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Articles

Deterritorialized bodies: new territory-body relationships in Umbanda liturgy

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Abstract

Based on the assumption that the sacred territory is inseparable from the body, that is, for the religious experience to reach the epiphany/hierophany, it is necessary to connect bodies with their center of the world (ELIADE, 2019), we seek to problematize the context of the deterritorialization of bodies from their sacred space, in the face of a crisis that makes liturgical practice impossible - in the case discussed, the COVID-19 pandemic of the 2020-21 biennium and its impacts on the religious practice of Umbanda practitioners. We launched some questions about how these disembedded bodies (GIDDENS, 1991), as a form of identity resistance, exercise their liturgy in an online environment, even with the fragmentation of the egregore composed of spiritual entities, mediums, and consultants. The object chosen to discuss the topic is the online liturgies (giras) of the Adérito Simões channel on the YouTube platform, broadcast between 2020 and 2021.

Keywords: Umbanda. Communication. Territory. Mediatization. Body. Egregore.

An introduction and our proposed approach

The body is *a priori* a media: a primary media that addresses its materiality to infinite forms of cultural expression through movements and actions that make up a narrative of interconnections. The body is an integral part of cultural systems - we can dare to say that it inaugurates or creates such systems - a sign of belonging that can be one and many; it is in this aspect of collectivity, marked by customs and traditions, that the collective body becomes a vehicle for perpetuity that spans the ages. In this sense, the body both delimits and creates territories, merging with them - consolidating itself as a body-territory.

This body, intrinsically linked to the territory, is a fundamental element in the process of religious communication: It becomes a receptacle for the unknown, the mysterious, and the intangible. In addition to being a mere receptacle, the body in religions goes further and is the actual mediator of the sacred and the profane, known in mediumistic religions - and here, we have already made room for our object of interest, the Umbanda religion - as a medium. To *mediate* the intangible and the mysterious to the bodies on the earth, it is necessary to be in the center of the world, in the sacred space, in the terreiro - the space of connection and communication between the divine and the earthly. Much more than an epiphany, for Mircea Eliade (2019), hierophany overflows, the highest point of connection in religious experience: “Every sacred space implies a hierophany, an intrusion of the sacred that has the effect of detaching a territory from the cosmic environment that surrounds it and making it qualitatively different” (ELIADE, 2019, p. 30).

What we are trying to problematize in this article is a rupture in this space-body paradigm (we often use the expression territory-body), reconfigured in deterritorialized and disembedded bodies, removed from their sacred spaces; and here we think the concept of disembedding formulated by Anthony Giddens (1991, p. 29) is appropriate, which refers to a displacement of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring through indefinite extensions of time-space. Our attention was drawn to the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-21, which forced the closure of terreiros. The solution found by some terreiro leaders was to practice the Umbanda liturgy online; in this context, we used live broadcasts of *giras* from the Adérito Simões YouTube channel as our object of study.

The body and its religious function

Studies on the body in the social sciences have different approaches, which seem to come from both phenomenological and cognitive perspectives. These approaches are presented in a review by Almeida (2004), focusing on anthropology and sociology. Among the many authors cited are Marcel Mauss (2003) e Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1999) – as well as Margaret Lock, who defines areas of study for the anthropology of the body (ALMEIDA, 2004, p. 1-6). What these intellectuals have in common is the importance given to the legacy of phenomenology, a subject dear to Edmund Husserl’s philosophy and later discussed by social scientists in order to counter or justify part of his thinking.

When Marcel Mauss presents his techniques of the body - the tool with which human beings shape their world (ALMEIDA, 2004, p. 4) - they are defined by what the author defines as *habitus*. Mauss prefers the Latin expression because it is more complete than the mere translation (in this case, into French) of habit: “[the word expresses, infinitely better than ‘habit,’ the ‘axis’ [*hexis*], the ‘acquired’ and the ‘faculty’ of Aristotle” (MAUSS, 2003, p. 404).

Mauss’s analysis of the *total human being* (*l’homme total*) is based on a “[...] threefold rather than a single consideration, whether it be [1] mechanical and physical, like a theory [2] anatomical and physiological [...] or, on the contrary, [3] psychological or sociological”. (*ibidem*, p. 405). The concept of *habitus* was also later developed, based on Mauss’ (2003) ideas, by Pierre Bordieu:

Bourdieu goes beyond the idea of habitus as a collection of practices and defines it as a system of permanent dispositions, an unconscious principle collectively [*sic*] inculcated for the generation and structuring of practices and representations. This principle is nothing other than the socially informed body (ALMEIDA, 2004, p. 12).

In the case of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, his thesis is that perception has its central point in the relationship to the body based on sensations - perception loaded with meanings (MERLEAU-PONTY, 1999, p. 27). The author summarizes this sensation-perception-body relationship: “The perception becomes an ‘interpretation’ of the signs that sensitivity provides according to bodily stimuli”. (*ibidem*, p. 61-62). For him, the body is the condition and foundation of existence; it is the apprehension of the world and the idea of that world.

In a study on the importance of this author for the analysis of the body in cognitive sciences, researcher Terezinha Petrucia da Nóbrega (2008) states that the contribution of Merleau-Ponty’s (1999, p. 142) ideas to the phenomenology of perception is related to the corporeal attitude:

In the phenomenological conception of perception, the apprehension of meaning or the senses is done by the body, in the case of a creative expression, from different perspectives of the world [...]; it is necessary to emphasize the experience of the body as a creative field of the senses, this is because perception is not a mentalistic representation, but an event of corporeality and, as such, of existence.

A sometimes convergent and sometimes divergent point among intellectuals in anthropology and sociology is based on the theoretical limitation only to the symbolic aspect of the body and body language (including symbolic classification systems); for some of them, the body is not merely reduced to the symbolic dimension of a linguistic or reflective nature. (ALMEIDA, 2004, *passim*).

It seems obvious to the authors of this article, it seems evident that the body – in our specific case, the religious body – is full of symbolic aspects. In the various researches on the relationship between the body and religion – especially those that have taken African religions as a subject of study, such as Candomblé and Umbanda – we find approaches to the symbolic dimension of gestures and bodily acts of incorporated mediums are found, generating processes of reintegration and resignification of personal and group histories (PAGLIUSO and BAIRRÃO, 2010, p. 225); dance as a transgressive element (RIO, 1906, p. 21; BASTIDE, 1971, p. 195-197); as a theatrical element, “[...] reading the body in movement and especially that movement that runs inside, inside the body that suffers the imminence of receiving the *orisha*” (RODRIGUES, 2012, p. 2) 2); the body performance that represents cultural anthropophagy, through the incorporation of *exus* (AMARAL and DRAVET, 2019, *passim*) and the aesthetic experience shared between *medium* and entity (the incorporation), considered as a kind of dance that “[...] takes place not only in metaphor, but literally. In it, we have the dancing body which, through the incorporation of archetypal images, is increasingly ‘itself’ by also being another or many others.” (KOLLROSS, 2019, p. 177).

The body also has a “[...] symbolic-semiotic value that is structural to Afro-Brazilian religiosity” (JORGE, 2013, p. 123), which promotes reflections on the imaginary and otherness in incorporation, where the “[...] personal process of identification that occurs through the attraction of otherness is particularly stimulating. To incorporate is to call and invite the other to occupy one’s interiority. It is a voluntary immersion/confrontation with this co-presence”. (DRAVET, 2016, p. 302).

The body is considered an inseparable component for more comprehensive research on Afro-Brazilian religions, such as Miklos and Madeira’s (2018, p. 47) article, which mentions the “[...] importance of the body in religious ritual processes, considering of the case of this religion [*Umbanda*], the body is the instrument that mediates the ritual”; for Santos (2019, p. 19), the body is “[...] a way of thinking about space [under] symbolic-religious thinking [...] through the rituals of *Umbanda*”.

In the light of the studies cited above, we can configure a bodily aesthetic experience within the rituals of afro-religions, understanding that this experience is generated from a dualism represented by visible/non-visible, real/imaginary, concrete mundane/invisible sacred-spiritual. At this point, having generated an initial affection - having overcome fears, prejudices, anxieties, and doubts - with the object in question through an *affective contract*, we take a position, according to Pereira (2012, p. 112), a position, “[...] a posture that constitutes and shapes our perception. Not as an intentionality, a premeditation, a rational anticipation of what is to come, but as a contingent disposition, a circumstantial openness to the world.”

We take a position of appreciation of the event of bodies that dance, spin, frighten, fascinate, and assume different stereotypes in *Afro* rituals: *exus* and *pombagiras* laugh, drink, smoke; *caboclos* beat their chests; *pretos* and *pretas velhas* arch their bodies, *orishas* (in *Candomblé*) come to the *Aiyê*, like *Oxum*, who dances softly.

Within the *terreiro de Umbanda*, we have the components of a triad (spiritual entity/medium/consulente), also understood as an *egregora*, which together are responsible for the realization of the religion's main foundation, the "manifestation of the spirit for charity" (AZEVEDO, 2008, p. 9; JURUÁ, 2013, p. 19; BARBOSA JÚNIOR, 2014, p. 19) which is a form of communication between the spiritual entities and those who need them (the consultants), mediated by the incorporated mediums; such communication is made possible by the fusion territory/body, unleashing *axé*, the invisible, ancestral, bodily energy in this sacred space. According to Muniz Sodré (2006, p. 211), *axé* is associated with the *arkhé* of the Africans, an ancestral force expressed in the terreiro's physicality as a cultural heritage, a tradition¹.

Our first experience - or dazzle - is not with the medium's body but with another body, transformed, with the incorporated being that has entered the body and transformed it, giving it a new identity. Leal de Souza defines incorporation in *Umbanda* - and we can extend this to other religions of African origin - as

[...] a complex phenomenon that is processed through psychological, physical, and spiritual accidents and has in [...] *Umbanda* the maximum expression of its transcendence. Usually, it is enough for the spirit to take possession of the cerebral, vocal and manual organs, or all the so-called noble ones, in order to communicate orally or in writing, and to give *passes* [...] it must take possession of the whole body of the medium, because in this body it will live materially for a few hours, moving around, using objects, sometimes carrying weights. The incorporation [...] is almost a reincarnation, in the words of a spirit (SOUZA, 1933, p. 44-45).

It is an experience with the sacred, according to Sodré (2006, p. 210):

In the world view of these cults [...] the recognition of the here and now of existence, concrete interpersonal relations, the symbolic experience of the world, the affective power of words and actions, the power of the realization of things and the joy in the face of reality [...] the experience of the sacred in its radicality. Hence the great importance of the body.

This dazzling experience of the sacred sometimes fascinates and sometimes horrifies. The center of the world (the *terreiro*) and the percussion (the sound of the *atabaques*) are the stage for bodily transformation. The aesthetic experience of the body refers precisely to the effect that the unknown has on us, whether for good or bad, whether beautiful or ugly, friendly or aggressive. This is what the embodied body stamps by showing it to anyone who wishes

¹ In this, *arkhé* is close to the original concept of Anaximander's School of Miletus: primary substance, the infinite, eternal and imperishable that encompasses all worlds (RUSSEL, 2015, p. 52).

to experience it: “[...] the body is the seat of wonder, the possibility of encountering mystery or the means of experiencing the magic of the unity of a world that never ceases to amaze us with its richness”. (VALVERDE, 2017, p. 24). As spectators of this event, we allude to Deleuze (2007, p. 29) to imply that incorporation is like music that crosses bodies in waves and nerves, dragging the body into another element, freeing the body from inertia and even from the materialities of its presence.

An analogy can be drawn with Gumbrecht’s *game of beautiful* (2006). The otherness of the body incorporated through ritual provides a *game of dazzle* - in the sense that the aesthetic experience lived by the spectator (through the affective contract) of the body transformed through ritual and incorporation causes the spectator’s fascination, amazement, and enchantment. Gumbrecht (2006, p. 60) tells us that

The game of beautiful as a form is surprising and therefore epiphanic [...]. It is corporeal and concrete because it is always consists of a multiplicity of bodies [...]. One does not have to be a “sophisticated” spectator, in the academic sense of the word, to respond to games of beautiful with precisely this oscillation between effects of meaning and effects of presence that we have defined as typical of aesthetic experience today. On the one hand, the spectator will evaluate the contribution of an individual move within the broader framework of the game’s outcome (signification effect). But he or she will also relate to the game as a corporeal form that, as it unfolds, moves toward and away from the spectator’s body, making the spectator part of the unfolding scene (the effect of presence).

Based on this statement, we can assume that the game of dazzle (the body in ritual) is more than epiphanic: it is hierophanic, in the sense that Eliade (2019, p. 17) gives to this word, “[...] something sacred [that] is revealed to us [and] manifestations of sacred realities”; we do not need to be sophisticated spectators to respond to bodily expressions in ritual. The individual movement within the broader framework referred to by Gumbrecht (2006) can be understood as the ritualized body within the sacred space - the *terreiro* - and the elements that make up the effects of meaning and presence for the aesthetic experience are the most diverse for the liturgical process, including the dances, the smokes, the beats of the atabaques: these are elements that converge on the movement as a corporeal form, the bodily hierophany.

The Adérito Simões channel

For this article, we have chosen the object of study used in our doctoral thesis via exploratory/qualitative research: the online *giras* of the YouTube channel “Adérito Simões”².

² The *pai de santo* and YouTuber Adérito Simões is the spiritual leader of the *Sete Montanhas do Brasil* temple, located in Praia Grande, São Paulo. His YouTube channel was created in 2014 and has 383 thousand subscribers,

“ Here, specifically, we will focus on three videos recorded between 2020 and 2021, during the pandemic, within a larger *corpus* analyzed in our thesis (34 videos broadcast in lives in the biennium 2020-21). To justify the criteria for choosing both the platform and the channel, these lives were initially broadcast only on YouTube; there were attempts to broadcast them simultaneously on Facebook and Instagram, but without regularity due to technical problems. The Adérito Simões channel, on the other hand, was the first to adopt this format; according to the *pai de santo* of the same name, who is responsible for directing and broadcasting the *giras*: “... we’re the pioneers in this, you know? Nobody did it, we started with it and then some other people started it too” (SIMÕES, 2020a, 22min06s), see Figure 1.

Figure 1. Frame from an online *Gira*. On the left, dressed in red, the *Curimba*; on the right, dressed in white, Adérito



#umbanda #aderitosimoes

GIRA ONLINE DE UMBANDA EXU E POMBA GIRA | PAI ADERITO SIMOES UMBANDA

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4zhR-bhoGk&list=PLjrLGdkeT6LdcHcjtEYD66p5nWFtg20PX&index=4>

The criterion for selecting two videos - given that the *corpus* has the same liturgical and ritual pattern, consisting of the same sequence of liturgical chants (*pontos cantados*), procedures such as crossing and smoking the *terreiro*, etc. - was the number of views – was the only one with the largest number of views (the titles are transcribed as originally described): “GIRA ONLINE DE EXU E POMBA GIRA: Uma gira de Umbanda completa online LIVE

in addition to a total of 35,132,997 video views. The richness of meanings made possible by the channel’s lives, especially the online *giras*, was explored by us in two other articles; In these, we seek to explore both the media coverage and the emulation of the *giras* broadcast on YouTube, in tension with the in-person *giras*. Emulating, unlike simulating in this context, means reproducing something in a context other than its original, presenting a different (in this case, inferior) performance.

às 20h” (Date 05/20/2020, with 77.019 views) and “GIRA ONLINE DE UMBANDA EXU E POMBA GIRA/PAI ADERITO SIMOES UMBANDA” (Date 06/13/2021, with 62.316 views). We also chose Adérito’s first online gira (“GIRA 26/03/2020”, with 110,000 views) because, in the words of the *Youtuber*, it justifies the need for such a format and arouses interest due to its originality.

The most striking thing about the first live is that, despite the title “Gira,” it has a more confessional and “venting” nature on the part of Adérito Simões in relation to the pandemic situation that forced the closure of the *Umbanda* terreiros. In this first broadcast, there is not the usual liturgical sequence of his *terreiro*; but there are some prelections and prayers. Some passages of the live refer to the deterritorialization of the egregore of his *terreiro*. In the passage “...my *filhos de santo* are not here, they are at home, taking care of themselves and their families and trying with us here in this live to have contact with *Umbanda*” (SIMÕES, 2020b, 1min09s); in the passage “...as the *terreiros* are closed, I open the doors to everyone [. ...] through this live” (*ibidem*, 1min50s) and “... this day of *gira* [is] very sad, because there is no one here, there is no assistance, there is no openness, there is no human warmth with all of us” (*ibidem*, 3min19s). Thus, the pandemic separates the egregores (spiritual entities, mediums and consultants), and the way Adérito uses to promote a reconnection is through live broadcasting, where the doors of the *terreiro* are (virtually) opened for religious practice, see Figure 2.

Figure 2. The first *Gira*



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ig9LRZhy7Ls&list=PLjrLGdkeT6LdcHcjtEYD66p5nWFtg20PX&index=1>

In the second live chosen, (chronologically the ninth realized) Adérito adds to the transmission members of the *terreiro* (known as *ogãs*) who are responsible for rhythmically leading the *giras* with *atabaques* (*curimba*). The passages transcribed below also reflect the

detritorialization of the egregore; however, it can be seen that the *pai de santo*'s communication to the audience is addressed to the practical/liturgical aspect: "to all of you, may this smoke reach wherever you are, in your homes, imagine that this smell, this smoke, this power reaches you, cleanses your home". (SIMÕES, 2020c, 8min33s). This "axé at a distance" is also recognizable in these passages: "to my *filhos de santo*, to my *netos de santo*, may our *congá* reach you. We smoked in place where you lived before the quarantine, and now in your homes" (*ibidem*, 8min46s) and

I ask permission, my father *Oxalá*, to play *Umbanda* today, not in the traditional way, but with all these people who are here watching us, who fell the axé of our beloved *Umbanda* wherever they are. Inside Brazil, outside Brazil, all over the world. Today they will receive the axé of our father *Oxalá* today (*ibidem*, 12min54s).

This last passage illustrates what Anthony Giddens (1991, p. 23-24) derives from the concept of disembodiment, the rupture between time and space, mainly because the youtuber is aware that any viewer can see his broadcast, anywhere - and at any time, not just during the broadcast.

Finally, the date of the third *gira* was June 13, 2021. In the selected passages, we notice the character of detritorialization in moments of energization at a distance: "[...] I ask you to breathe together with me [...] so that this vibration enters, so that I can pray and close your house against all evil and we can work this wonderful power with you" (SIMÕES, 2021, 15min17s); "now that *Ogum* has entered your house [...] we're going to continue with this *gira* online [to] give you physical strength, mental strength, to unload" (*ibidem*, 23:53) and "[...] all the ruling power of this egregore that is formed in our online *giras*, may our paths be open to all that is good and our bodies closed to all that is evil". (*ibidem*, 1h9min13s). This last passage refers to the notion of the egrégora (in our concept, the community made up of spiritual beings, mediums and consultants), a virtual and detrterritorialized egrégora that must receive the remotely evoked energy for the *pai de santo*. The egrégora mentioned by Adérito refers to these three elements; however, outside the sacred space, there is no way of knowing if the mediums who observe the lives actually incorporate their entities or not, or even if some of them use incorporation.

Discussion

In our search for an understanding of this body-territory imbrication, we found in other disciplines of the social sciences, especially in geography, specific approaches aimed at decolonial³ issues, converging with what Eliade (2019) and Sodré (2006) affirm, the inseparability of body and territory. Through Haesbaert (2020, p. 76) we then consolidate this perspective under an approach preferred by the author under the decolonial ³aspect, which is

3 There is no consensus on the use of the concept decolonial/decolonial, both forms refer to the dissolution of the structures of domination and exploitation configured by coloniality and the dismantling of its main devices. (QUINTERO *et al.*, 2019, p. 4).

that of resistance, from feminism and the indigenous movement, but which we understand to be also applicable to *Umbanda*, “[...] which paid attention to the power of corporeality at the same time as an object for the exercise of power and as an (embodied) subject of resistance.”

Figure 3, we can see aspects of the inseparable connection between the body and the territory; in the *terreiro*, the “head banging” signifies contact with the sacred space; the dots crossed out in the *terreiro* indicate the identity and territorial presence of the entities⁴.

Figure 3. *Terreiro* as “body-territory”



Source: JURUÁ, 2013, p. 155.

However, Haesbaert (2020) makes clear the different possibilities that exist in the combinations of body-territory and territory-body, an expression that can sometimes have the same meaning, sometimes indicate a direction or emphasis; but both reflect:

the inseparability of body-land, in order to put into practice what we consider, along with body-territory, to be one of the great contributions of Latin American decolonial thought to the debate on territory, that is, to read it from an ontological perspective, to defend territory as a space of life, of existence in the broadest sense, which also implies taking into account the whole experience of extreme

4 Banging your head, in Umbanda, means paying homage to the *orishas* and entities, crossed-out dots are symbols drawn by the entities to identify them to the leader, affirming that they are not a rogue entity trying to pass itself off as one, as well as being a point of energy.

violence (especially against women) that is widespread in our continent. I call this perspective, which must necessarily include that of the body-territory, “territory of r-existence”. (*ibidem*, p. 82).

We prefer the term territory-body not to denote a hierarchy, a direction or a transformation, but for the sake of relationality and inseparability. On the basis of Haesbaert’s (2020) ideas, we can then define the relationship between the body and the *terreiro* in Umbanda under two aspects of resistance: the first is the identity resistance of a religion against various fronts of prejudice - as we justified earlier - composed of minorities and with a history of persecution by the police and other Christian religions, and which ends up composing among these groups an imaginary of non-Christian practices, devil worship, witchcraft, reducing the religion to the pejorative term *macumba*: “[...] Umbanda was persecuted not only by other religions faiths, but also by the authorities, who relegated it to the level of black magic”. (JURUÁ, 2013, p. 12).

The second aspect of resistance is survival in the midst of the crisis. This crisis comes at a time when the entire planet is going through a public health crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, which, especially in the 2020-21⁵ biennium, has forced social isolation, including a ban on worship with crowds of people. We are beginning to see an identity resistance of a territorialized *egregore* that ends up moving - even partially - to another territory, the online one. So we have a double resistance, a double need to affirm our identity, caused by the pandemic crisis. This resistance is the need to exist and to continue to assert oneself as a religion, as a group, as a *terreiro*.

Obviously, worship services held outside the physical space are already conducted by other religions, especially Christians, from televangelists’ television programs (MARTINO, 2016, p. 40) to online services, recorded or even broadcast through live streams. On digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram and Facebook. The concern with this dissociation of bodies and in-person religious practice dates back to Miller and Slater (2000, p. 185), where in an ethnographic study – carried out in the late 1990s – they describe the testimony of priests foreseeing (at the time) the problem of in-person sacraments versus practices via the internet, a subject very well explored by Campbell e Tsuria (2013), in the relationships between religion and new media, especially the internet. Campbell e Tsuria also explores digital religion as “the technological and cultural space that is evoked when we talk about how online and offline religious spheres have blended”⁶. (2013, p. 5, our translation). It is also worth highlighting Miklos’ (2010, p. 71) study on the absence of the body with the advent of ritualistic in the online space, where “the cyber-religion founded on distance communication, abolished the physical body and material space, promoting dematerialization and the sacrifice of the body.”

⁵ According to a report from the World Health Organization (2021, p. 9).

⁶ The technological and cultural space that is evoked when we talk about how online and offline religious spheres have blended.

Nevertheless, emphasizing once again, the pandemic crisis that established a reconfiguration of the *Umbanda* religious practice in the online space, the impossibility of meeting the *egregore* (entities/mediums/consultants) gave rise to a deterritorialization of part of it. In the Figure 4, we can see that in the photo on the left – defined as offline mode – the entire *egregore* is present in the *terreiro*, while in the photo on the right – online mode – the *egregore* is fragmented, represented only by the *pai de santo* and members of the *curimba* (percussion); The incorporation mediums (necessary for the presence of the entities) and neither the public who need the consultations (consultants) are present.

Figure 4 – Offline (left) and online (right) mode



Sources: http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-aae0Kta41vA/UQHCPRQ5s_I/AAAAAAAAADhU/EIx6ralQ84E/s1600/Casa+de+Neta+e+lan%C3%A7amento+do+livro+SP+003.JPG (left picture); <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzesgcDHo4c> (right picture).

We clearly perceive the territorial dilemma synthesized in the previously transcribed passages from the online *giras*, indicating a process of deterritorialization, an element dear element to the idea of the rhizome in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1995, p. 68) and which leads to reterritorialization, a line of “escape” that we can compare to the pandemic crisis: “we have to think of deterritorialization as a perfectly positive power, which has its degrees and thresholds (epistratum) and which is always relative and has a reversal, a complementarity in reterritorialization.”

However, what it seems to us is that there is no single process of (de) and (re) territorialization, because one does not replace the other, in the case of online *giras*. There is no line of escape that Deleuze and Guattari (1995, p. 45) – alluding to Elias Canetti – cite for the mass and pack – territorialization and deterritorialization, respectively – that migrates from one territory to another: the *terreiro* territory continues to exist; the territory-body, this one, is deterritorialized, moreover, *dismembered*.

Still on the subject of territorialities, Rogério Haesbaert (2020, p. 40) brings us the concept of multiterritorialization, that is, the grouping of several territories; this conception also alludes to what the author calls “territorial networks”. These territories are

Completely different from ours, without the need for physical mobility. It is a multiterritoriality that involves in different degrees of what we could call the connectivity and/or informational (or virtual) vulnerability of territories.

This is not just a conceptual division of territory, and we do not need to refer to this case as a digital “diaspora”. This argument may point to a hybridization or intersectionality of a sacred territory (*terreiro*) with a “profane” territory (the places from where spectators watch the *giras*). We have used quotation marks for profane because we have no way of knowing exactly from which places the spectators watch the *giras*. Finally, the home of a particular *Umbanda* spectator may have its own *congá*, with images of *orishas* or guides, a place of worship; we still consider this space to be profane because it does not refer to the sacred space of the *terreiro* as the center of the world and the non-territorializable place for the meeting and gathering of bodies, the house of the *egregore*.

We must take into account to the fact that the deterritorialization of the territory-body is partial and that it is also part of the *egregore* – in the *giras* observed, the *pai de santo* and the *curimba* are present in the *terreiro*, physically, but they transmit the *gira* in live streaming. We are not considering here the existence of two territories (if we take into account what we said above, a profane territory intersecting with another, sacred one); the body-territory is only one: *egregore* inseparable from the *terreiro*, in the pandemic, this body-territory is dismembered. It is not the spectator’s territory (home, office, etc.) that is connected to the *terreiro*: it is the spectator’s own body; after all, this body finds the screen on which the *gira* is displayed as a mediator of the spiritual connection connected via the Internet, the body virtually connects to the territory through the screen. When the body-territory is dismembered, the bodies are disembedded from the *terreiro* and the relationship of co-presence is replaced by a relationship mediated by the screen⁷, separated in both time and space. This spatial separation is evident because the *egregore* (in the pandemic) is fragmented into countless spaces and the temporal one can be identified in the context in which the viewer of the online *gira*, if not watching the live broadcast, accesses the video at a later time. If the video is kept on the channel, it can be accessed days, months or even years later.

Conclusion

The summary of the analysis of the aforementioned channel reveals a context that goes beyond the aspect of identity resistance: what we realize is that the body, in mediumistic religions – and fundamentally in religions practiced in Brazil with an Afro matrix – is crucial in epiphanic development/liturgical hierophany, together with the sacred territory. The

⁷ Our thesis is that the body-territory transforms into a screen-territory in the face of a crisis situation; We hope to unfold it in another article in due course.

moment there is a dissociation of the territory-body, that is, of the religious egregore that is deterritorialized, there is automatically a reconfiguration that profoundly affects the way in which the *gira* of *Umbanda* is performed. When we say that bodies are deterritorialized, there is no counterpart of (re)territorialization. The online space is not a new territory, but a product of media coverage, since the *gira* of *Umbanda* continues to take place within the *terreiro*, but there is a separation of bodies, part of the egregore.

Resistance as a need for religious practice through online transmission affects the communication process and the liturgical flow, where communication from the entity to the medium and the consultant is interrupted. The bodies are undocked during the online transmission; streaming does not allow the bodies to meet or perform sensory and tactile actions. Head banging, which is a greeting and a commitment to the *orishas* and *guides*, cannot be performed in the homes of viewers because they are not sacred (and consecrated) spaces. Bodies cannot be touched by spiritual entities through mediums, so blessings, whether by touching, smoking, puffing on cigars, rubbing herbs, do not exist in the online space.

Therefore, we believe that either the movement from offline to online – and vice versa –, in the particular case of the *gira* of *Umbanda*, can be addressed in the context of seasonality or specifically in a crisis (political, war, public health) that forces this movement. We conclude that the tradition, composed of the body-territory, the non-territorializable that maintains its own identity history, its own rites, history, liturgy and, not least, its triadic egregore, is offline, while its reconfiguration, the streaming of the *gira*, without the egregore in its entirety present in the sacred space of the *terreiro*, it is the opposite online.

It is not our place here to point out future directions for the modality of online mediumistic liturgy; we insist that these religions in particular have a special need for a territory-body connection that other digital religions do not have. We suggest further study of this issue, including other Afro-based religions such as *Candomblé*, which, due to its hermeticism and degree of hierarchy, has more complex territorial/body particularities than *Umbanda*.

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