>71</sup> Poole and Rénique.

<sup>72</sup> For a brief history of this group, their aims and a description of their performative protests, see Gustavo Buntix, 'Wash the Flag: The "Colectivo Sociedad Civil" (Civil Society Collective) and the Cultural Overthrow of the Dictatorship in Peru', *e-misférica*, Performance and The Law, 3.1 (2006) <[http://hemisphericinstitute.org/journal/3.1/eng/en31\\_pg\\_buntinx.html](http://hemisphericinstitute.org/journal/3.1/eng/en31_pg_buntinx.html)> [accessed 12 September 2015].

blatant use of a musical genre called *tecnocumbia*. Coming to prominence in the Peruvian cultural scene in the late 1990s, the genre is a transformation of *chicha* music as it settled in the Peruvian rainforest. Adding Mexican and Brazilian pop to *chicha*, by the turn of the millennium *tecnocumbia* dominated the musical scene of the popular classes in Peru and neighboring countries, particularly Argentina.<sup>73</sup>

*Chicha* itself was already a blended genre. It originated as a distinctively Peruvian musical genre in the 1960s. Internal migrants and their children created the genre as they settled in cities, particularly in Lima. *Chicha* fuses traditional Andean rhythms of pre-Hispanic origins (*huayno*) with *cumbia*, the Afro-Colombian tropical music that was very popular in South America during the 1960s. *Chicha* musicians overlapped the nostalgic and melodic Andean singing style and repertoire with the faster rhythmic-based patterns of tropical *cumbia*, all performed with electric guitars and keyboards. The lyrics dwell on the difficulties of urban migration and range from nostalgia for country life to work and progress in the city, uprooting, love, sexism, alcoholism, politics and religion.<sup>74</sup>

Aiming to capitalise on the popularity of *tecnocumbia*, Fujimori commissioned a jingle for his 2000 campaign. Sung repeatedly in all his appearances, the so-called ‘Ritmo del chino’ (the Chinese man’s rhythm) made reference to the President’s nickname – which drew, problematically, on his Asian origins. Along with popular female *tecnocumbia* singers dressed in revealing brief costumes, Fujimori danced along in rallies aiming to portray himself as close to ‘the masses’.

Associated with Andean migrants in Lima, for the upper-classes *chicha* soon became a pejorative adjective to mean informal, unfinished, common, distasteful and opposed to sanctioned culture. The musical rhythm became a whole cultural phenomenon by the late 1990s, when the adjective came to be widely used in order to refer to a variety of cultural phenomena that have in common the combination of elements in ways that are

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<sup>73</sup> Jaime Bailón, ‘Vida, historia y milagros de la cumbia peruana. La chicha no muere ni se destruye, solo se transforma’, *Íconos*, 18 (2004), 53-62  
<<https://www.flacso.org.ec/docs/Bailon18.pdf>> (p. 61) [accessed 12 September 2015].

<sup>74</sup> Wilfredo Hurtado, ‘La música y los jóvenes de hoy: Los hijos de la chicha’, in *Cholonautas. Biblioteca Virtual de Ciencias Sociales*, 1-26  
<<http://www.cholonautas.edu.pe/modulo/upload/Hurtado.pdf>> (p. 5) [accessed 10 September 2015].



impossible to conceive for long-established *Limeños*.<sup>75</sup> For example, *chicha* food combines a number of diverse Peruvian dishes in one single plate. *Chicha* architecture is characterized, among others, by façades made up with such disparate components as uncovered walls (without plaster or painting) coexisting with some other walls covered with ceramic tiles, heavily adorned motifs and strong contrasting colours.<sup>76</sup> *Chicha* press, in turn, comprises various sensationalist tabloids with colorful covers and headlines in characteristic urban slang. In sum, *chicha* aesthetic is distinguished by the amalgamation of discordant elements in a single item in ways that are perceived by the middle- and upper classes as *huachafo* – incongruous, kitsch and in bad taste.

In the twenty-first century, *chicha* was already a distinctively urban boom, particularly related to a Lima overflowing with internal migration and Fujimori was seen clumsily trying to follow complicated *tecnocumbia* choreographies of his ‘Ritmo del Chino’. This was Lima in 2001, the year when Yuyachkani premiered *Hecho en el Perú* using a strong *chicha* aesthetic in order to perform an archived memory of the decade the country had just lived through under Fujimori’s dictatorship.

### **Hecho en el Perú: *Walking along Lima’s memory arcade***

The show was advertised with a large poster reminiscent of those used to advertise *chicha* concerts. Hanging at the venue’s entrance, the poster boasted large white fonts in bright shades of green displaying the event’s main details: ‘Yuyachkani. 1971-2001. 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Presents: *Hecho en el Perú*. School of Fine Arts Cultural Centre. 6<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> December. 5-8 pm. Free entrance.’

According to Yuyachkani’s director Miguel Rubio the decision to premiere the show as another arcade from the surrounding area was guided by a desire to stage a ‘human exhibition’, with pedestrians passing by, walking in and coming out as they wished:

We wanted a show that breathed in sync with the street and its transit. That’s what happened in *Bellas Artes* [School of Fine Arts]. People who come to

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<sup>75</sup> Juan Gargurevich, ‘La prensa chicha’, *Historia de los medios de comunicación* (2008) <<http://blog.pucp.edu.pe/item/24665/la-prensa-chicha-juan-gargurevich>> [accessed 10 September 2015].

<sup>76</sup> For visual examples of *chicha* architecture, see Jorge Burga, ‘Arquitectura chicha y arquitectura vernácula rural’ <<http://arquitecturahuachafa.blogspot.com/2011/05/arquitectura-chicha-y-arquitectura.html>> [accessed 15 September 2015].

Yuyachkani's theatre come with the intention of sitting down and watching a play. At *Bellas Artes* things were different. People came and went. We had street vendors coming in, as well as children and adults from all walks of life. Since the show was free, nobody was compelled to stay.<sup>77</sup>

Offering free entrance was a way to celebrate the troupe's thirtieth anniversary. This was possible thanks to a small degree of sponsorship from the Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (Institute of Peruvian Studies) – a private institution for the research and dissemination of social studies on Peru. Free entrance was also a chance to test the reception of a show whose format was new both for the group and Lima's public. The response they obtained from the audience met their expectations. People felt free to come and go as they pleased. Some stayed just for five minutes and looked uninterested. Others attended the show everyday during the five-day season and focused on one 'window' each day. Some audience-members attended as street vendors during weekdays and then, on weekends, came again dressed in their Sunday best bringing their families along.<sup>78</sup>

As spectators entered the front door of the School of Fine Arts' gallery, a *chicha* song that was very popular in South America in the 1990s, blasted at full volume:

My soul is consumed, my heart broken. Forgetfulness won't come to ease my crying. I drink because all my love to you has been in vain. You're the reason for my pain. Friends, bring more beer! I want to drink to forget. Friends, bring more beer so I can kill this pain.<sup>79</sup>

As if a party was going on inside the gallery, the tout keeps calling people in ('come in, friends, come and enjoy culture!') while this lively music with nostalgic lyrics sounds repeatedly. Neon letters spell 'OPEN' on a sign hanging in front of a closed black curtain. Behind it, music is even louder and neon lights are displayed all around a dimly lit large room. A disco ball in the middle of the room is further indication of an animated event. Yet, the people and objects displayed in individual stalls around the

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<sup>77</sup> 'Queríamos un show que respirara con la calle, con el tránsito. Eso fue lo que pasó en Bellas Artes. La gente que viene a la sala de Yuyachkani viene con la intención de sentarse a ver una obra. En Bellas Artes fue distinto. Entraban y salían. Entraban vendedores ambulantes, niños, adultos de los más diversos. Como era gratis, nadie estaba obligado a quedarse.' Rubio.

<sup>78</sup> Rubio.

<sup>79</sup> 'Tengo el alma destrozada, tengo el corazón partido. No me llega el olvido para dejar de llorar. Tanto amor que yo te he dado. Tanto amor y todo en vano. Por tu culpa me emborracho, es tu culpa este dolor. Amigos traigan cerveza, quiero tomar para olvidar. Amigos traigan cerveza, quiero matar este dolor.' Lyrics of 'Amigos traigan cerveza' by the Bolivian group Los Ronisch.

room give a very different impression. Similar to the many window shops and stands that lie outside in various arcades, the room harbours six stalls set in two parallel rows.

These are the *vitrinas* (shop or display windows) announced in the name of the show – *Hecho en el Perú. Vitrinas para un museo de la memoria* (Windows for a Museum of Memory). Each of them houses a member of Yuyachkani’s cast performing an action that lasts around forty minutes in a three-hour loop. In the room, all senses seem to be oversaturated, with the six performances happening simultaneously while the tout keeps calling spectators in, neon lights and the disco ball illuminate the place and *chicha* music keeps pounding.

The stage design of this piece leaves only four to five metres between the two parallel rows of ‘windows’ where Yuyachkani’s actors perform. Visual artist Jorge Baldeón, who is part of the troupe’s technical team, explains that the stage design for this piece responds to the desire to reproduce the feeling consumers have when they come to the arcades of this area of Lima. Music is loud and people yell, offering all sorts of products or hire touts who raise their voices calling crowded costumers into the shops. The narrow passage in *Hecho en el Perú* aims to make spectators touch each other as they walk and negotiate their way around. It also enables audience members to be part of a crowd of passers-by and avoid feeling self-conscious.<sup>80</sup>

Each ‘window’ bears a title announced on the show’s programme. ‘El Dorado’ displays Amiel Cayo – of distinctive Andean features – toying with the ways in which the figure of the native has been manipulated throughout the country’s history. Surrounded by coca leaves as well as Andean masks and textiles, only his head is displayed at the beginning. Enclosed in a crystal case, as if it were a piece from an ethnography museum, his face looks unaffected while a sign on the pedestal that covers the rest of his body states: ‘Amiel Cayo Coaquira. [Born in] Puno – 1969. Origin: Native Peruvian. Technique: Skin on bone’.<sup>81</sup> After a few minutes, this object-like figure comes out from his case and strips himself down to his underwear. With a cheeky sign saying only ‘69’ that hangs from his briefs, he becomes a sexy Andean male, enticing the desire and

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<sup>80</sup> Interview by Michelle Nicholson-Sanz on his work as visual arts consultant for Yuyachkani (Lima, March 2013).

<sup>81</sup> ‘Amiel Cayo Coaquira. [Nacido en:] Puno – 1969. Origin: Native Peruvian. Técnica: Pellejo sobre hueso’.

consumption of the tourist market. While then dressing himself as an Inca, a woman's voice announces in strongly accentuated English: 'Welcome to Cusco. Cusco has been called the archaeological capital of the Americas.' Before long, actor Cayo puts on an Andean devil mask and lifts his middle finger to the audience, revealing the satire he has been putting on of the ways his 'indigeneity' has been offered as an exotic 'product' for the foreign audience.

In another window – 'El Asesor' (The Adviser) – Julián Vargas, born and bred in Lima, plays Vladimiro Montesinos, Peru's head of intelligence service during the Fujimori administration. With a mask that caricaturizes the so-called 'Doc', Vargas puts on rubber gloves and carefully holds a female mannequin. Covering its face with a plastic bag, he cuts and fractures the mannequin into pieces and then proceeds to film and take pictures of the tortured 'body' while it lies on a bed. A television screen transmits his actions live, reminding the audience of the infamous 'vladivideos'. Passport-size photos of disappeared and tortured people hang on the wall behind. Among these photos, a small mirror reflects the image of spectators who have stopped in their tracks to witness this performance. Having their image reflected among these photos, vividly place spectators in the role of potential victims of the regime, and exposes the extent to which state violence had become naturalised during the 1990s. Withal, the brutality and crudeness of these actions are somehow eased by the risible mask and the occasional gestures the actor makes squeezing his own bulging belly, humorously showing the opulence and corruption of the regime.

One by one all six windows tread a thin line between the laughable and the deeply tragic. In 'Madre Patria', actress Rebeca Ralli performs the motherland. Invested in a white tunic and a laurel crown, she reads topical news regarding the democratic transition after Fujimori's resignation. When closing her news bulletin, she dresses herself in a kimono and, parodying Fujimori's privatisations and his posterior flight to Japan, she sings: 'For sale. Country with a view to the sea, water, electricity, telephone connection, and a large tropical forest. Incredible discounts, fabulous price reductions. It is sold populated by millions of individuals – docile, stubborn occupiers of its old structures. (...) Weigh, weigh your anchor, captain. So much I've heard about Japan that I'm looking forward to being there. Little Japanese lady, so loving and tender... I

will say, *sayonara!*'<sup>82</sup> Ralli's tableaux also includes Santa Rosa de Lima (Saint Rose of Lima), another figure that has played a central motherly and civic role in Lima. Canonised in 1671, Santa Rosa was the first Catholic saint to be born in the Spanish colonies and became the patron saint of the Spanish Empire in the New World and the Philippines.<sup>83</sup> She is also the patron saint of Lima, Peru, and the Peruvian police force. The succession of these images renders a multilayered Peruvian Motherland furnished by such conflicting aspects of the country's history as the patriotic symbol whose solemnity is undermined by the infamous acts she broadcasts; the Japanese lady who alluringly offers the country for sale; and an icon that brings to mind colonial Lima's far-reaching political and religious influences as well as the city's preeminence in the national Catholic imaginary.

'Piel de mujer' (A Woman's Skins) has Ana Correa exploring various female presences that have been instrumental in either shaping or undermining democracy. A miner's wife protests against her husband's precarious labour conditions; a laundress washes and hangs up red and white clothes reminiscent of the Peruvian flag; the female leader of a terrorist group shouts ideologically charged emblems while raising her fist. 'El Desembarque' (The Disembarkation) sees Augusto Casafranca – himself of Andean origins and a migrant in Lima – becoming an icon for the numerous Peruvians who had to settle overseas, looking for job opportunities and a sense of security they lacked in a country impaired by financial and political crises as well as civil conflict. Finally, in 'Mano Poderosa' (Mighty hand) Teresa Ralli performs Catholic and secular rituals and prayers from the country's popular imaginary, thus examining Peruvians' need to believe in something.

Fusing performance and art installation, these tableaux work as windows into the country during the 1990s. Director Miguel Rubio explains that the show was conceived as a space of transit, like the arcades one can find in a well-known street in downtown Lima called Jirón de la Unión, 'where you can walk along, do some window shopping,

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<sup>82</sup> 'Se vende país con vista al mar, agua, luz y teléfono; con extenso bosque tropical. Increíbles descuentos, fabulosas rebajas. Se vende habitado por millones de individuos, mansos, tercos, ocupantes de sus viejas estructuras. (...) Sube, sube tu ancla, capitán. Tanto me han hablado del Japón que impaciente estoy ya por llegar. Japonecita, cariñosita... te diré, ¡Sayonara!' Yuyachkani.

<sup>83</sup> Alejandra Osorio, *Inventing Lima: Baroque Modernity in Peru's Couth Sea Metropolis* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 136ff.

stop for a moment if you want, and continue your journey.’<sup>84</sup>

Jirón de la Unión is one of Lima’s main, and few, public spaces and a place that enables ‘multi-social encounters’.<sup>85</sup> Running along eight blocks, this pedestrian street connects two of the main squares in downtown Lima – Plaza de Armas and Plaza San Martín. It dates from the city’s Spanish foundation (1535) and in the late nineteenth century, until the 1950s, it used to host cafés, restaurants and shops attended by the city’s social and political elites. However, when downtown Lima stopped being frequented by the well-off, around the 1970s, Jirón de la Unión came to be occupied by less classy businesses, many of them located in various arcades, offering all sorts of products from medicines to food and clothes, and primarily attracting customers from populous districts.<sup>86</sup>

This is the ambiance that *Hecho en el Perú* wanted to emulate. I would claim that in a city like Lima, socially fragmented and with a serious lack of public spaces, the arcade staged in *Hecho en el Perú* offers citizens from all socio-economic strata and geographic origins a shared space where they could interact, exchange glances and negotiate their way around a common history. Furthermore, the show capitalises on the revival for political activism that was underway in Lima when it was devised and premiered. Putting spectators in the active role of pedestrians or passers-by in a street-like setting heightens their position as members of a civil society; that is, individuals bound together by their belonging to the same territory, laws and historical trajectory. Journalist Miguel Ángel Cárdenas, writing on his impressions on *Hecho en el Perú*, stresses the production’s capacity to integrate citizens beyond individual differences and needs:

If you subscribe uncritically to the bureaucratic and bourgeois idea that ‘my freedom ends where the freedom of others begins’, wake up (...) and urgently pay a visit to Yuyachkani’s new show. You will bite your tongue, your lips and nails all at the same time. You will shake your individuality before use; your heart will become a liquidizer without a lid (...). As you leave, you will not be able to refrain from the desire to write on the walls of banks, barracks and cemeteries: ‘Your freedom expands my freedom to infinity.’<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Rubio.

<sup>85</sup> P. 4.

<sup>86</sup> According to a study, around 90% of customers come from popular areas of Lima. Lucía Burneo Hurtado, ‘Construcción de la ciudadanía mediante el uso cotidiano del espacio público’ (unpublished master’s thesis, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2010), p. 90.

<sup>87</sup> ‘Si usted adscribe acriticamente la noción burocrática y aburguesada de “mi libertad termina donde comienza la libertad ajena”, despercúdase (...) y vaya urgentemente a ver la nueva

*Hecho en el Perú* enables a shared civil space for Peruvians. But, most significantly, it does so from the gaze of what sociologist José Matos Mar calls ‘the Other Peru’ – that side of Lima comprised by waves of internal migrants who changed the city’s geography, ethnical composition and economy structures. This is made clear particularly through the show’s set – a typical arcade from the now populous downtown Lima –, as well as the decision to traverse the piece with a strong *chicha* aesthetic. The aural and visual atmosphere created with loud *chicha* music, neon lights, the tout calling people in as if the event was a *chicha* concert, the poster advertising the show, all this captures the ‘Other Peru’ that has settled in Lima. Informal and *chicha* Lima is the frame, the gaze through which Yuyachkani chose to archive the country’s recent past in this performed museum of memory. It configures archetypical elements of the country’s 1990 decade following in a setting that gives primacy to the social spaces (arcades) and aesthetic (*chicha*) that internal migrants have created in the city.

Examining the concept of the archive, Jacques Derrida points out that it entails both a place of residence, a domicile, and the power and the law necessary to command that a certain body of knowledge is to be gathered and consigned into a single corpus that should be memorialised. Yet, as Derrida explains, the archive is more concerned with the future than the past. Archiving entails the promise that something will acquire its full significance in times to come. There is thus a certain ethical responsibility, ‘a responsibility for tomorrow.’<sup>88</sup>

Actress Rebeca Ralli recalls that the purpose of the piece was to encourage young people not to forget what the country went through: ‘We wanted to say, “This has happened in these last years. Do not forget. We have been governed by such a president

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creación de Yuyachkani. Se morderá la lengua, los labios y las uñas al mismo tiempo, agitará su individualidad antes de usarla, su corazón será una licuadora sin tapa (...). Al salir, no podrá reprimir el deseo de escribir en las paredes ocre de los bancos, cuarteles y cementerios: “La libertad ajena amplía mi libertad al infinito.” ‘Yuyachkani: Amnesias, insomnios, memorias y antimemorias. Exorcismo nacional’, *La República*, 22 July 2001 <<http://www.larepublica.pe/22-07-2001/yuyachkani-amnesias-insomnios-memorias-y-antimemorias-exorcismo-nacional>> [accessed 15 September 2015].

<sup>88</sup> Jacques Derrida and Eric Prenowitz, ‘Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression’, *Diacritics*, 25 (1995), 9-63 (p. 27).

and in such circumstances. (...) Here it is. It is now your responsibility.”<sup>89</sup> *Hecho en el Perú* is a call for remembering as an ethical and civic responsibility. The act of remembering and walking around the country’s recent past becomes an act of civic gathering, a politically and ethically charged event.

The part of Peru’s past that Yuyachkani chose to privilege in *Hecho en el Perú*, is composed by archetypical images of Peruvianness that the country’s government at the turn of the century would rather have erased from the public’s memory. A death drive, claims Derrida in ‘Archive Fever’, is what gives archives their reason for existence. The passion, the fever for the archive comes from the need to override a desire to destroy what the archive intends to preserve. The Fujimori administration not only aimed to destroy Peruvian civil society and its institutions but also citizens’ political participation. Through the ‘vladivideos’ it maintained a filmed archive of the ways in which it undermined the country’s public sphere. In choosing to consign for the future what the regime was determined to hide, *Hecho en el Perú* exposes in this show the damage produced by the ‘Fujimori decade’ and calls for a commitment to remember.

The configuration Yuyachkani give to this body of knowledge is eloquent. The show’s exploration of the arcade as a memory museum subverts official memory. It does so by privileging the perspective of Peruvians who have flooded into Metropolitan Lima, confronting a state that could not integrate them into its legal structures. The arcade in *Hecho en el Perú* becomes a hospitable space for the exhibition of an alternative archive, one that makes public the corruption and damage that the regime intended to keep private. Following a *chicha* sensibility, it offers a place of consignment, a gathering together of tableaux that goes against the grain of what is sanctioned by the country’s ruling and social elite. The audience works to connect these ‘windows’, participating in an active process of tracing, gathering and re-membering Peru’s infamous 1990s.

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<sup>89</sup> ‘Queríamos decir, “esto ha sucedido en estos últimos años. No te olvides. Hemos sido gobernados por un presidente así y en estas circunstancias. (...) Ahí está. Ahora esto es responsabilidad suya.”’ Rebeca Ralli, Interview by Michelle Nicholson-Sanz on her work in Yuyachkani (Lima, March 2012).



### 4.3 The Quilombo

[Zumbi, Bando de Teatro Olodum, 1995]



(Scene from *Zumbi*, Bando de Teatro Olodum's archive)

Zumbi dos Palmares was the last leader of the Palmares *quilombo*, a fortified community that sheltered runaway slaves in Northeastern Brazil between around 1672 and 1694.<sup>90</sup> *Quilombos* had developed as a form of protest against slavery in colonial Brazil as early as the beginning of the slave trade in 1575.<sup>91</sup> What was particular about Palmares was the timespan it endured despite being under permanent siege by the Portuguese, and later also by the Dutch when they invaded the Brazilian northeast in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Seven of the ten major *quilombos* in Brazil were destroyed by the Portuguese administration within two years. Palmares, on the other hand, survived as an autonomous state for more than twenty years. Repelling an average of one Portuguese expedition every fifteen months,<sup>92</sup> this marooned state dominated a considerable expanse of mountainous forest some thirty to ninety kilometres inland from the coast.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> R.K. Kent, 'Palmares: An African State in Brazil', in *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, ed. by Richard Price (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 172.

<sup>91</sup> Roger Bastide, 'The Other Quilombos', in *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slaves Communities in the Americas*, ed. by Richard Price (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 191-201 (p. 50).

<sup>92</sup> Kent, p. 172.

<sup>93</sup> Robert Nelson Anderson, 'The Quilombo of Palmares', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 28.3 (1996), 545-66 (p. 550).

Quilombos were made up of various peoples, from African-born former slaves of varied ethnic origins to afro-descendants born in Brazil. What tied this and other *quilombos* together was their desire to resist a slave-holding system, to have control and agency over their own labour, and to embrace political, cultural and social practices familiar to Africa.<sup>94</sup> In 1694, suffering the economic losses of a long sustained war, the colonial administration seized and destroyed Palmares and captured its leader. Zumbi was later decapitated, his head exhibited publicly as a means ‘to kill the legend of his immortality’.<sup>95</sup>

For contemporary Afro-Brazilians, both Zumbi and *quilombos* have become a metonymy for courage and resistance to the political and social structures that justified the domination of black peoples during colonial times. Critically, they have played a role in the ways in which Afro-Brazilians have sought to subvert how their identity has been constructed in the country: taking pride in the phenomenon of colonial *quilombos* and resignifying their enslaved ancestry from a position of subjugation into one of agency and resistance. Such a process of resignification became apparent in 1995, the year that commemorated three hundredth anniversary of Zumbi’s death. A series of celebrations took place, along with public debates on the slave past and the viability and legitimacy of implementing a policy of reparations for Afro-descendants. In this context, the Brazilian black movement<sup>96</sup> decided to change the commemoration of its National Black Consciousness Day from 13 May – the day Princess Isabel of Portugal passed the Golden Law abolishing slavery – to 20 November, the date of Zumbi’s death.<sup>97</sup> In choosing to honour Zumbi rather than the occasion that marked the abolishment of slavery, the Brazilian black movement shifted the perspective from which Afro-Brazilian ancestry had been memorialised up to then. Rather than passive beneficiaries of the colonial power, Afro-Brazilians chose to remember their forefathers as resilient agents of their own freedom, and officially acknowledged Zumbi and *quilombos* as core symbols for their civil rights movement.

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<sup>94</sup> Kent, pp. 176,188.

<sup>95</sup> Kent, p. 187.

<sup>96</sup> For details on this movement, see Chapter 1, section 1.2, part C: ‘Salvador and Bando de Teatro Olodum’.

<sup>97</sup> Araujo, Ana Lucia. *Public Memory of Slavery: Victims and Perpetrators in the South Atlantic* (New York: Cambria Press, 2010), p. 229.

O Bando also took part in the 1995 commemorations of Zumbi's death, premiering an eponymous production that explored the resonances between Zumbi's resistance and Afro-Bahians' contemporary struggles for urban land ownership. The show is set in a *favela* – present-day shanty towns whose origins go back to the time of the abolishment of slavery, when former slaves with few work possibilities and no access to land ownership built these precarious settlements around urban peripheries. The production shows a group of inhabitants from a *favela* in Salvador who have to build their precarious homes anew yet again after these have been destroyed by the police. These people are squatters in the land they occupy. Living in permanent fear of police raids, they find themselves constantly reconstructing their huts:

IARA: Not again! Look what they did to me. They destroyed everything. I'm homeless! For god's sake Nicolau, help me! They ravished everything. All is over! (...)

NICOLAU: What's happening here is that we invaded this plot that has no owner. Then here comes the building company saying the plot is theirs. They called the police who came and smashed everything for the second time around. (...) We don't have anyone to support us. The building company has money, the judges, and the police with them. Listen brother, I won't stay here; I'm off.

CHICO: It's true Nicolau that we don't have anyone backing us up. But how many times has this happened already? The police came and destroyed everything. And what did we do? We came back and rebuilt everything again. Now you say we need to leave? That's not going to happen, brother!<sup>98</sup>

Without legal land ownership, the group of settlers have no access to basic public services such as electricity and running water, and no support from the police and the judicial system. In short, they have no access to full citizenship. Their lack of recognition from the Brazilian state parallels the illegal status of runaway slaves during the colonial regime. This analogy, highlighted throughout *Zumbi*, emphasises the significance of land ownership not only in terms of civil rights but also in relation to the right to be recognised as a people who belong to a place. As part of a diaspora

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<sup>98</sup> 'IARA: Não! De novo! Olhe o que eles fizeram comigo. Acabaram com tudo, destruíram tudo. Eu estou na rua! Pelo amor de Deus, me ajude, Nicolau, me ajude! Derrubaram tudo, acabaram com tudo! NICOLAU: O que está acontecendo aqui é que a gente invadiu esse terreno que não tem dono, aí vem a construtora dizendo que o terreno é dela, chama a polícia que veio e destruiu tudo pela segunda vez. (...) A gente não tem ninguém pela gente... A construtora tem dinheiro, juiz, a polícia. Olhe, meu irmão, eu não vou ficar aqui não, eu vou embora daqui! CHICO: Tudo bem, Nicolau. A gente sabe que nós não temos ninguém pela gente, mas quantas vezes isso já aconteceu? A polícia veio aqui e destruiu tudo. E nós fizemos o quê? Nós voltamos pr'aqui e reconstruímos tudo de novo. Agora vem você dizer que temos de sair daqui... Isso não vai dar certo, meu irmão'. Bando de Teatro Olodum, *Zumbi* (unpublished script, 1995).

community that was forced to relocate from across the Atlantic ocean, Afro-Brazilians' challenge to belong is particularly difficult.

This analogy brings to the foreground some contemporary consequences of European colonialism in Brazil: the politics of colonisation involved in taking possession of foreign lands and resettling millions of peoples from the African continent into the Americas as labour force for the accumulation of capital and the strengthening of imperial power. In postcolonial Brazil, Afro-Brazilians live with the effects not only of the exclusionist colonial social system but also of the ways in which the abolition of slavery was carried out. As historian Ana Lucia Araujo points out, when the Brazilian state liberated around 750,000 slaves in 1888, it did not afford land, education, or employment to the freed men and women.<sup>99</sup> Slave owners did not receive any form of compensation either, but they were not marked with the social stigma of slavery.

In the twenty-first century, most of those forced to live in slums in the suburbs of Salvador are Afro-Brazilians.<sup>100</sup> In one of the most powerful moments in *Zumbi*, a resident of the *favela* addresses the audience in a calm, disappointed and saddened voice and asks: 'Where did you get the idea that we are animals?'<sup>101</sup> Then he turns away, abandoning the stage and leaving the question hovering in the auditorium.

In the remainder of this section I will focus on the ways in which *Zumbi* explores the resonances between contemporary *favelas* and colonial *quilombos*. Both are clearly spaces of otherness within the Brazilian territory – pushed at the margins of the city and the state. I will interpret these social spaces as Foucauldian heterotopias and will argue that when staged in *Zumbi*, they widen the Brazilian public sphere by bringing forward the voices of underclass Afro-descendants.

The production starts with an empty stage, harbouring only some Afro-Brazilian drums at the back. A voiceover is soon heard. As if coming from a radio broadcast, a male voice lays down the geopolitical context of colonial slavery:

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<sup>99</sup> Araujo, p. 211.

<sup>100</sup> See Chapter 1, section 1.2, part C: 'Salvador and Bando de Teatro Olodum'.

<sup>101</sup> 'De onde vocês tiram a idéia de que nós somos bichos?'. Bando de Teatro Olodum.

RADIO VOICEOVER: Since the sixteenth century thousands and thousands of Africans were enslaved by the Portuguese, English and Dutch in order to work in the newly discovered lands. In 1537, Rome blessed the move made by Christian Europe and issued a papal bull that turned African slavery into a necessary evil; since, being descendants from Ham [Noah's son], black people had no soul. The Vatican demanded only that Africans be instructed in the Christian faith and baptised – which was often made with a cross-shaped red-hot iron. Rome received a percentage of the value of every ship that entered the colonies. The African nations enslaved one another, moved by fratricide wars with no end; and the winners sold the defeated to traders. Tobacco and *cachaça* [distilled sugar cane] were the currency for the purchase of slaves. Whites encouraged these wars.<sup>102</sup>

This radio voiceover punctuates the action throughout the show. With a detached, formal tone, this male voice sounds as if he was recalling the slave past from the standpoint of official history. The story he narrates, however, is very different from the one told from the viewpoint of the colonial white elite. It is a story that defies that official narrative by highlighting the uncomfortable truths about the collusion of European empires in justifying the trade in, murder, forced displacement and subjugation of millions of Africans. This voiceover of the history of the defeated brings to the stage the colonial past and simultaneously functions as an alienation effect. Acting in counterpoint to the action in the *favela* in Salvador, the radio voiceover keeps the audience aware of the theatricality of the show: the fact that the *favela* dwellers are fictional characters utilised to comment on the status of impoverished Afro-Brazilians in postcolonial Brazil. Half way through the production, past and present begin to fuse into one another. This process begins with the *favela* inhabitants talking about the colonial past. One of them links these references to past history with the Yoruba belief that the past informs the present – one of O Bando's most favoured leitmotifs:

IARA: Do you think slavery is over? Come and spend one day in the *favela* and you'll see that nothing has changed. Sometimes I feel like I'm in the times of my great-grandparents or my great-great-grandparents, when the plantation owners ordered beatings and killings, and nobody could do anything about it! The only

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<sup>102</sup> 'LOCUÇÃO DE RÁDIO: A partir do século XVI, milhares e milhares de africanos foram escravizados por portugueses, ingleses e holandeses para trabalhar nas terras recém descobertas. Em 1537, Roma abençoou a decisão da Europa cristã expedindo uma bula que tornou a escravidão africana um mal necessário, já que sendo descendentes de Cam, os negros não possuíam alma. O Vaticano exigia apenas que os africanos fossem batizados – o que geralmente era feito com um ferro em brasa em forma de cruz – e instruídos na fé cristã; Roma recebia uma porcentagem sobre o valor de cada carga que entrava nas colônias. As nações africanas escravizavam-se movidas por guerras fratricidas e intermináveis e os vencedores vendiam os vencidos aos traficantes. A moeda de compra dos escravos era o fumo ou a cachaça. Os brancos fomentavam essas guerras'. Bando de Teatro Olodum.

difference is that back then slavery was declared: people knew they were slaves. Today slavery is closeted because they keep doing the same things: they invade our favela, beat us, kill us, and destroy our huts. They fire their machine guns to us ‘unwittingly’, and we’re still unable to do anything. History repeats itself, dude! Nothing’s changed! That so-called freedom remained only on paper.<sup>103</sup>

Then, by the end of the performance, the people in the *favela* start speaking as characters from the Palmares *quilombo*. The character of Chico, who defends staying in the *favela* and resisting the police raids, slowly acquires a second layer – he gradually stops speaking about Zumbi and increasingly speaks as Zumbi, the leader of Palmares. Similarly, Mateus – who from the beginning of the show tries to convince the dwellers to leave the plot where they have been squatting and negotiate with the local council over a move into a more distant and dangerous area where they have been promised property titles – becomes the legendary figure of Ganga Zumba. During the final years of existence of Palmares, Ganga Zumba had been the leader of the *quilombo*. Seeing that the Portuguese were determined to destroy the maroon state, he decided to reach an agreement with the colonial authorities and give them back the runaway slaves sheltered in Palmares in exchange for peace. It is this decision to negotiate with the colonial power that Zumbi rebels against, challenging the authority of Ganga Zumba and becoming the new leader of Palmares. In *Zumbi*, the double character of ‘Mateus as Ganga Zumba’ directly addresses the audience as if negotiating with them the conditions of the agreement:

MATEUS: You say that we transformed this place into a breeding ground for blacks. These are strong black peoples that have economic value in any sugar mill, in any factory. We transformed these lands into the most fertile lands of the region (...). If I let you, you will come and take everything from us. I don’t want this. I want to give and receive. I’ll give you all the blacks that run away and the ones that my men kidnapped. But no one touches the black people who were born in Palmares. I’ll give you some weapons and food sacks. In return, I want peace. (...) I have a wife, children and a home. The other blacks also have dreams and aspire to be happy. Where did you get the idea that we are animals?<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> ‘IARA: Vocês também acham que a escravidão acabou? Venha passar um dia na favela, pra você ver que nada mudou. As vezes eu tenho a sensação que estou na época dos meus bisavós, dos meus tataravós, onde os donos de engenho mandavam bater, matar, espancar e ninguém podia fazer nada! Só que, naquela época, a escravidão era declarada: agente sabia que era escravo. Hoje a escravidão está enrustida. porque eles continuam fazendo a mesma coisa: invade nossa favela, bate, mata, espanca, derruba nossos barraco. Bota metralhadora na nossa cara e dispara "sem querer", e a gente continua sem poder fazer nada. A história se repete, cara! Não mudou porra nenhuma! Essa tal de liberdade ficou só no papel’. Bando de Teatro Olodum.

<sup>104</sup> ‘MATEUS: Vocês dizem que nós transformamos esse lugar num viveiro de negros, negros fortes que significam dinheiro em qualquer engenho, em qualquer fábrica, e que fizemos dessas

Mateus' direct address to the audience, talking as if he was Ganga Zumba, persuasively brings forward the resonances between the illegality and marginality of colonial *quilombos* and the similar situation of present-day *favelas*. His reference to sugar plantations [*engenhos*] and factories [*fábricas*] draws attention to the contributions of Afro-Brazilians in building Brazil through their sheer manual labour. Within *quilombos*, the black population were able to re-appropriate their own labour force, as well as to establish forms of political autonomy and to freely pursue cultural and social practices originating in Africa. In this sense, *quilombos* were a spatial tactic that was transferred into Brazil from Africa. *Zumbi* hints at this as one of the inhabitants in the *favela* explains that Ginga, a female leader in Angola, had already defended her community by founding a series of stronghold posts that she and her people would abandon as soon as they knew of a possible European attack. Runaway slaves in Brazil transformed this mobile strategy into rather stable fortresses with a clear political organisation and an agriculture-based economy. A similar tactic is used today in newly built *favelas* to avoid police raids. *Favelados* [*favela* dwellers] build precarious huts because they are aware that they will have to temporarily vacate them so the police cannot make any arrests. After the police have left, they will return to the squatted site, rebuild their huts and live in uncertainty until the next police raid.

Arafat, another character from the *favela*, explains: '[in Brazil] blacks ran away into the woods, following Queen Ginga, and formed *quilombos*, *favelas*, squattings: Palmares, Dona Marta [favela in Rio de Janeiro], Malvinas [Bahian favela founded during the Falklands War]<sup>105</sup>. Arafat is stressing the roles that *quilombos* have played along history and across Brazil and West Africa: from being an African war tactic, they became a space of resistance against slavery during colonial times. By equating *quilombos* to *favelas*, he draws a thread that connects West Africa with the Brazilian coast, where present-day land conflicts are often racialised. Moreover, by referring to

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terras as mais férteis da região (...). Se eu deixo, vocês sobem e arrebetam tudo. Eu não quero assim. Eu quero dar e quero receber. Entrego os negros fugidos e os que foram raptados pelos meus homens, mas quem nasceu em Palmares ninguém toca. Entrego algumas armas e alguns sacos de comida e em troca disso tudo eu quero paz. (...) Eu tenho mulher e filhos e uma casa. Os outros negros também sonham, também querem, também desejam, também são felizes. De onde vocês tiram a idéia de que nós somos bichos?' Bando de Teatro Olodum.

<sup>105</sup> 'Os negros desembestavam mata a fora atrás da rainha Ginga e formavam os quilombos, as favelas, as invasões: Palmares, Dona Marta, Malvinas'. Bando de Teatro Olodum.

the *quilombo* Malvinas [Falklands], he brings to mind wider colonial geopolitics behind these Brazilian postcolonial struggles.

In this sense, I would argue that both *favelas* and *quilombos*, can be interpreted as Foucauldian heterotopias. These are, ‘counter-sites (...) in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted’.<sup>106</sup> Located at the margins of Brazil’s colonial and present-day legal systems, but also at the periphery of urban centres, both forms of social space have resulted from the process of pushing away Afro-Brazilians from the centre; that is, away from the state’s recognition of their full citizenship and their legitimate claim to belong to a place. As such, colonial *quilombos* problematised the ways in which the labour, everyday-life practices and bodies of thousands of Africans and Afro-descendants were controlled and commodified during the days of Brazil as a slave-holding society. Similarly, *favelas* problematise the perpetuation of social, economic and political structures that still place Afro-Brazilians in a disadvantaged position. Both *favelas* and *quilombos* act as photographic negatives of the political, social and economic structures which underpin the exclusions against black Brazilians in the country – their underrepresentation in politics, as well as in dominant television and theatre;<sup>107</sup> and the fact that unemployment and poor housing conditions are social problems most frequently suffered by Afro-Brazilians.<sup>108</sup>

Bahian geographer and black activist Rafael Sanzio Araújo dos Anjos has undertaken extensive studies of the social spaces of the African diaspora in Brazil, mapping the existence of contemporary *quilombos*, now inhabited by the descendants of colonial *quilombo* dwellers. Examining the intricacies of the struggles of destitute Afro-Brazilians for the recognition of their rights to land ownership and of their affective attachments to the territory, he explains:

Hence, descending from the African continent in Brazil, is still a century-old risk factor, a challenge for the maintenance of human survival, an additional effort for getting visibility in the dominant system and, most of all, it entails

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<sup>106</sup> Michel Foucault, Michel, *Of Other Spaces*, trans. Jay Miscowiec, *Diacritics*, 16 (1986), 22-7 (p. 24).

<sup>107</sup> See Chapter 2, section 2.3: ‘Re-routing Afro-Brazilian Identity towards the African Diaspora’.

<sup>108</sup> See Chapter 1, sections 1.2, part C: ‘Salvador and Bando de Teatro Olodum’.



investing additional energy for getting and maintaining inclusion. It is an ancient struggle against territorial, social and economic exclusion.<sup>109</sup>

These challenges faced by Afro-Brazilians centuries after the end of slavery, and the tensions with the dominant side of Brazil – its European-influenced community – have been particularly evident during recent initiatives organised by the country's Black Movement in order to memorialise slavery in public places. Salvador is probably the city that bears the most resonant traces of the slave trade, for it was the main port of entry for slaves into Brazil. However, it was not until 2008 that the first notable monument related to slavery was erected in the city and its subject matter was, tellingly, Zumbi. Depicted as a warrior holding a spear, the statue was an initiative of the municipality of Salvador, the Ministry of Culture and two NGOs working for Afro-Brazilian rights.<sup>110</sup> A year later, another monument honouring Zumbi was inaugurated in Rio de Janeiro, the Brazilian city with the second largest population of Afro-descendants. This latter monument shows only Zumbi's head; a powerful sign as the leader died decapitated, the Portuguese deciding to exhibit his head in public to prevent any future revolts and curb any attempt to mythologise him into immortality. In an act that speaks eloquently about the difficulties of coming to terms with the memories of slavery in Brazil, the monument has been frequently attacked with offensive graffiti demeaning Afro-Brazilians.<sup>111</sup> The historian Ana Lucia Araujo explains the ongoing difficulties of dealing with the memory of slavery in public spaces in Brazil. She cites the concerns of white Brazilians that these acknowledgements of the country's slave past could lead to the demand of more reparations for Afro-descendants.<sup>112</sup>

Within this context, O Bando's *Zumbi* can be seen as an intervention in the national public sphere that put the wounds of slavery under the spotlight. Significantly, this production was designed with a thrust stage that emphasised the various direct

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<sup>109</sup> 'Dessa maneira, ser descendente do continente africano no Brasil, secularmente continua sendo um fator de risco, um desafio para manutenção da sobrevivência humana, um esforço adicional para ter visibilidade no sistema dominante e, sobretudo, colocar uma energia adicional para ser – estar inserido. É uma luta secular contra a exclusão territorial, social e econômica'. 'Cartografia da diáspora África – Brasil', *Revista da ANPEGE* [Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Geografia], 7.1 (2011), 261-74 (p. 272)

<sup>110</sup> Araujo, p. 262.

<sup>111</sup> Diário O Globo, 'Monumento a Zumbi é pichado dias antes da Consciência Negra', 18 November, 2013 <<http://oglobo.globo.com/rio/monumento-zumbi-pichado-dias-antes-da-consciencia-negra-10807347>> [accessed 10 January 2015].

<sup>112</sup> Araujo, p. 256.

addresses of the show's characters. Either speaking as favela dwellers, historic personalities from Palmares or both, their confrontation of the audience with questions, facts or direct accusations put the latter in the place of the Brazilian population. By moving the drama forward into the public spaces of the theatre, the thrust stage physically brought the drama into audience's domain. During each of the show's performances, audiences were compelled to critically engage with the postcolonial aftermaths of slavery.

*Zumbi* is a production that not only interrogates dominant national discourses but also exposes the extent to which they have been historically, socially and politically constructed. This is especially the case with the use of a radio voiceover punctuating the dramatic action with historic facts throughout the performance. By staging the country's slave past within its historic geopolitical context and emphasising the acts of resistance of Afro-descendants both during the colony and in the present, the show rewrites the country's official history, helping to erase the image of the ancestors of black Brazilians as victims and reconstructing them as heroes and the agents of their own freedom.

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Through this chapter I have discussed spaces that are central to the ways in which Lima, Buenos Aires and Salvador have come to terms with their countries' 'Others'. In all three productions – *Fulgor*, *Hecho en el Perú*, and *Zumbi* – the retelling of history becomes a political act of remembrance and commemoration and a mode of thinking through communities' relation to place and space. I have claimed that by focusing on the histories of these port cities, these theatrical explorations enable unfixed considerations of place. Overall, I have suggested that ports are particularly fruitful for such analyses, as they constitute sites of arrival that look out, across the ocean, while lying within national borders.

## CONCLUSIONS

According to an ancient Greek myth, there lived in Attica a blacksmith called Procrustes. He used to invite passers-by travellers to spend the night at his house. He offered them an iron bed so they could get some rest during their journey. What these guests did not know, however, was that Procrustes' invitation had a hidden motive. If his guests were too tall or too short for the bed, Procrustes would use his blacksmith's hammer to stretch or cut off their bodies so as to make them precisely match the size of the bed.

Procrustes' method to force strangers fit into the bed he had made is comparable to the ways in which the elites in Argentina, Peru and Brazil carried out the national projects that they supported after independence in their respective countries. For these elites, the formation of their nation states was strongly tied to their being accepted by European countries as part of the Old World's idea of modernity. This idea implied, chiefly, privileging whiteness as a racial pattern and industrialisation and capitalism as standard economic structures. Elites in Argentina, Peru and Brazil assumed these ideals as the model against which the well being of their nations would be measured. The sectors of the population that did not fit such models were considered backward, lazy and undesirable. Furthermore, they were 'erased' from these countries' official history or marginalised in positions of subalternity. In Brazil and Argentina, natives were almost exterminated. Afro-Argentines were rendered invisible by not considering them in national censuses and not including them in the country's twentieth-century 'official' history. In turn, Afro-Brazilians, like indigenous peoples in Peru, were placed at the bottom of the social and economic hierarchies.

Incorporating these sectors of the population as citizens with full rights and acknowledging and respecting their own racial and cultural differences, would have hindered the national elites' positions of privilege. The cheap labour obtained from indigenous Peruvians and Afro-Brazilians was crucial in preserving the productivity and economic systems of Peru and Brazil. Decimating the natives settled in the Argentinean territory was also central to expanding arable land and thus building Argentina's role as an exporter of agricultural goods and cattle. Such social segregations were a legacy of

these countries' colonial pasts. Maintaining these sectors of the populations as 'Others' within their nation states facilitated the ordering of social and economic relations in ways that sustained these countries' national utopias.

The roles that Buenos Aires, Lima and Salvador played in the colonial and republican histories of their respective countries made them key spaces where these national utopias and the tensions they generated were played out. Buenos Aires came to epitomise Argentina's ideals of a white, European nation until internal and Latin American migrants called into question the city's identity. Doubts about Buenos Aires' European roots were again challenged with the economic crises of the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s that brought to the scene an impoverished middle class and the appearance of people 'left behind' by the country's neoliberal reforms. On the other hand, Lima's position as the epicentre of Peru's 'white' coastal elite – heirs to the advantages of this port's past as the former capital of the Viceroyalty of Peru – had to give way to new identities. The city received waves of internal migrants who transformed Lima into a place with a strong Andean influence, especially in the newly formed districts in the outskirts of this metropolis, where most of the population is of Andean descent. In turn, Salvador's position as Brazil's colonial capital and main port of entrance for the slave trade has made it the city with the largest Afro-Brazilian population in the country. At the turn of the new millennium, these three ports are still coming to terms with their hybrid identities, not fully able to incorporate their respective Others without racist attitudes or social and economic inequalities.

What I have aimed to show in this thesis is that Catalinas Sur, Yuyachkani and Bando de Teatro Olodum's work around the social memory of their ports of residence constitute alternative narratives to the ones privileged by their countries' elites. These counter-narratives expose the ways in which the utopias favoured in each country are not natural but historically and socially constructed. In so doing, these groups challenge the 'single narratives' through which such utopic visions have been discursively disseminated. They dispute the benefits of modernity as a homogenising project as well as the idea that grounds prevailing social and economic inequalities in the supposed moral, physical or mental incapacity of these countries' 'Others'. To sum up, the groups contest the idea that these 'Others' simply need to look forward to modernity to be fully incorporated into national citizenship. This would imply, for example, that Peruvian

indigenous peoples agree to incorporate their agricultural lands into large agricultural export projects or transnational mining, that Afro-Brazilians in Salvador and the working-classes in Buenos Aires agree to be displaced to the outskirts of the city in favour of processes of gentrification and growing initiatives to build gated communities that favour exclusion.

My use of Michel Foucault's concept of the heterotopia as my primary critical lens has various implications. Unlike utopias, heterotopias are real places that, as Foucault describes them:

[H]ave the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect.<sup>1</sup>

I would claim that Yuyachkani, Catalinas Sur and Olodum's explorations of Lima, Buenos Aires and Salvador constitute heterotopic spaces. The groups' re-enactment of critical events in the history of these cities simultaneously mirror and contest their wider national contexts. In other words, the companies stage their port cities as the product of their countries' national utopias while at the same time challenging these representations, subverting them by emphasising the ways in which these ports are also deeply informed by the racial and cultural imprints of those 'Others' left at the margins of their nations.

Foucault's explanation of the mirror as an example of a heterotopic place is particularly fruitful for my argument. The mirror, he claims, is a utopia insofar as it projects a reflection that does not exist. But it is also a heterotopia because the mirror does exist in reality. A very particular experience is enabled through mirrors, one in which I am able to see a full-body image of myself there where I am not. Foucault describes the experience in the following terms:

From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Michel Foucault, 'Of *Other Spaces*', trans. by Jay Miscowiec, *Diacritics* 16 (1986), 22-7 (p. 24).

<sup>2</sup> Foucault, p. 24

I would argue that this experience enabled by the mirror as a heterotopic space is similar to the effect of the work of Yuyachkani, Catalinas Sur and Olodum in their national contexts. By staging the histories of their port cities and the ‘Others’ within these cities, these theatre companies put in the public space images of these ‘Others’ that challenge the Procrustean racial and social standards that the Peruvian, Argentinean and Brazilian elites have privileged throughout their postcolonial eras. These theatrical counter-narratives enable citizens in these countries to look at their nations with a new gaze, one that allows them to consider the need to incorporate alterity within national borders.

Furthermore, I believe that heterotopia is as productive methodological tool for considering the work of theatre groups whose aim is to effect a positive impact in their communities. The concept of utopia is often employed to examine such theatre praxes, as theatre groups themselves frequently describe their work as utopic. This is also the case for the companies studied here: the three of them claim that they seek to achieve utopias of social justice and racial equality. However, they also believe that their work does achieve these goals in reality: not through quantifiable means of measuring efficacy but through keeping alive social memory and the presence of those otherwise rendered invisible. Thus, Catalinas Sur in all their productions speaks of keeping the flame of memory alive. Olodum similarly heightens the idea of being aware that history repeats itself, that slavery is not something rooted in the past but is present in the day-to-day treatment of Afro-Brazilians. In turn, Yuyachkani’s very name – ‘I am thinking, I am remembering’ – emphasises their aim to stage memory as a tool that maintains a counter-discourse. I would claim that the methodological benefit of using the concept of heterotopia in order to examine political theatre is that, unlike the idea of utopia, heterotopia allows room for the analysis of how these theatrical enterprises can be actually achieved.

Writing on applied theatre, James Thompson has suggested that researchers need to move beyond the requirement to provide ‘hard evidence’ to support claims on theatre’s impact. Instead, he claims, the analysis of these praxes needs to stress the genre’s ability to empower segregated communities through the restorative qualities of affects and the

aesthetic.<sup>3</sup> I agree that the move towards affects and the aesthetic in the assessment of political theatre's efficacy is central. Especially in cases in which affects animate claims of place belonging, it is important to consider what kinds of affects are mobilised through the theatre, for what purposes and with what degree of success. I believe that heterotopias as an analytical tool favour this kind of examination. The concept of the heterotopia as a space of alterity related to all other surrounding sites by its capacity to subvert and suspect its wider context allows for an examination of efficacy that positions theatrical aesthetics and discourses as counter-narratives within their historical and politic contexts.

Regarding the explorations of Yuyachkani, Catalinas Sur and Olodum of the hybridity of their port cities, throughout this thesis I have tried to demonstrate that the concept of the heterotopia favours a double analysis: that of the nature of these companies' dramaturgical languages, and that of the contents of their counter-narratives. I shall elaborate both ideas and their implications for the study of theatre in what remains of this section.

### *Heterotopias of language*

Heterotopias, Foucault claims, have the capacity to juxtapose, in a single real place, various sites that are otherwise incompatible.<sup>4</sup> Expanding this idea further in his essay on the paintings of René Magritte, *This is not a Pipe*, Foucault distinguishes between two modes of understanding the relationship between a depiction and the object of this depiction: resemblance and similitude.<sup>5</sup> Resemblance is the language of figurative painting and realism, aiming to achieve verisimilitude with the real-life object it depicts. Here, the referent is fixed. The painting of a pipe, for example, would intend to be a copy of a real pipe. On the other hand, similitude offers a different relationship between the signifier – a painting of a pipe – and its referent – a real pipe. Challenging realism, similitude privileges a relation of juxtaposition among signifiers. Achieving a bricolage effect, things more or less similar to one another are placed next to each other, without

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<sup>3</sup> *Performance affects: Applied theatre and the end of effect*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Foucault, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Michel Foucault, *This is Not a Pipe*, trans. James Harkness (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

one being the model for the rest. In this way, similitude prioritises a lateral relationship among signifiers in which the referent – the real thing depicted – cannot be easily fixed.

I would claim that the dramaturgical languages elaborated by Yuyachkani, Catalinas Sur and Olodum are heterotopic languages of similitude. Their aesthetics juxtapose a number of different performative traditions in the single space of the stage, creating with these fragments a larger order of cultural elements that emphasises their ‘dis-order’. In this re-arrangement, cultural fragments seem to be ‘out of place’ insofar as they are not quite what they ‘normally’ are.

A good case in point is the character of the Qolla in Yuyachkani’s *Adiós Ayacucho* (Farewell Ayacucho). The show stages a Qolla, but not quite. On stage, he is a lone character while in fiestas the Qolla are a people, performed through a *comparsa* – a group of around fifteen dancers all dressed alike and singing at unison as part of a religious ritual. Furthermore, Yuyachkani’s production places the character of the Qolla next to other cultural traditions: the Andean ritual of carrying out wakes using an arrangement of the dead person’s clothes, and the Andean music played by the character of the woman who witnesses the Qolla’s testimony from a corner of the stage. Similarly, *Hasta cuándo corazón* (Until when my Heart) explores tensions between the coast and the Andes by placing side by side creole music – which epitomises ‘coastal Lima’ – with the Andean *danza de tijeras* (scissors’ dancing). *Hecho en el Perú* (Made in Peru) offers a juxtaposition of *tecnocumbia* – a tropical musical form – with chicha aesthetic and performance art.

In turn, Catalinas Sur in *Venimos* (We come from Afar) uses an arrange of *sainete criollo*, *murga* and puppets. *Carpa* (Scorched Tent) displays all these genres and add *circo criollo*, while *Fulgor* further adds melodrama to this ‘dis-order’. Olodum places liminoid renditions of *candomblé* alongside with video screenings in *Bença*. In *Zumbi*, they bring *capoeira* and Afro-Brazilian drumming to the stage; and in *Áfricas*, *candomblé* myths sit side by side with Afro-Brazilian drums and with the West-African tradition of the *griot* (the troubadour).

These languages of similitude unfix the referents attached to these traditions out of the theatre. Adapted for the stage, these cultural fragments are no longer properly



*candomblé* or Qolla or *capoeira* or *circo criollo* or *sainete criollo*. They are part of a new ‘dis-order’ which unfixes their origins, thus challenging essential identities. At the same time, in this new arrangement these cultural fragments still retain enough characteristics of their ‘normal’ use, so that it can be identifiable when staged. In this way, they can mobilise affects in relation to the sectors of the populations whose presences they seek to bring forward: Andean peoples, Afro-Brazilians, and the lower- and working classes in Buenos Aires.

This use of performative traditions pertaining predominantly to subaltern populations in order to raise an awareness of their marginal status is not free from tensions. I want to focus now on one specific issue: the controversial question of the perils of speaking for an ‘Other’. To what extent are these counter-narratives of national utopias inadvertently silencing those Others whose marginality they seek to redress?

Catalinas Sur is perhaps the less problematic of these case studies as they use traditions that are ‘their own’. Most of the groups’ members are middle- or working-class descendants of Europeans for whom *circo criollo*, *sainete criollo*, *murga* and puppets are part of their cultural ‘heritage’. The company has privileged these genres because they have become local to La Boca. Yuyachkani, on the other hand, are a troupe of eight actors of different ethnic backgrounds, two of whom were born in the Andes (Augusto Casafranca and Amiel Cayo). The troupe explains that after the public hearings carried out by the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, they decided to turn to ways of exploring *presentation* rather than *representation*. During these hearings, the victims of the civil war were able to speak for themselves and what they had to tell surpassed any attempt at representation. In turn, Olodum’s, cast made up entirely of Afro-Brazilian actors, speak about the problems they face in Salvador and Brazil. The Afro-Brazilian traditions they explore on the stage are largely their own. However, the two artistic directors of the group are white and middle-class. I would argue that Olodum understands race as a discourse, a stance, a social construction as well as a question of physical appearance that marks Afro-Bahians’ everyday life. This is what the actors claim when they explain their work with Márcio Ceirelles and Chica Carelli; *i.e.* that by assuming a discourse in favour of redressing inequalities against Afro-Brazilians, these directors frame themselves as black. Identity, in their case, is grounded in discourse. This was further reinforced by the troupe’s decision to give free entrance to audience

members who claimed they were black (regardless of their actual racial features) during the premiere of *Cabaré de Rrrrrraça*. This choice proved highly controversial in a country whose intellectual, social and political elites have sought to eliminate the idea of race under the guise of *mestiçagem*. Olodum's work, like that of Catalinas Sur and Yuyachkani, has aimed to counter such narratives with alternative ones.

### *Heterotopias of place*

Engaging with the histories of Lima, Buenos Aires and Salvador, these theatre groups use the stage in order to put forward, in their countries' public spheres, notions of time and space that challenge their elites' Procrustean standards of modernity.

Catalinas Sur's *Carpa Quemada* explores national time as registered in sanctioned history in order to expose the constructed nature of this single narrative and the social players who have benefited from it. In so doing, it re-verses time in the sense that goes back in time to the event of Argentina's foundation, seeking to tell again the history of the country's first hundred years from an alternative perspective. In contrast, in *Hasta cuándo corazón* Yuyachkani explores Lima's present time during the troubled 1990s. Their way of doing so is through a dream-like register that considers the present through memories of the past and anxiety towards the future, within the context of a country that was at the brink of economic, social and political chaos. *Bença*, on the other hand, offers a rendition of time that considers how the past and ancestry inform place, as well as cultural and racial identities. Moreover, the company's homage to Salvador's elders is a celebration of old age as a source of wisdom and embodied knowledge. All these three examinations of time run against modernity's emphasis on a linear progression towards increasing development and material improvements. They consider present and future times as shaped by the past in such intrinsic ways that any thorough explanation of the present or hypothetical consideration of the future need to take the past into account.

The companies' examinations of space also build alternative discourses to modernity's single narrative. In *Fulgor*, the social club becomes a metaphor for a nation permeated with class conflicts that are expressed in overtly racial ways through the figure of the 'cabecita negra'. The show capitalises on the role of the club as a space where place,

class and ethnic identifications are reproduced and affirmed. Through this function, the club becomes a space of alterity within the nation. Contrastingly, Yuyachkani employ the arcade in order to reflect on the ways in which Lima has negotiated the arrival of waves of internal migrants from the Andes. Developing a large informal economy, these migrants made apparent the state's failure to incorporate them into official structures. Yuyachkani's use of the arcade as one of the symbols of this 'informal immigration' serves as a space to archive the country's non-sanctioned history. Olodum, on the other hand, contrast the *quilombo* with present-day *favelas* in order to show the extent to which inequalities against Afro-Brazilians are still prevalent. In all these instances the staged spaces serve to point towards the social fractures that face each of these countries as a consequence of their failure to include their 'Others' within their national borders.

I hope to have demonstrated that these productions show the ways in which, by interrogating dominant narratives and exposing these as historically, socially and politically constructed, theatre has the potential to open up debates that challenge exclusive narratives of race, belonging and place. This thesis has argued that examining how theatrical praxes stage place as events – as meetings of histories and affects that need to be negotiated – allows for an assessment of the ways in which theatre can generate histories that enter a country's public sphere, where they meet other national narratives. This allows for contradiction and debate while at the same time counteracting essentialising single narratives. In so doing, such theatre praxes show their capacity to make audiences and readers think critically about the ways in which discourses are constructed and promoted within the nation-state.

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