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# Improvisations with archive-objects: we dance armengue & wear ancestral parangoles

*Improvisações com objetos-arquivo: dançamos-armengue  
& vestimos parangolés ancestrais*

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## ABSTRACT

In this article, the notion of improvisation in dance is approached from creative processes based on Afro-Brazilian cosmogonies. We call our experiences Armengue Dance. They are anti-choreographic and counter-dramaturgical scenic creations that make use of objects (archive-objects) in their body compositions. These creations were made during workshops and classes that made use of *elinga* principles, developed initially in a postdoctoral dance internship. Our aim is to dismantle the prejudiced view, presented in Brazilian dictionaries, for the notion given about an improvised action from the term *armengue* and to discuss a dance with objects from the point of view of street epistemologies. In this sense, the concept of improvisation-*armengue* is considered, in our studies, as a creative and anti-colonial weapon of the Brazilian people.

KEYWORDS: black-dance; armengue; parangolé; improvisation with objects; anti-colonial; intercorporeity.

## RESUMO

Neste artigo, a noção de improvisação em dança é abordada a partir de processos criativos com base nas cosmogonias afro-brasileiras. Denominamos nossas experiências de Dança *Armengue*. São criações cênicas *anticoreográficas* e *contradramatúrgicas* nas quais fazemos uso de objetos (objetos-arquivo) em suas composições *corp.orais*. Essas criações foram feitas durante oficinas e aulas as quais foram usados princípios da *Elinga*, sistematizados e desenvolvidos, inicialmente, em um estágio de pós-doutorado em dança no PPGDANÇA/UFBA. Um de nossos objetivos é desmantelar a visão preconceituosa, apresentada nos dicionários brasileiros, sobre o termo regional, baiano, *armengue*. Apresentamos provocações desde outros pontos de vista sobre o conceito de improvisação. Argumentamos desde epistemologias da periferia, práticas criativas “rueiras” brasileiras. Neste sentido o conceito de improvisação-*armengue* é considerado em nossos estudos como uma arma-criativa e anticolonial do povo brasileiro.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: danças negras; armengue; parangolé; improvisação com objetos; anticolonial; intercorporeidade.

# Improvisations with archive-objects: we dance armengue & wear ancestral parangoles

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## 1. The nature of our inventions: armengues and other anti-colonial parangolés

“The good dancer who makes dancing is the drum.”  
(African proverb)

“When I see an object, I always feel that there’s still  
being beyond what I see.”  
(Merleau-Ponty)

“Just like that *hopi* lady who talks to the stones, her sister, there’re many  
people who talk to the mountain.”  
(Ailton Krenak)

Save our relatives, the elements of nature! Save our original peoples! Save the enchantment! Save the enchanted objects<sup>2</sup> of Arthur Bispo do Rosário! Save the Parangolés of Oiticica! Save Ligia Clark's Pet Objects! Save our Eres and their games with the world-object<sup>3</sup>! Save the imagination and creativity of the Afro-Brazilian people.

We started this article saluting all the beings that spin, dance and exercise their coexistence with humans during the spins of planet Earth around the relative Sun. Our thinking is governed by the relationships established between paired bodies in a dance situation and their possible vibrational<sup>4</sup> exchanges. We will deal with creative processes in performing arts, emphasizing the body's relationship with the space environment and with archival objects. Therefore, the notion of improvisation is approached from the point of view of the irruption of a black-Brazilian performative dance. In this article, we called *armengue*<sup>5</sup> dance. Our initial objective is to

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<sup>2</sup> The word object is spelled this way - ob.jeto - following its etymological root in Latin ob-icere (iacere) – “something that flies or is thrown towards me”. That is: we consider that the object is everything that is found in the world and that is projected in our direction. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, objects coexist with humanity and constantly move towards it.

<sup>3</sup> In this sense, we understand that children, as much as artists, invent other worlds with their toy objects. That is, they subvert the functional meaning defined by society for each object and produce other realities from their creative imagination.

<sup>4</sup> The term vibrational is understood, in this case, in the sensorial context. We are interested in the intercorporeal exchange between the archival objects and the artists of the scene from their sensory-affective powers.

<sup>5</sup> We can understand the Armengue concept of dance in two ways: dance with archival objects, a search for ancestry in materials from ancestral

dismantle the prejudiced view presented in Brazilian dictionaries of the Bahian term *armengue*, which means improvising creatively to solve a problem.

Our study was developed through a direct and continuum dialogue between the one who writes to you, and the knowledge breathed into our ears by the parents. Our conversation transits between worlds: the material and the spiritual, and will be mediated by corporeities and archival objects. This textual work is part of a profound exercise of dancing and listening between beings (material and immaterial, human and non-human). As the poet Baudelaire (1985, p. 115) stated in his poem *Correspondances*: “Nature is a temple where living pillars /Not infrequently let unusual plots filter through; /The man crosses it in the middle of a forest of secrets /That there watch him with their familiar eyes.” The French poet’s poem announces the universality of the human being’s relationship with nature. However, we direct our gaze to the Brazilian Afro-indigenous cosmogonies in our reflections. We are interested in studying and creating from the synesthetic power of our vast Brazilian cultural backyard in the field of performing arts.

The writing we present is collective, and it is biased, full of zigzags and syncopally slips through the cracks of the colonizing technologies of power to produce other points of view in the performing arts. We glide through spatial reliefs, in which each being<sup>6</sup>, or rather, each entity, is considered the owner of a singular corporeal signature in its cor.poexistencial trajectory in the instant that it re/organizes its presence on the scene. We understand that for the stage artist, in the condition of intercorporeity<sup>7</sup> (MERLEAU-PONTY,

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memory. And the dancing expressions that appear day after day in spaces considered to be on the outskirts of Brazilian cities. In this case, these actions are understood as rhythms from the mixture of contemporary rhythmic technologies in fusion with traditional technologies, which establishes anti-colonial sociocultural and behavioral reactions.

<sup>6</sup> The concept of entity that we present is based on African and indigenous cosmogonies that value the mystical and mythical characteristics of “things” (material or immaterial) that coexist in the same spacetime as human beings. These entities are relatives, they exist as a potentiality of life.

<sup>7</sup> Intercorporeity is a fundamental concept for our studies as it discusses bodies in relation. That is, the intercorporeal actions that are engendered in the encounter between bodies (human or non-human), in the case of our investigations. The object does not exist at all, every object is a subject. By being flesh, by being matter, by being energy, we consider that he, the body, is at the same time subject and object.

1991), the elasticity of his scenic actions grounds his human experience with the fluctuating temporality of the now. Therefore, each corporeal movement is a walk through an unfinished universe of oneself.

Therefore, readers, we believe that space-time displacements in Armengue dance establish vibrational, bodily, ancestral, gravitational, and energetic dialogues of another order when we relate the condition of dance with archival objects. That is, at the moment of improvisation in Armengue dance, we seek to reconfigure the functional notion given to a given object, expand the perceptive field of our senses, and expand the field between the material world and the spiritual world. Thus, united by internal and external sounds, the artists' bodies of the scene and archival objects dance, and move through spacetime without being able to separate one from the other. Therefore, "Sound has a mediating, hermetic power: it is the communicating link between the material world and the spiritual, invisible world." (WISNIK, 2017, p.30). Wisnik's thought, directed to the musical context, corroborates our observations by helping us to decipher that the condition of intercorporeity projects us to a *plurisensorial*<sup>8</sup> encounter that is crossed by a direct relationship with the immaterial, spiritual world. In this way, the improvisation that we study takes place in intermediality, in listening, in the game between bodies: archival objects plus artists of the scene.

Therefore, when we dance with a group of archival objects that are ancestral symbols - elements of nature that represent itself: stones, trees, leaves, flowers, feathers, sand, mud, earth, water - elements with which we dance paired, exercising a kind of cosmic listening between parents. That is, when we dance armengue we wander between rhythms, ancestry, and suprasensorialities<sup>9</sup>. Our aim is to produce tonal and sensory bodily combinations, determined by the low-medium-high rhythmic markings, which are juxtaposed to compose in an intermedial way (human body + archival

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<sup>8</sup> We use this term to identify an opening in the perceptual field beyond those already determined by our senses. We expand this reading of the world to the perception of the immaterial, spiritual world. Later on, we assume the concept coined by Oiticica because we understand it to be the most appropriate for our reflections in the field of the arts.

<sup>9</sup> The term suprasensorial, spelled this way, was coined by Helio Oiticica in 1967 and will be explained throughout this text.

objects), which we call *armengue* composition in dance. We understand these actions produced by *Armengue* compositions as structures “underpinned by an organization system that uses the sound tones of words, atabaques, berimbaus, and intracorporeal and extracorporeal sonorities.” (SANTOS, 202, p.9). We consider that “the rhythmic intensity of the movements introduces another way of thinking about the ordering of actions in the present moment.” (SANTOS, 2022, p.10)

The starting point of our experiences in *armengue* are the following questions: What do these other relatives say? Where do the rhythmic pulsations of our synesthetic encounter with these relatives take us? What can we draw in space, and what do we pulsate while we are doing *armengue*<sup>10</sup>? How do we move and perceive our gravitational centers paired with intercorporeity in dance?

From the political and socio-cultural point of view, reader parents also consider everyday objects, manufactured objects, and industrial objects, which, when found and reconfigured in an *Armengue* dance situation, can produce expansions of meaning. They are industrial scraps and waste of all kinds, accepted in *armengue* as relatives with dancing powers. As for the *Objetos-parangolé*, they are objects that can be dressed up, and fitted to the body. Therefore, we seek the multiartist from Rio de Janeiro Helio Oiticica for his *parangolé* covers and his relationship with samba some connections with our thinking. Oiticica tells us:

My interest in dance, in rhythm, in my particular case samba, came from a need to de-intellectualize [...] Dance is, par excellence, the search for a direct expressive act, for the immanence of this act; not the ballet dance which is excessively intellectualized [...]. (OITICICA *apud* BRAGA, 2013, p.113/114)

Like this artist from Rio de Janeiro, we seek to expand our perspectives within the scope of the arts of the dance scene by thinking about these archival objects from an intercorporeal, oral, ancestral, and *suprasensorial*<sup>11</sup> horizon. That said, we consider the

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<sup>10</sup> In this case, we replace the verb *improvisar* with *armengar* (*do armengue*).

<sup>11</sup> Form spelled by Helio Oiticica to define the sensorial field of his works.

archived objects, parangolé objects, from an intimate, ancestral perception of the artists of the scene with them, the objects, and their possibilities as producers of gestures when paired (body of the artist + Ob,jects file). The compositions created and reconfigured during the creative process as a function of the intercorporeality relationship between the human body and the archival objects speak of the production of gestures, movements and actions that translate the power of the encounter. Therefore, we have divided the archival objects we work with in our armengue dances into: Ancestral-ob.jetos, everyday-ob.jetos and Parangolé-ob.jetos. Everyday objects, industrialized, manufactured materials will not be included in the reflections made in this article. However, this quality of archival objects that is part of our daily life has been the reason for a meaningful discussion that we are implementing about the consumer society and the excessive production of industrialized products.

Having said that, let us return to directing the paths of our prose. What we defend as Armengue dance, in addition to its potency as a foundation for artistic creations, is part of a political discussion about the colonality of power (QUIJANO, 2005). Anibal Quijano's concept of modern capitalism's technologies of power is one of our conceptual pillars in an exhaustive debate in which languages, as dominant idioms, producers of meaning "of things in the world", are operational agents of colonial power. Based on this fact, we begin our conversation about the definition of the armengue, regarding the concept of improvising presented to us in Brazilian dictionaries. In the various Portuguese dictionaries researched, we found this word registered as a Brazilianism<sup>12</sup>. The word armengue is prejudicedly presented to us as: a fraudulent way of stealing energy; something or someone ugly, something poorly arranged; popular resource of dubious outcome, an improvised way to solve a problem, etc.

We understand that this approach has a colonizing and prejudiced character with regard to the pragmatic solutions found by

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<sup>12</sup> It is a popular expression in Bahia and understood as a synonym of gambiarra, a term that is better known nationally when explaining something or something done in an improvised way. A possible origin of the word armengue would be a corruption of the French word "arrangements", however, it is a statement in which we did not find scientific data.



the Brazilian peripheral population to survive in the face of the pressures of global capitalism. Consequently, our interpretations of the world are trapped in definitions that aim to demean, to subordinate, the inventive capacity of a part of the Brazilian population, which makes use of its powerful imagination to solve, in an emergency way, some problem, which in general is related to its form of survival. Therefore, this article defends the thesis that the notion of *armengar* is a creative force that transits between the existential needs and the aesthetic<sup>13</sup> perceptions of our Brazilian population.

Let us move, then, to the universal and erudite understanding of the word improvisation: a word derived from the Latin: ***IN PROMPTU***<sup>14</sup>, which indicates “in a state of attention, ready to act”. In other words, the term is formed by the prefix IN = “in” + PROMPTUS, “readiness”. This is the definition of improvising, which we find in Latin dictionaries. That is, being ready to act, responding promptly to something emergency. In this sense, we use the notion of improvising as an operational concept in our studies from the point of view of the regional term *armengue*. It is defined, in this case, as the action of improvising in dance, the *amengue*<sup>15</sup> dance.

We establish a complementary dialogue with the conceptual word “*parangolé*” reconfigured<sup>16</sup> by the visual artist Hélio Oiticica to name its covers, its corporeal-visual garments. The term found by Oiticica written on a piece of cardboard, in front of a shack, “this here is *parangolé*” defined a territorial space. It is important to note that this slang word was already circulating in the hills and streets of Rio de Janeiro before taking the format given by the artist, or rather by the “unleashing state of inventions” (OITICICA apud

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<sup>13</sup> In most of the Afro-Brazilian cosmogonies that we researched, the idea of aesthetics and ethics are not considered separately, as determined by European philosophical principles.

<sup>14</sup> In the field of music, the term *Impromptu*, improvised in Portuguese, designates a name given by romantic composers such as Schubert, Schumann, and Chopin, to a short and generally delicate piece of music, with the “face” of improvisation.

<sup>15</sup> *Armengue* dance is, here, considered as a representative metaphor of the corporal and socio-political actions of the “*quebradas*”, of the populations that inhabit the outskirts of Brazilian cities. A response to the colonial, prejudiced, and racist, oppressive system of the ruling classes.

<sup>16</sup> This term, which was already a slang word at the crossroads of Rio de Janeiro, was discovered by Hélio Oiticica when written on a cardboard plate and seen by the artist.

BRAGA, 2013), who initially thought of producing a banner embroidered with the name parangolé. However, from the connections with the populations of the favelas<sup>17</sup>, with the streets and alleys of Morro da Mangueira and, consequently, with the samba of the Escola de Samba Mangueira, the parangolé takes on the shape of a bodily garment, becoming a visual-dancing experience. “The street for<sup>18</sup> me was also a nourishment that opposed everything more abstract. I tended to lock myself up in my ideas [...]” (OITICICA apud BRAGA, 2013, p.107). It is important to emphasize that terms that are slang such as: armengue, parangolé among others, are part of a rich glossary that appears in the streets, in the favelas, in the Brazilian peripheral corners as creative incidences, aesthetics founded in the daily life to transform and reinvent the harsh reality.

They are behavioral political actions, creative actions that use improvisation to supply material needs, to solve an emergency problem resulting from a socioeconomic precariousness marked by social inequality. Usually, these expressions end up becoming popular and gaining other semantic shades. However, our intention is not to romanticize the sociopolitical origin of the word armengue. Instead, we intend to announce the aesthetic strength of these behavioral and, fundamentally, bodily actions as a philosophy of creative life. That is, one of the purposes of our studies is also to demonstrate the inventive and ingenious capacity of Brazilian culture as an insurgent, anti-colonial action and artistically based on the syncopated pace of Afro-Brazilian ancestry.

Well then, in this article, dear readers, we will talk from corporal improvisations with ancestral archival objects – elements of nature -in which we seek intermedial<sup>19</sup> relationships. Our experiences, as mentioned in previous paragraphs, with Armengue dance

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<sup>17</sup> The term favela is here understood as a space of high creative power for the Brazilian cultural scene. Place of creation of body-ancestral expressions like passinho, samba, funk... Favela is an armengue in the territorial condition of its existence as a concept of improvisation.

<sup>18</sup> Spelled this way in the consulted book by the author Paula Braga (2013). The author respected the spelling assumed by Helio Oiticica. N.T.: The difference in spelling exists only in Portuguese idiom.

<sup>19</sup> We understand as an intermediary relationship any relationship between two bodies, human or non-human. The Canadian researcher Izabella Pluta (2011) works with this concept from a relationship with the new technologies on the scene, digital technologies.

are developed from synesthetic encounters and rhythmic pulsations. Through this experience with intercorporeality, we seek to express that improvising is a political, behavioral, and ancestral action for the Afro-Brazilian population. During our experiences developed in classes/meetings in dance, theater, and performance courses within the academic space<sup>20</sup> and in workshops outside the academic circuit, and artistic residencies, we used the black-Brazilian principles of acting, called *elinga*<sup>21</sup>. The methodology used is guided by the construction of experience with a scenic action that ritualizes the instant and expands the condition of presence of the artist in the scene, in this case in an intermediate condition (human body + objects-archive).

The questions that permeate our creative experimentations in dance with archival objects are intended to verify these objects' aesthetic, gestural, ancestral, cultural, social, and political potential and their sensorial implications with our bodies. What exists beyond the tangible when we establish a relationship of intercorporeity with the archival objects and/or parangolé objects? What do these file-objects tell us? Where do they take us? How to escape the everyday symbolic representation of these objects? Wouldn't it be in synesthesia, in the sensorial intersection between bodies and ancestral archival objects, an expressive force of another symbolic order?

Therefore, in this article, we will focus on ancestral archive objects that say about our ancestry, and our existential intimacy with the cosmos. Archive objects can be organic elements, found in nature or elements with a symbolic value (photos, toys, clothes, personal objects, etc.) from our family tree, which refer to our family history. In this case, parangolé objects that can be dressed up are also used. There is a degree of intimacy in the relationship with ancestral archival objects and parangolé archival ob-

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<sup>20</sup> In the academic space, in classes/meetings at PPGDANÇA/UFBA in the Dance and Africanities curricular component, and during classes in the undergraduate course at the UFBA Theater School.

<sup>21</sup> The principles of elinga performance and staging are part of a study on scenic presence based on Brazilian Afrodiasporic cosmogonies that began its systematization in the postdoctoral internship of artist/researcher Lau Santos at PPGDANÇA in 2018/2019.

jects to which only those who have access are those who intermediately experience the body-object-archive relationship in a continuum of production flow of realities. We defend the thesis that there is a symbolic, socio-political, historical, ancestral, affective, and documental character in archival objects with an emancipatory power by revealing the material memory of a given time. Well then, let's move on to the structure of our article.

The article is divided into three parts: 1) The nature of our inventions: armengues and other anti-colonial parangolés; 2) Archive objects: ancestral and suprasensory encounters, creation of enchanted worlds and 3) Armengue Dance: political-creative reliefs that have always been insurgents from the Brazilian peripheries. In each of these topics, the idea of improvisation is understood as a creative and spontaneous resource with an Afro-Brazilian identity, which responds to a rhythmic, corporeal, sociocultural, and anti-colonial need. The act of armengar is presented as an experience in the field of scenic language that does not seek a logic of meaning from a linear narrative, but rather the juxtaposition of movements, gestures, actions, and sounds guided by rhythmic and spatial “listening” during the performance moment of the game between the human body and the archival objects used in Armengue dance compositions.

## **2. Archive objects: ancestral and “suprasensoriais<sup>22</sup>”, creation of enchanted worlds**

“When the birds dance and sing, they also improvise”  
(Couchot)

In this topic, we outline a dancing encounter with the concepts of intercorporeity, suprasensoriality and intermediality to

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<sup>22</sup> Suprasensorial is a complex concept coined by Helio Oiticica “which exists as a poetic microcosm – olfactory/tactile/sound/visual” (SALOMÃO, 2015). Odors, colors, sounds, movements correspond in this poetic microcosm. The suprasensorial concept with an “s” was created in 1967, and is present in the text “À Busca do Suprasensorial”, according to researcher Paula Braga, 2013. Although we know that the correct graphic form in the Portuguese language is: suprasensorial, we will use it in this In this article the term “suprasensorial” with an “s” and between quotation marks respects the conceptual position of Helio Oiticica, as we believe that disobedience to the “coloniality of power” begins with a semantic and creative revolution problematizing the language imposed by the colonizer.

organize the reading of the body at the time of improvisation with archival objects.

The subversion of symbolic, representational and functional values through the logic of discovering and sharing the present moment, through improvisation with archival objects, in the form of Armengue dance, allows us to raise sensory discoveries that go beyond the idea of the body as a place, a space delimited by the sensorial condition defined by a specific number of senses. In other words, this sensory-affective relationship that we propose in the condition of intercorporeity (MERLEAU-PONTY, 1991) with the archival objects in the condition of dance seeks, through improvised, armed actions, to outline manifestations that unveil the sharp boundaries between: the material world and the immaterial world; and intra-corporal and extra-corporeal sensations. See what the philosopher Merleau-Ponty says when he questions and answers himself seeking to define the concept of intercorporeity: “What is there more, between me and my body, besides occasional causality? There is a relationship between my body and itself that converts it into a vinculum with the self and things” (Merleau-Ponty, 1991, p. 183). Therefore, this author continued:

[...] There is not only a one-way relationship between the one who feels and what he feels: the relationship is reversed, the touched hand becomes touching, and I am obliged to say that touch is spread throughout my body, it is something that feels, subject-object. (MERLEAU-PONTY, 1991, p.184)

That is, the perception of my body in space in a coexistence situation in the world is a two-way street, which determines the role of the body as a mediator<sup>23</sup> of our encounter with the world: “[...] space itself is known through of my body.” (Merleau-Ponty, 1991, p.184). Based on these reflections on the concept of intercorporeity, in our investigations we studied ways to understand the unfolding of this intercorporeal relationship between the artist of the scene, in the

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<sup>23</sup> When we think of “mediation” in the light of black-indigenous cosmologies, we must consider that there is a continuous connection between the material, physical world, and the immaterial, spiritual world. Mediating and mediumship in this context are synonyms, in our understanding. That is, the body functions as an intermediary device that maintains a continuous connection between the material and immaterial worlds.

condition of Armengue dance, with archival objects. Therefore, it is essential that the dancer, partner, or the person who dances with the archival objects and/or parango objects, tries to distance himself from the idea of functional representation of objects. It is fundamental to detach oneself from predetermined sociocultural paradigms. The idea is to establish a link between the artists' bodies and those of the archival objects. In other words, a relationship of involvement designated by the intermedial and intercorporeal encounter, in which the charm of ancestral Afro-Brazilian rhythms leads movements, gestures and actions in the invention of other realities. The most important thing is *acontecimentização*<sup>24</sup>, improvised combinatorial actions between bodies and archival objects, at the moment of the present encounter, as a proposition for the manifestation of other worlds. In this case, the scene artist's performance must be guided by a dip in his imagination and in the suprasensory relationships of his body with ancestral archival objects or parangolé objects in *spacetime*.

As stated in previous paragraphs, we will now make an exegesis of the suprasensorial concept coined by the visual artist from Rio de Janeiro, Helio Oiticica, who in the text "À Busca do Suprasensorial" from 1967 says: "Behavior - here is what interests me to raise it to maximum freedom" (OITICICA apud BRAGA, 2013, p.73). Having behavior as the basis of his aesthetic experiences, Oiticica places life as a suprasensory place (olfactory, tactile, sound, visual) – "a poetic microcosm" (SALOMÃO, 2015, p.57) where everything corresponds to the creation of a "antiart". That is, beyond what is understood by the notion of sensorial, the concept of suprasensorial coined by Oiticica envisions the idea of a poetic microcosm of sensations that open a portal to the phenomenal world and to the aesthetic world. In his searches, this artist from Rio de Janeiro used samba in his creative processes, as one of his creative pillars in dancing with the parangolé capes. The conceptual approximation that we make between the Parangolés of Oiticica, the Armengue dance, the Cloaks and Objects of Arthur Bispo do Rosário takes

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<sup>24</sup> For more information on this concept, see the article: From Oríki to Elinga: black-Brazilian principles of acting and staging by the author Lau Santos, present in the references of this article.

place in the field of improvisation as a creative and anti-colonial response of reading and insertion in the world from a perception enchanted by the streets, by the daily life, through the agglutination and juxtaposition of “things” to compose other “things”, understood here as anticolonial behavioral reactions. In our case, the agglutination of rhythmicities, intercorporeities, gestures, and archival objects aims to compose from improvisations, Armengue dances, inventive compositions with archival objects, and Afro-Brazilian rhythms. For Wally Salomão “H.O. knew how to metamorphose the given world into a significant system and fail the order of experience with the order of expression” (SALOMÃO, 2015, p.57). Salomão shows us that H. Oiticica did not separate everyday actions from his aesthetic expressions. When dialoguing with this thought of the poet/writer Wally Salomão about Oiticica's experiences, we find in the writings of Merleau-Ponty (2017) the following statement:

There is, therefore, in perception a paradox of immanence and transcendence. Immanence, since the perceived could not be foreign to the one who perceives it; transcendence, since it always involves a beyond what is currently given. [...] the appearance of “something” indivisibly demands this presence and this absence. (MERLEAU-PONTY, 2017, p.37)

In dialogue with the thought of Merleau-Ponty, Oiticica states: “[...] there is something like an exploration of something unknown: we find things that we see every day, but that we never thought to look for. It is the search for oneself in the thing - a kind of communion with the environment.” (OITICICA apud PEDROSA; TOLEDO, 2020, p.128). The discovery of the game between the body and things, the objects projected towards us in the world, awakens us to the existence of an interconnection between the reflections of the Brazilian artist Oiticica and those of the French philosopher Merleau-Ponty. These thoughts base our arguments on Armengue dance and the concept of precariousness as a potential agent of creative processes. In this relationship between beings that coexist in the world, the unexpected becomes present as a *suprasensorial* aesthetic exercise of freedom.

The suprasensorial and intercorporeity conceptual propositions outline our studies because they constitute the foundation

of an artistic phenomenon elaborated from the Afro-Brazilian cos-  
moperceptions in which the body is the re/presentant of itself and  
the place of everyday, spiritual events and, consequently, is .ethical.  
Finally, “music cannot be separated from dance, the body is not far  
from the soul, the mouth is not suppressed from the space where  
the ear is found.” (SODRÉ, 2007 p.61), sings and philosophizes us  
in a samba tone, who owns the body, the master Muniz Sodré. In  
this sense, the body operates as an intermediary device that contin-  
uously connects the material world to the immaterial, spiritual world.  
Therefore, in our investigations, in addition to the intercorporeity  
with the archival objects, when we improvise, we also dance with  
our “ancestral shadows”, we are guided by our *Ori*<sup>25</sup>(s).

That is, we start from principles in the field of scenic lan-  
guage that do not seek a linear logic, a dramaturgy based on Greek  
values; our searches aim at a counterdramaturgy, there are not nec-  
essarily narrative or choreographic objectives determined by a  
Euro-referenced explanatory linearity, but rather a search for the  
game between bodies and rhythms in the condition of armengue  
dance. Therefore, we understand that counterdramaturgy is anti-co-  
lonial, denies behavioral, sociocultural paradigms and colonial aes-  
thetic conceptions. It is anti-choreographic concerning the organiza-  
tion of a body that scribbles space. It is down to earth and denies  
the Euro-Western verticality of ballet to organize the body in  
spacetime. It, counterdramaturgy, dialogues with sinuous thinking,  
undulates the spine and makes use of the notion of "denial" when  
compared to the mechanistic view of the body present in the foun-  
dations of most European dance techniques. In counterdramaturgy,  
syncopation and improvisation make their musical “bed”. They are  
valued for corporeal compositions in relation to rhythmic tonalities.  
In this sense, we call Corpo.tonal combinations the compositions of  
Armengue dances that walk through the keys: low – medium – dur-  
ing the displacement through spacetime with the archive objects.  
Counterdramaturgy is plural in opposition to hegemonic Eurocentric

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<sup>25</sup> Energies of ancestral deities, the energy that for the Yoruba population we carry in our heads. Therefore, for the Yoruba, each person has their own Ori. For more information, see the article: From Oriki to Elinga: black-Brazilian principles of acting and staging.



visions; in it, culture and nature complement each other in aesthetic perspectives invented from armengues of the daily life of peripheral populations. The counterdramaturgy is ancestral, vibrating memory, wanders, and wanders between two worlds: the material and the spiritual. It is corpolitic and cosmopolitical in its “street” artistic roots. We understand the notion of Counterdramaturgy as another way of organizing the body on stage to produce actions, gestures and corporeities. A form based on the principles of elinga and which is materialized by armengues.

That said, we start from intercorporeal combinations, intracorporeal and extracorporeal sonorities; and juxtapositions of movements guided by the discovery of a “listening”, a rhythmic, vibratory frequency established by the encounter of the human body with the archival-objects.

By valuing the elaboration of corporeities as a genitor of the organization of possible non-linear narratives, the artists of the scene investigate a complex and intense sensory-affective network in which the text of the body and the body of the text produce other forms of ordering scenic actions in opposition to what is understood as the idea of a universal dramaturgy. (SANTOS, 2022, p.6)

We understand, therefore, that it is in the suprasensory encounter between the carnal and consequently spiritual body with the materiality of the archival objects that the affective doors open for access to the other, to the encounter with the relative. We left a relationship of introspection for a direct relationship of “otherspection”<sup>26</sup>. So, fellow readers, remember how we started the article? Remember that in one of our epigraphs, Ailton Krenak comments that a lady converses with stones, mountains, and nature. She exchanged words of respect and evocation of nature with her relative. A process of complicity, of listening, between human beings and their non-human relatives. Let's listen to what David Kopewana tells us about the xapiri<sup>27</sup>, dancing spirits of the forest.

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<sup>26</sup> The term otherspection was coined by the philosopher Roman Krznaric. Its objective is to generate an activity of reading, listening, watching, and sharing the stories of other people worldwide, as a process of self-knowledge.

<sup>27</sup> “The xapiri are the Yarori animal ancestral images that were transformed in the first time. Our ancient shamans always made them dance

In their presentation dances, the xapiri shake young shredded leaves of the hoko si palm, an intense and bright yellow. [...] They are very pleased to show us their presentation dance! Your moves are really magnificent! They dance fervently, like young guests entering their host's home. (KOPENAWA; ALBERT, 2015, p.113).

Well, it is in this flow of exchange between these elements of nature or our daily life loaded with energies, existential indices of other presences, emotions, symbologies and points of view on social relations and their philosophical and/or historical consequences that we transit, or rather, we arganmos our dance. As we stated in the first topic of this text, for us, all beings that coexist with humanity are considered in their potency of life as our relatives, that is, our lives are paired in the same space-time. That said, let's move on to the third and final part of our prose. Let's keep dancing our *antichoreographies* and *counterdramaturgies*.

### **3. Armengue dance: political-creative reliefs that have always been insurgents from the Brazilian peripheries**

“All I've done so far is the prologue. The importante thing is starting now. Everything before was prelude”  
(Helio Oiticica)

The subversion of symbolic, representational and functional colonizing values through the logic of discovering and sharing the present moment, through improvisation in Armengue dance, this dance with archival-objects, allows us to articulate displacements that go beyond formal knowledge. The expansion of ways of understanding the world beyond the rational, intellectual process, intensifies the need for artists of the scene, in short, for people who dance with archival-ob.jetos and/or parangolé-ob.jetos to open themselves up to an experience suprasensorial and libertarian. In this sense, scene artists must distance themselves from the idea of functional representation of objects. Finally, at the moment of improvisation constructed as Armengue dance, they exercise a kind of socially,

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and, like them, we continue until today” (KOPENAWA; ALBERT, 2015, p.111)

politically and culturally predetermined syntagmatic and paradigmatic displacement for these archival objects. The intention is to flee from a Euro-Western hegemony. of meanings based on an orderly representation and naturalized by a notion of “coloniality of power” (QUIJANO, 2005).

Armengue dance is based on a creative line of constant displacement of the senses, and this behavior characterizes the fact that its actions are considered anti-choreographic and counter-dramaturgical. Therefore, in the syncopated encounter of the body with ancestral archival objects, political boundaries are blurred for establishing a subversive and anti-choreographic act that originally started in the streets, on the outskirts of Brazil. Or in the forests and in the terreiros, sacred spaces, places of resistance, secret arks that keep our Afro-Brazilian ancestral energies.

Improvisation, in this specific armengue dance, is a disobedient response to an aesthetic idea formatted in literary canons by Greek philosophers. Armengue dance is built on the intercorporeities produced in the present moment, they are immediate and anti-colonial resolutions that are directed against the Euro-referenced standards of choreographic and dramaturgical organization in the field of performing arts. Corporal movements, as well as the desemantization of archival objects, must be deconditioned, decolonized so that other ways of organizing the body in spacetime can be established: “As the body incorporates new roles, as it is coated with new fantasies, their ethical-social behavior changes” (BRAGA, 2013, p.239).

The provocations we make seek in antichoreography and counterdramaturgy their inventive and representative strength, because “Perhaps we are too conditioned to an idea of being human and to a type of existence. If we destabilize this pattern, maybe our mind will suffer a kind of rupture, as if we were falling into an abyss” (KRENAK, 2019, p.57). The idea of “abyss” presented by Krenak is exactly what we use to break with the colonized conditioning of our creative processes. In other words, we aim to change the aesthetic, sociopolitical and re/presentational behavior of our creations in the field of performing arts, diving into decolonizing creative abysses.

The irruption of creative processes in our experiences, from the relationship with ancestral objects-archives of nature, is developed with the elements of nature that discover us and not with what we think we discover. This is an important key for working with file objects. They are the archival objects that appear to the artist of the scene. As we stated earlier, our searches are governed by the notion of happening. Therefore, the encounter with the archive-objects must be, in a certain way, a suprasensory behavior of relating with the parent/partner. We assume that this encounter is guided by the notion of object, presented in the first part of this article about the etymological root of the word object. In other words, *objeto* in Latin is: “something that launches itself towards me”. This proposition of discovering archival objects is also based on some Afro-Brazilian principles of valuing and consecrating sacred objects. For the Yoruba people, the term *akoro*<sup>28</sup> means a form of non-verbal communication, made by symbolic objects. For the Bantu people, the term *kintu* can be understood as the ancestral energy existing “in the things of the world” and represented by the elements of nature or symbolic objects that coexist with their people.

Let's go back to our experiences in Armengue dance. After finding this object-archive, each artist of the scene initially discovers the object's weight in relation to the force of gravity and the gravitational interaction between the two bodies: his body and the object-archive. From there, we move on to a series of questions that are asked after the experiments. Notes are made that we call “*capt.graphy*”<sup>29</sup>. What appears between the artist's body, the gravitational displacement and the archival object. Who wears who? How are the directional lines constructed, the vector lines arising from the condition of intercorporeality? What kind of impulse do we use when we produce a paired movement (Body + Object-file + Internal and external sound vibrations)? How does the object's texture in contact

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<sup>28</sup> *Aroko* is a coded language, transmitted through symbolic “objects”. *Aroko* is used to communicate about: wars, dissatisfaction, disagreements or happiness. Yoruba Symbolic Communication Method Objects were placed in a specific location relevant for the recipient to understand the message.

<sup>29</sup> This conceptual term, as well as others that appear in this article and that were coined by Lau Santos, are addressed in some articles placed in the references.

with our skin influence our movement? What does this file-object tell us about its origin? What memories does this body, which is an archival object, bring? What spiritual/sacred relationship do we establish with him? What situations do we produce when we happen together? How do we read and insert ourselves into the world when we move? How fast can we move in tandem? What kind of violence do we produce? What kind of affectivity do we generate? What rhythmicities do we produce in an intermediate condition? Who do we talk to when we talk in the condition of intercorporeity? How do we react when we do not make sense to the one who perceives us? Who manipulates whom? Who wears who?

Therefore, our reflections on the notion of improvisation began from a point of view on the prejudiced and subordinate view found in Brazilian dictionaries on the regional word *armengue*. *Armengue* became a concept and gained other shades, or rather, it gained body and danced, it made itself exist as dance. A dance that is political and brings in the core of its actions the aesthetic disengagement with Euro-Western doctrinaire and dogmatic paradigms and syntagms. *Armengar*, which is *armengue* dancing, carries in its guts *samba* (*chula*, *pareia*, *circle*), *macumba*, *passinho*, *charme*, *jongo*, *funk*, *rap*, *frevo*, *pagode*, *miudinho*, *noiadance*<sup>30</sup>, *coco*, *maracatu*, *capoeira* and all anti-colonial behavioral trickery from the Brazilian periphery. All of this is magnetized by Afro-Brazilian ancestral knowledge which, in this case, is umbilically present in ancestral archival objects and in *Parangolé* archival objects. We believe, therefore, beyond the cruel, inhuman and racist reality of global capitalism, that the excluded and silenced knowledge of the world's peripheral Brazilian population is capable of producing creative actions, corporative and ethical technologies to fight against the technologies of power based on fascist, sexist, colonizing and patriarchal Euro-Western ideologies of whiteness! Save the right arrows of our ancestors that expand our access to other voices and sensory-affective values. Okê Kaboclo!!

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<sup>30</sup> Dancing rhythm created in Rondônia.

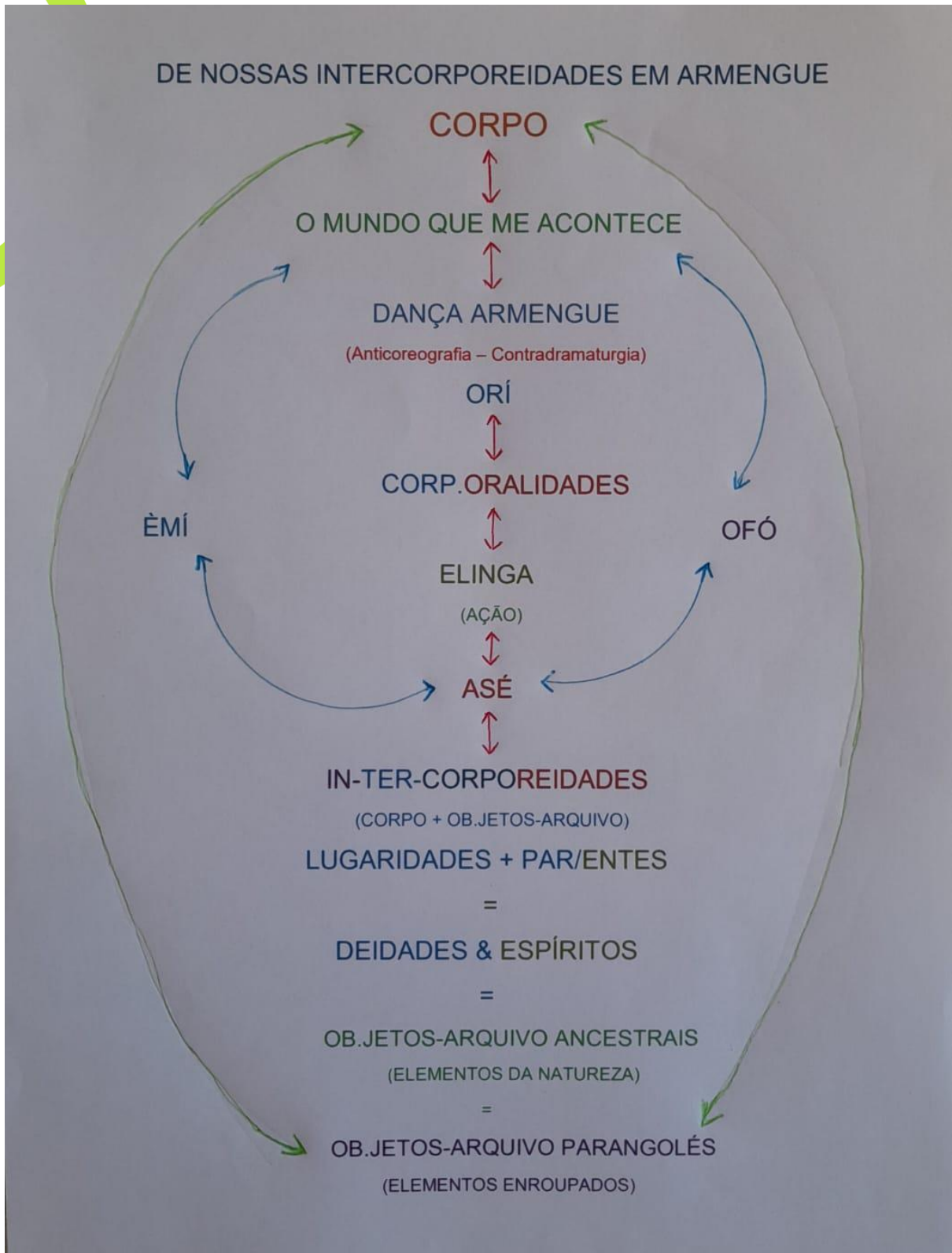


Figure 1 – Draft of our capt.graphies. Resource: Author's himself (2022)

**For everyone see:** Table with the presented terms that make up the pillars of Armengue Dance organized in an organization chart. Conceptual doodle showing typed words and squiggled arrows suggesting the relationship between terms.

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