

BookOunce: a book concept in Indigenous America

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ABSTRACT

The text is arranged in four dialogical moments: i) a (re)introduction of a bibliographic and countercultural becoming-America, obliterated in the erasures of colonial scriptures, ii) an archeology of the concept of book from the advent in the ancient Greek world of the anthropos as a giver of psychic-corporal form to the alphabetic graphics of the West, iii) the exposition of bookOunce as a possible book by Abya Yala, present in the semiophagias of difference (différOunce) of American grammatologies, and, finally, iv) the last textual moment addresses the finial enchantments, a present end as the cessation of the absolute, disenchanted and finished condition of the Western book that is enchanted through the ancestral (re)beginning, the deification of things and the fabrication of life by the Amerindian writings of the peoples of Terra Viva, also known as Amoxtlapan, land of living books. Faced with a theoretical perspective of argumentation, the text walks through the terran assemblages of geophilosophy proposed by Deleuze and Guattari and the deconstructive space-time deferral of the book proposed by Derrida, however, with a difference, both methods are devoured by multinatural perspectives of the Amerindian peoples. To jaguarize the book, this is the ounceological objective of the text.

Keywords: bookOunce; différOunce; indigenous grammatology – America; philosophy of the book; amerindian thought.

(RE)INTRODUCTION: THE RELEVANCE OF A BECOMING-AMERICA

É preciso criar um lugar à parte para a América. Claro, ela não está isenta da dominação das árvores e de uma busca das raízes. [...] Diferença entre o livro americano e o livro europeu, inclusive quando o americano se põe na pista das árvores. Diferenças na concepção do livro. ‘*Folhas de relva*’. E, no interior da América, não são sempre as mesmas direções: à leste se faz a busca arborecente e o retorno ao velho mundo. Mas o oeste rizomático, com seus índios sem ascendência, seu limite sempre fugidio, suas fronteiras movediças e deslocadas. Todo um ‘mapa’ americano, no oeste, onde até as árvores fazem rizoma. A América inverteu as direções: ela colocou seu oriente no oeste, como se a terra tivesse devindo redonda precisamente na América; seu oeste é a própria franja do leste. (Não é a Índia, como acreditava Haudricourt, o intermediário entre o Ocidente e o Oriente, é a América que faz Pivô e mecanismo de inversão.) A cantora americana Patti Smith canta a bíblia do dentista americano: não procure a raiz, siga o canal (Deleuze; Guattari, 1995, v. 1, p. 40-41)¹.

In Digressão sentimental sobre Oswald de Andrade, Antônio Cândido (1977) narrates a telling episode that exemplifies the “becoming-America” proposed by Deleuze and Guattari. Around 1950, Oswald de Andrade was preparing to apply for the Philosophy Chair at the Universidade de São Paulo. Antônio Cândido, however, insisted that he should not apply, arguing that it was a technical field for which he was unprepared for (lacking formal training), and the endeavor might wear him down. Searching for the right words, Antônio Cândido (1977, p. 72)² recalls hearing convoluted vocabulary like “ser-no-outro,” “por-si,” “orifício existencial,” and, to illustrate his point, mentioned what a renowned scholar in the selection committee could ask him: “Diga-me V. S. qual é a impostação hodierna da problemática ontológica?” And, without batting an eye, Oswald responded to Cândido’s simulation: “V. Excia. está muito atrasado. Em nossa era de devoração universal o problema não é ontológico, é odontológico.” In other words, Amerindian issues are not substantial, nor do they refer to the Western imaginary of an exclusive definition of Being.

Oswald de Andrade’s announcement of a new era sparked a world-effect: the meaning of being was devoured by the beast of the outside. The beast and the outside heralded the contemporary and ancestral consumption of symbols (semiofagy) of Amerindian thought, an odontological turn.

Amerindian language devoured the canonical reality of the West, and philosophy became logological anthropophagy³. Within the linguistic structure of philosophy’s signification, syntax transformed from amphibolies, semantics transfigured from homonyms, and grammar took perspective in equivocal usages provoked by the variation of wild bodies. Formerly, in his dispute for the monopoly of reality’s signification against the sophists, Aristotle (Aristóteles, 2002, p. 145-147) attributed the status of being senseless and the bearer of plant logos (*homoios phutôi*) to those who spoke without signifying something unique or those who spoke for the pleasure of speaking (*logou kharin legousin*). This topical exclusion of the other’s humanity and of another world – the world of the other – through language, was recalled during the European invasions of the lands of the First Nations. Here, the indigenous peoples were classified or dehumanized from the sense of being adopted by the ancient sophists. Hence, as Oswald de Andrade stated to Antonio Cândido in the staging of the court of reason, we, Amerindians, are dinner guests to form and the prisons of meaning; we devour the universal and its exclusive pretensions of humanity and reason.

From the Amerindian perspectives, humanity is a condition disseminated among all existences - there is no ontological distinction that outlines what being is and excludes from the world, under various gradients, the ontic dimension of beings. To be is to have a point of view, this is the perspective of Abya Yala, the Living Earth⁴. Amerindians are interested in seeing and eating according to their humanities, so that in the multiplicity of relationships and their agencies, they find in the other an enhancement of differentiation and vital potential.

Anthropophagy is the force (substance) that unites us, as stated in the first sentence of the *Manifesto antropófago* (Andrade, 2011, p. 67). In this world, every living being who sees and eats becomes pragmatically more relevant to the immanence of the odontological dietary regime and its semiofagies (swallowing of senses and meanings) than the immaculate abstinence of the transcendental being in its remembrances of the lost thing. The Amerindian book and writing are dimensioned by the jaguar record of meaning (*chilam balam*). With each attempt at totalitarian co-optation of meaning, the dinner guests to the form devour it. The objective is to connect thoughts (*chinā ātinānāi*), as the Marubo say, from their semiofagic agglutinations, not to imprison the folds of life in the dogmatic territory of the idea (*eidos*) and meaning (*ousía*).

In keeping with the tune of the odontological song, it evokes an ancestral and scriptural theme of Amerindian philosophy. Such bibliographic alliance of becoming-America becomes visible, for example, in Amerindian expressions: “to follow the path of risk” (*kusiwa*), used by the Amazonian Wayāpi peoples to talk about shamanic writing (Macedo, 2009), or “the path of the book” (*amoxhotoca*), used by the Mesoamerican Nahua peoples before European arrival (Léon-Portilla, 2012b). American books invert the directions of the European total book by opening other bibliographic perceptions obstructed by colonial decimation. Semiofagy, or the path of the book, represents liminal channels through which we can contemplate the concept of the book in a decolonized manner. This includes considering potential bibliographic cartographies that have resisted the genocidal and epistemicidal onslaught of the West’s totalitarian machine.

The American rhizome is a composite of cannibal associations. Pursued, burned, and recomposed by various colonial and post-colonial indigenous agencies, the ancestral books of Abya Yala move away from the colonial metaphysics of the “livro-aparelho de Estado” (Deleuze; Guattari, 1995, v. 1, p. 25)⁵ and begin to forge alliances with the world through their cannibal metaphysics (Viveiros de Castro, 2018).

The American book asserts itself in the becoming of the world’s skins, in the circumstances of its scriptural contexts, in the semiofagy of its acts, and in the multiplicity of its text-visual landscapes. The goal of this research is to reintroduce the elements of the *bookOunce*, forgotten in the discursive layers of the Western informational field. Hypothetically, the intention is to demonstrate how the American perception of the book and writing can alter the grammatical assumptions of bibliographic studies. Finally, under the shifting borders and inversions of becoming-America, the question is reposed: what is a book?

THE ANIMO-CORPOREAL BOOK: ANTHROPOS, THE GIVER OF FORM TO WESTERN GRAPHISMS

Sócrates – Pero si está solo cuando se hace a sí mismo esas reflexiones, sigue caminando conservándolas en sí a veces bastante tiempo.

Protarco – Totalmente.

Sócrates – ¿Y luego? ¿Piensas lo que yo con respecto a ello?

Protarco – ¿El qué?

Sócrates – **En mi opinión nuestra alma se parece en tales casos a un libro.**

Protarco – ¿Cómo?

Sócrates – **El recuerdo, al coincidir con las sensaciones sobre un mismo objeto, y aquellas reflexiones relativas a ello, me parece que en tales circunstancias vienen a escribir discursos en nuestras almas, y cuando ese escribano que hay en nosotros escribe cosas verdaderas, de ello resultan coincidir en nosotros opinión verdadera y discursos verdaderos, mas cuando escribe cosas falsas, resulta lo contrario de la verdad.**

Protarco – Me parece perfecto, y acepto lo que así se ha dicho.

Sócrates – Acepta también que haya al mismo tiempo otro artesano en nuestras almas.

Protarco – ¿Cuál?

Sócrates – **Un pintor, que después del escribano traza en las almas las imágenes de lo dicho.**

Protarco – ¿Cómo y cuándo decimos que opera éste?

Sócrates – Cuando uno, tras separar de la visión o de alguna otra sensación lo entonces opinado y dicho, ve de algún modo, en sí mismo las imágenes de lo opinado y dicho. ¿O no ocurre esto así en nosotros? (Platão, 1992, p. 74-75, grifo nosso)⁶.

According to Aristotle's earliest formulations (2007, p. 414), reading is one of the skills pertinent to the "art of grammar" and its *tekhnites* – grammarians – which Plato (1988, p. 110) referred to as makers or artisans of names. Alongside reading, writing is the other elemental and formative component of the grammar-word. "*Grammateion* was the term given by Aristotle (2010, p. 116) to the book-thought, translated by medieval commentators as *rasum tabulae* (Agamben, 1993, p. 35) – pure potency – and by modern ones as *tabula rasa* (Locke, 1999, p. 57) – the mind represented as a blank slate, an inherent faculty of understanding human nature⁷. *Grammateion* is the place of *grammas* or *grammatas*, the letters and their writings (*graphé*) – in the Aristotelian and Western case, alphabetical writing. Paul Otlet (1934, p. 12), for example, recalling the Western tradition, uses the terms *biblion*, *grapho* (*grammata gramme*), *liber* and *documentum* as synonyms for the foundation of Bibliology and Documentation.

Both in Antiquity and in Western Modernity, the book was directly associated with the animic question peculiar to the human species. While in Antiquity, the book oscillated between the categories of soul and body, in Modernity, the book inhabited the onto-epistemic pendulum of secular historicity and universality. As the sole giver of grammatical forms, man (*anthropos*), in his patriarchal sense of gender that shaped the carrier of discourses in the ancient Greek world, was the artisan of the book, a mediator (*aedo*) between the designs of the extra-world and the sacrament of human language.

Marked by the finite and mortal condition of the *anthropos*, the book is an artifact crafted under the immortal fingers of the soul. Despite its flirtation with immortality, the book is tainted by the speciesist condition of humans.

The corporeal dimension delimits the book, not only as a support or materializing container of the soulful attributes or intellectual labor, as the moderns say, but under the soulful figure of mortality. It is from the lifeless specter represented by the term "*soma*" and the cadaverous figures of Patroclus and Hector, that the body inscribes itself in the cartography of the Homeric human (Diogo, 2015, p. 358). In the anguish of not losing Patroclus, Achilles does not bury him. Patroclus becomes a ghost, an ambiguous figure – a dying and visible body whose soul allows itself to be seen. Only from the funerary rite of passage – the burial –, does the soul detach itself from the body and is led to the realm of shadows, where all humans will end up. The human work, their book, is death.

Through death, the body is born in the Greek world as a ghost awaiting a funerary ceremony that will enclose it in a tombstone. This ritualistic tradition was common in non-Western cultures and, probably, came into contact with the Greek world through the Egyptians, especially from *Thoth* (Hermes) and the myth of writing. Jacques Derrida (2013, p. 276)⁸ already told us: "o cadáver oriental está no livro."⁹ Plato leaves a series of traces in this direction and uses writing to weave his pharmacological arguments (Derrida, 2005). Initially, epigraphy is defined as the art of crafting tombstones and creating epitaphs, a facet of Epilogue, the science of stones. This implies a literal sense of artisanal treatment of stones, such as in the production of tombstones or sculptures. Furthermore, a figurative sense is attached to the term, influenced by its Greek roots. The Greek term for stone, *herma*, initially referred to sepulchral stones. This connotation of *herma* is linked with Hermes, the psychopomp god¹⁰, renowned for guiding souls during their *psychostasy*¹¹ using his caduceus-crafted feather (Qalam¹²). Hermes is a poetic scribe of phantoms: in writing, he transforms the lifeless body into a ghost (the living-dead) and guides its soul.

This hermeneutic practice, associated with Hermes, was associated by Plato (2000, p. 81) to the rhetorician, whom he named a “logographer,” the maker of discourses. In his dialogue with Phaedrus, Socrates (2000, p. 90)¹³ inquires, “não te parece que a retórica é uma psicogogia, uma arte de conduzir as almas através das palavras, mediante o discurso?” Contrary to the epitaph of King Midas¹⁴, a phantasmal script, the moralistic Socratic dialectic professed: “todo o discurso deve ser formado como um ser vivo” (Plato, 2000, p. 98-99)¹⁵, a distinct organism, harmonious and mortal, meaning, with a beginning (head | birth), middle (internal and external organs | adulthood), and end (feet | death).

The discourse *corpus* of the hermeneutic epigrammatist – rhetorician and sophist – is fluid and spectral, whereas the Socratic discourse is ideal and static. While the former is made up of namemakers (grammarians) and discourse crafters (logographers) and is inscribed in the scriptural performances of various graphisms, the latter is oral, hieratic, and relies on the intelligible condition of the living as a like entity—human and civic, capable of speaking within the polis. The Platonic world comprises a series of onto-epistemic distinctions: essence and appearance, intelligible and tangible, original and copy, idea and image. The ability to discern the intelligibility of a thing is an ontological condition of sharing the form (eidos), that is, the ontology of informing¹⁶. The intelligibles give form to something – they inform, they imprint the mold of the idea onto the corporeal matter – and the tangible elements, upon receiving the action of the idea, they are grasped by the gift of grounding. Thus, according to Platonic political ontology, intelligible individuals are politically instituted as “good copies” (*eidolon*), tangible representatives of the idea. Splendid appearances and well-founded, these tangible beings are made in the image and likeness of the Idea (*eidos*). The task of Platonic informational ontology is to elevate to the sublime the lineage of the likeminded (Deleuze, 2006), rendering them akin to a pure book untainted by the scriptural presence of the soul, the inner scribe-painter of the epigraph of this contextualizing section.

In the scene featuring the book-soul, Plato takes the phantasmatic scriptural corpus and purifies it, thus minimizing the impact of the body’s agency on the soul. The dual aspect of the scriptural *pharmakon* (*biblion*) – memory’s poison and cure – that Hermes (*Thoth*) provided to King Tamuz in the myth of writing (Platão, 2000, p. 121, §274e), is removed. Consequently, writing becomes solely associated with the soul’s intelligible dimension. Plato establishes the book as a crucial element of the being’s “stage of interiority” (Silva, 2022), a metaphor for the soul.

Platonism introduces an ontological exclusion in the polis, a process of distinguishing between “good” and “bad” copies – a clear division between beings capable of receiving form – the intelligible beings or humans¹⁷, particularly male – and “other beings” devoid of form and reduced to the non-human state of phantoms. The latter is a macro-term Plato employs for all formless beings excluded from the Republic – women, children, slaves, foreigners, gypsies, poets, scribes, artists, musicians, animals, among others. Platonic thought aims to expel, exclude, and suppress the dissimilar¹⁸, the *polis*’ simulacra. In essence, the simulacrum (or phantom) represents difference— a demonic image destined for atonement and deemed as non-being. Between the idea (model) and the images (copies) reside the phantoms (*phantasmatas*), the “bad copies” – images without resemblance, a pure becoming without measure that eludes the influence of form. Phantoms, thus, symbolize the stigma of the body and difference. These phantasmatic appearances, labeled as imitators in *A República* (Platão, 2017, p. 456-461), are considered malignant, perverse, and insidious simulacra, disrespecting both foundation and the founded. The phantoms, being formless (*informis*), fail to meet the standards of copying and the expectations of the model.

Banished to the ontoepistemological non-existence of “exteriority” (Silva, 2022), these residual elements persist in a state of becoming, found in the materiality of books and their scriptures, and in the actions of their phantoms – the scriptural agents: the artist, the scribe, and the painter (Platão, 2017, p. 456-461).

Within Plato's world order, these elements and material beings exist between the intelligible world and the sensible world. In other words, they dwell in an intriguing third world of murky, illegitimate, and hybrid intelligibility (*khóra*), as per Plato's conception (1992, p. 202-204).

Plato's book-soul aims to imprint an idea, to provide a foundation, a characteristic, and a form that can be identified. This is done to dismiss, eradicate, and prohibit all manifestations of difference (Deleuze, 2006, p. 369). The act of assigning form to something involves a power relation intent on suppressing the concept of difference in favor of identity, reducing the matriarchal formlessness to the patriarchal informational ideal. Platonic ontology relegates the book to alphabetic symbols, which are crafted by the painter-scribe within the soul of the western free man, the custodian of cultural heritage.

The Platonic book-soul resurfaces in Aristotle's logology, the science of logos. In the book *De Anima* or *Da Alma*, Aristotle (2010, p. 116, §430a)¹⁹ refers to the book-thought, the potency for thought²⁰ that shapes the soul – *grammateíon* – “a tabuinha de escrever onde nada está escrito”. For Aristotle, the essence of *anthropos* resides in attributing meaning to its thoughts, to express something substantial and unique to its fellow man²¹. Thus, in Aristotle, the essence of being is its *grammateíon*; to endow it with meaning – to inform it – is its anthropic task. All these conceptual elements are structuring figures of Aristotelian metaphysics, and the book is a reserve to which thought is destined in Aristotle's work. He is “[...] o escrivão da natureza, que molhava a pena no pensamento”²² (Agamben, 2013, p. 23)²³, as noted in the entry dedicated to Aristotle in the *Suda*, a late Byzantine lexicon and one of the world's earliest encyclopedias.

Before the spoken was divided, as mentioned by Aristotle, the oral and the written were unified in the rhythm of graphemes, or “oraliture”.²⁴ This term was coined by Leda Martins (1997, 2003) to denote

the textuality of the African peoples' afrographies and the drawings and symbols of Amerindians. In Aristotle's book *Peri Hermeneias*, or *Da Interpretação*, (2013), the rhythms of scriptural graphemes are condensed into the linearity of alphabetic writing's phonetic system. The linear nature of alphabetic writing is inextricable from phonologism, which asserts itself as a universal writing model through the non-contradictory singularity of meaning. This model results in a series of doctrines exclusive to the being (Western human): phonocentrism, logocentrism, and ethnocentrism (Derrida, 2013).

In the foundational relationships of *Metafísica*, Aristotle (2002, p. 25-27, §985, b14-20) argues that rhythm evolves into a scheme and a scheme becomes form – fundamentally in-*forma*-tional – in its physical, moral, and conceptual manifestations. The form is not only aspectual and similar in its function to the letters of the alphabet – an example Aristotle borrowed from Democritus's “primitive hypothesis of the atom” – but also moral, indicating the political meaning of humanity. The seemingly inherent meaning enforced by the alphabetic letter establishes the political significance of humanity – the centrality of the Greek logos that transformed, over the course of Western history, into man, citizen, and ultimately, with modernity, into the white European.

From the Aristotelian perspective, which will persist in the anthropological machinery of the West (Agamben, 2011), form is a noun characterizing the meaning of being, that is, ontology establishes the *anthropos* through a semiogenesis. Meaning defines the human, since its function (*ergon*) is to signify. This principle of recognition and representation through meaning is a defining factor of humanity, and through its letters, the unique human history book was written, overlooking differently human beings, categorized by ethnocentric linear writing, among other things as *agraphou*.²⁵ *Agraphous* refers to peoples without alphabetic writing, specifically those who could not write in Greek during Antiquity, Latin during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, and Indo-European languages during

Modernity. A good counterpoint example is found in the words of André Baniwa (2021, p. 1)²⁶: “a escrita Baniwa sempre existiu”. The Baniwa refer to writing as *lidana*, which can incorporate graphism in basketry, petroglyphs in stones, and relates to drawings, graphisms, letters, and words. These are gateways to the ancestral realm of traditional Baniwa knowledge.

Beyond the ontological sense, the so-called “*agraphous* peoples” were classified as *homo alalus*, humans without articulated speech. As such, they were marginalized to a state of non-humanity, akin to slaves, women, children, and foreigners — ontic assets (*patrimonium*) of the patriarchal despot — the free man (*anthropos*). This aphasia isn't physiological or related to speech-language; it's an act of exclusion and political ostracism towards individuals whose language classification schemes are marked by difference and minor-tone usage of their bodies. Found in Aristotle (Aristóteles, 2002, p. 10-13)²⁷, this exclusionary act establishes philosophy as the “única ciência livre,” as it is the “única que é em vista de si mesma,” positioning the “homem livre” as its quintessential operator. This is because *anthropos* is the only being “that is for himself” (*ho hautoû héneka*), irrespective of all alterity. This unveils the somber facet of Aristotelian thought (the book).

The alphanumeric codes used by the so-called universal population (Western civilization) define the world through a unique spiritual lens. Aristotle's interpretation of meaning (Aristóteles, 2002, p. 145-147)²⁸ posits that “não é significar uma infinidade de coisas, deste modo não haveria discurso” (*ouk an eîê logos*). “Não significar uma única coisa é não significar nada absolutamente” (*to gar mê hen sêmainein outhen sêmainen estin*). Because “não se pode pensar em nada sem pensar em algo único” — the total book. Without a distinct word or a comprehensive book to represent “something,” communication collapses, “não diz nada (*an de mêthen*), não sustenta discurso algum (*ton mêthenos ekhonta logon*)”. If the meaning is not understood, “tal homem é semelhante a uma planta” (*homois*

phutôi), a non-human entity devoid of *logos*, and hence, the book — the physical embodiment of thought. If one “falar por falar” (*logou kharin legousin*) without aiming to symbolize or give form to something distinct, they risk descending into the domain of non-human animals. Alternatively, adopting the *logos* of a plant, they merely vegetate. Devoid of rationality and discourse (*aneu logon*), such a person can become alienated, transitioning into a state of non-humanity (*alogon pragma*). Absent a body of work, such a person remains formless. Lacking the letters specific to humans, the unsuitable letter-less state of formless beings is inscribed in the body of *wordworld* (*palavramundo*) and in the book of existence, left uncharacterized (*zoê*) by the patriarchal suppression of exceedingly human males. The element of death, or thanatology, lies in the exclusion of the body politically defined as non-human — that is, a body lying outside the single-meaning human inventory. Thus configured, the book stamps the mark of death on those viewed as different under its authoritarian gaze — from foreigners to heathens, animals to witches, children to mythical creatures, all custodians of the minor books in the libertarian library.

In terms of linguistic science, within the history of Western metaphysics, language has disembodied itself from the voice, and the human being has become a concept and a political form distinct from that of the animal. As the unambiguous bearer of *idea* (*eidos*) and meaning (*ousía*), humans have become politically and informatively capable of substantively and exclusively shaping their own world. Grammarians began their treatises with the classificatory definition of voice (*phoné*), as *phoné synkechiméne*, the confused voice of animals and plants, and *phoné enarthros*, the voice articulated by human meaning. The Latin expression *vox articulata* equates to *phoné engrámmatos*, that is, the voice that can be written and understood through letters²⁹. The confused voice of animals and plants is “unwritable,” “unrelatable,” and without signification — they do not sustain any discourse (*mêthena ekhei logon*) —, whereas the articulated voice is human due to its potential to be effectively

inscribed in alphabetic script. Outside the chorus of animal voices relegated to *agraphia* and *aletria*, humans enter the meaning of language, of speaking and thinking. The rhythm made schematic caused the sound of the voice to disembodiment itself from language (to substantiate itself). An emblematic episode was the ill-fated encounter between the Lusitanians and the Tupinambá on the coast of Pindorama, where the quincentenaries, whose patron was Aristotle, landed on Amerindian lands and promptly questioned the humanity of the natives, whose language did not pronounce *f*, *r*, *s*, that is, they spoke without articulation and grammar, therefore without signifying (Viveiros de Castro, 2017). From this logocentric observation, the white settlers skeptically questioned whether the peoples of Abya Yala possessed a soul or not, if they were human or not. As a result of this “ceticismo misantrópico colonial e racial” (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 136)³⁰, the books of Abya Yala were smothered by the tyranny of the total book. The linear script founds the total book and, politically³¹, turns those formless beings without universal-alphabetic script (“*agraphos*”), therefore without books, into enslaved ones.

A ideia do livro é a ideia de uma totalidade, finita ou infinita, do significante; essa totalidade do significante somente pode ser o que ela é, uma totalidade, se uma totalidade constituída do significante preexistir a ela, vigiando sua inscrição e seus signos, independentemente dela na sua idealidade. A ideia do livro, que remete sempre a uma totalidade natural, é profundamente estranha ao sentido da escritura. É a proteção enciclopédica da teologia e do logocentrismo contra a disrupção da escritura, contra sua energia aforística e, contra a diferença em geral (Derrida, 2013, p. 21).³²

Situated outside of human meaning, the colonial condition of formless beings is characterized by non-existence, incapability, and ignorance. This epistemicidal meaning denies the distinctiveness and legitimacy of knowledge-bearers, their social organization methods, and their modes of understanding. These aspects are symbolically represented in a multi-dimensional fashion in their other books, which are erased by the linear identity of the total book. To the anthropological machinery of the West, the peoples of Abya Yala are negative particles of meaning (*informis*), representing that which seems not to exist, that which is absolutely non-existent, and that which cannot and should not exist, for it lacks an “here” - it signifies existential nothingness (*ouk on*).

Contrary to the ontologically significant man, there exists its symmetrical opposite: the human without work, or whose book does not pertain to the distinctive characters of humanity. This other, negatively depicted human, akin to plants and animals in the social and political structure of the metaphysics of coloniality, is represented in the theory of natural slavery (Aristotle, 1988), which shaped the enslaved and their non-human counterparts – the formless beings. Reduced to a formless condition, the imperfect work of the enslaved is the “use of bodies” (*he tou somatos chresis*); their symbolic language is the corporeality of their performances. Outside of the *nous* (intellect), the work of the enslaved is non-human (*ergon doulou*), while that of the free man reaffirms its exclusive lordly capacity to inform (*ergon anthropou*). The soul commands the body with a despotic order, while the intellect commands the appetite with a political mandate. In other words, the soul-book stands to the body-book just as the master stands to the slave. In this enslaved entity, the body is in use, while in the free man, the soul is at work according to reason.

Derrida (2013, p. 98)³³ posited that “o logocentrismo é uma metafísica etnocêntrica.” Claude Lévi-Strauss (1957, p. 318)³⁴ hypothesized that “a função primária da comunicação escrita é facilitar a servidão,” either i) through overt domination of one group over another, or ii) through subjugation to the laws of the polis and the state, particularly the modern one, with its consistent regulation of precarious labor modes. In Abya Yala, based on onto-theological and racist principles, the soul-book marked the native body and the African diaspora as entities damned and stained by sin, labor, and reproduction, as highlighted by Frantz Fanon (1968, 2008).

Excluding that which makes it possible, the book of meaning is the primary entity that cannot tolerate contradiction (Cassin, 2005), and the non-contradictory is the formal essence of man (*anthropos*). Meaning is constructed in such a way that something either has meaning or it does not, that is, “[...] é da natureza do sentido o fato de ser totalitário, quer dizer, reduzir a si mesmo tudo o que não é ele” (Cassin, 2005, p. 84-85)³⁵.

The enslaved is defined by the use of the body (not the intellect), outside of meaning – a person “[...] sem obra, aquele ser vivo que, embora sendo humano, é excluído da humanidade – e, por essa exclusão, incluído nela – para que os homens possam ter uma vida humana, ou seja, política” (Agamben, 2017, p. 41)³⁶.

The Western foundation of informational ontology reveals the formless as the condition of possibility and materialization of the informational being, or, in the terms of Sueli Carneiro (2005), the non-being as the foundation of being – referencing the condition of Black people in Brazil. In a broader context, beyond Brazil, Achille Mbembe (2014) describes this state as the “becoming-black of the world,” where those considered formless and peripheral to the major language (Deleuze; Guattari, 1977) are circumscribed in the Western classification schemes.

Distinct from the repulsive characterization of the other that emerges in the informational ontology of the soulful-corporeal book and its classificatory attributes of negativity, universalization, teleological and hierarchical exclusivity of the Western human (Olson, 1999), we introduce the Amerindian perspective of *bookOunce*, grounded in the other as a vector of transformation and enhancement of life. Heeding Leda Martins’ (2003, p. 78)³⁷ lesson: “não existem culturas ágrafas.” On the eve of the total book and its ethnocentric teleology: the Amerindian writing and its transformational graphisms. According to Derrida (2013), the past of phonetic writing is inscribed on the tablets of non-linear scriptures. Beneath the erasures of this text deprived by the “universal people,” we read and conceptually envision the Amerindian book, inscribed in the folds of human corporeality and in the graphisms of its symbolic languages. Sharing meals of form and semiovorous of singular meaning, the peoples of Abya Yala devour all the disenchantment of Western mortality and regurgitate in a manner overflowing with the possibility and multiplicity of altering ways of life, as described by Oswald de Andrade (2011, p. 70-71)³⁸ in the *Manifesto Antropofágico*: “perguntei a um homem o que era o Direito.

Ele me respondeu que era a garantia do exercício da possibilidade. Esse homem chamava-se Galli Mathias. Comi-o,” or, as at the beginning of this quote: “A magia e a vida. Tínhamos a relação e a distribuição dos bens físicos, dos bens morais, dos bens dignários. E sabíamos transpor o mistério e a morte com o auxílio de algumas formas gramaticais.”

BOOKOUNCE: A DIFFÉRONCE IN THE AMERICAN GRAMMATOLOGY

Talvez em meu rosto estivesse escrita a magia, talvez eu mesmo fosse a meta de minha busca. Estava nesse afã quando me lembrei de que o jaguar era um dos atributos do deus. Então minha alma se encheu de piedade. Imaginei a primeira manhã do tempo, imaginei meu deus confiando a mensagem à pele viva dos jaguares, que se amariam e gerariam infindavelmente, em cavernas, em canaviais, em ilhas, para que os últimos homens pudessem receber. Imaginei essa rede de tigres, esse candente labirinto de tigres, causando horror nas pradarias e nos rebanhos para conservar um desenho. [...] Dediquei longos anos a aprender a ordem e a configuração das manchas. Cada cega jornada me concedia um instante de luz, e assim consegui fixar na mente as negras formas que marcavam a pelagem amarela. Algumas incluíam pontos; outras formavam riscas transversais na face interior das pernas; outras, anulares, repetiam-se. Talvez fossem um mesmo som ou uma mesma palavra. Muitas tinham bordas vermelhas (Borges, 2008, p. 106-107)³⁹.

Reader of Amerindian writings, Jorge Luis Borges (2008) in “The God’s Script” shares the adventure of deciphering lived by Tzinacán, a Mayan sage, who discovered the scriptures of Qaholom, his god, inscribed on the skin of a jaguar that was imprisoned beside his stone cell. With the boundaries between literal (own) and figurative (improper) language as constructed by Western rhetoric erased, in the grammatology of America, the jaguar becomes a *bookOunce*. Its ancestral skin, perpetually painted, marks the living and ancestral scripture of the Amerindian peoples. To this scripture, I refer to as *bookOunce*, in dialogue with *diferOnça*, an Amerindian grammatological (or oncological) difference proposed by Viveiros de Castro (2018b).

Consuming the *différance* of a book spaced over time, from the indigenous American scriptures, Gordon Brotherston (1986) proposes a grammatology of America, outside the boundaries of phonologism and its ethnocentric and logocentric Western presuppositions. Through other indigenous paths, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2018b) introduces *diferOnça* (*différance*), spelled with a capital O to resemble the open maw of the jaguar. *DiferOnça* is a politically anthropophagic reinterpretation of concepts of difference found in Derrida and Deleuze. From this perspective, we discuss *bookOunce*, a portmanteau born from a devouring union between the jaguar (beast) and the book (outside), a rhizomatic and grammatological *intermezzo* of *diferOnça* (*différance*). Born from an American grammatology and its *diferOnça*, the *bookOunce* is a scriptural materiality of dissident Amerindian senses.

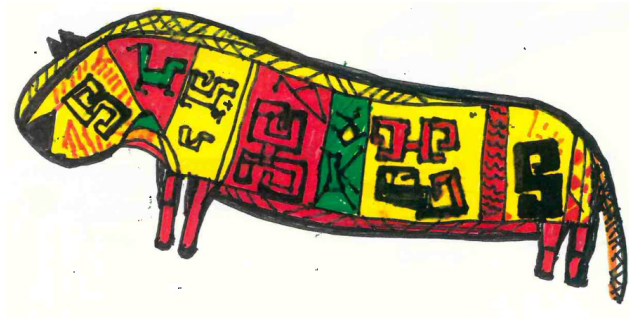
The *bookOunce* is characterized by a “fantastic realism” (not exotic) as designated by literary classifications, or by a “magical materialism” as philosophically argued by Carlos Cardozo Coelho (2020). Once the link of necessity and representation between words and things is devoured, the extraordinary becomes a telluric attribute of description and perspective in the books of Amerindian cosmologies: “o livro [ameríndio] é uma realidade maravilhosa nos universos dos homens e dos deuses” (León-Portilla, 2012a, p. 86)⁴⁰. Regarding this configuration of the marvelous and the extraordinary in Amerindian worlds, Nimuendaju (1981, p. 18)⁴¹, from the perspective of the Sipáia peoples, states:

Um bando numeroso de demônios povoa as matas, os rios e o céu da terra Sipáia. [...] Os índios não os consideram como entes sobrenaturais, em nossa acepção do termo, pela simples razão de que para eles não existe nada de sobrenatural. No conceito dos índios, o que conta é a maior ou menor atividade de um poder mágico imanente a todos os seres, e se alguém é capaz de produzir alguma coisa que aos outros pareça prodigioso. Esse extraordinário não tem limites: simplesmente, tudo é possível e natural.

A skilled craftsman of Latin American prose, Borges (2008) through a fictional (fabricated) tale, conveys a real and perspectival manner of Amerindian writing: the natural and artificial skins of the American world’s body. Gordon Brotherston (2001) in *Meaning in a Bororo jaguar skin* unveils a set of meanings attached to the jaguar skin of the Bororo people, both from the external and natural standpoint of the skin – as in the case of Tzinacán – and from the production and crafting done by the Bororo on the skin’s inner face. *Adugo biri* is how the Bororo refer to these jaguar skins and, complementarily, the painted skins. *Adugo biri* also signifies writing. *Ikuie adugo* is a specific expression for face painting, of the eye and of the star. These arrays of paintings and graphics are associated with the night sky, the site of the battle between the Jaguar, the Sun, and the Moon that culminated in the banishment of the Sun and Moon to the sky and the emancipation of Earth for the enjoyment of human and extra-human lives.⁴².

Owing to its remarkable ability to adeptly navigate various geographies – both terrestrial and spiritual –, its skill in hunting across diverse environments, and its deeply painted skin – a defining hallmark of the human – the jaguar is the quintessential image of the vital potency that Amerindians pursue. Indigenous ancestors from Mesoamerica (1500 B.C. – 400 B.C.), the Olmec people, depicted in their stelae humans as a hybrid of jaguar-person with human-person (Coe, 1972). The human par excellence is a teratomorphic being: the beautiful is the beast (Van Velthem, 1995). Emulating capacities akin to that of the jaguar is a sought-after aspiration in numerous Amerindian societies (Taylor; Viveiros de Castro, 2019), and this possibility manifests through the skin and its body paint, an immanent boundary between various worlds and their inhabitants.

Figure 1 – The jaguar and his painted skin



Source: Anakari drawings cited by Van Velthem (1995, p. 155).

In Amerindian cosmologies, skin serves as a transformative sign of life. Life is painted, and these paintings facilitate differentiation amongst the entities of this all-living world. While animals, plants, minerals, ancestral beings, and spirits “have an image” meaning they are permanently painted, humans, to differentiate themselves and to assume a viewpoint amidst various multi-natural worlds, need to craft their skin – that is, paint it. Human-folk are painted. Their otherness is colored.

In Amerindian societies, the painted body is the yardstick of humanity. Bodily inscriptions dictate the condition of a person, serving as the genesis of their perspective (Taylor; Viveiros de Castro, 2019). Graphics, designs or “patterns” (*yonchi*), as discussed by Peter Gow (1999) with reference to the Piro people of the Bajo Urubamba River in the Peruvian Amazon, are prerequisites for individuals to become human amongst many humans, essentially, to inhabit a vantage point. Pedro Cesarino (2012) noted a similar concept regarding the Marubo people, inhabitants of the Javari basin in the Brazilian Amazon.

The Marubo refer to these design patterns (writings) as *kene*, which chronicle the oral-written (oraliture) history of the people in memory places – the books configured by the world’s skins. A Marubo shaman narrates: “os riscos [a escrita] são o *chinã-kene* dos *nawa-rasî* [não-índios]. O *nawa-rasî papirî kene* [o *kene* de papel dos não-índios] é a escrita” (Franchetto, 2018, v. 1, p. 94)⁴³.

Of uncertain anatomy, Amerindian books are crafted on bodies, necklaces, baskets, pots, clothing, fans, sieves, nets, or found in fauna, flora, or even in the foreign bodies of other peoples (Gow, 1999). Facing dispersed humanity, the books of the Living Earth aren’t confined to a single tribe but are present in jaguar-folk, parrot-folk, snake-folk, fish-folk, leaf-folk, spirit-folk, and, ultimately, in the infinite and infinitesimal citizens of the “florestas de cristais” – the “archi-polis virtual” of the Abya Yala peoples (Viveiros de Castro, 2006, p. 323)⁴⁴. Abya Yala’s books are potentially formless, virtual traces – a unique individuation.

In a world where humanity is the nature of the subject, or the ontological condition common to beings, drawing designs on the body is to fabricate and distinguish the specist humanity in the eyes of others – to specify, among the variations of the wild body, which or with which human we refer to. Thus, as Taylor and Viveiros de Castro (2019) contend, the body is composed of perspectives, and the skin, which the ancient Greeks referred to as *biblion*, is “a casing that binds the parts and gives the body a specific identity” (Lima, 2002, p. 12-13)⁴⁵, as articulated by Tânia Stolze Lima (2002, p. 12-13)⁴⁶: “é ela [a pele] que atua como um princípio de individuação e que fundamenta a transformação interespecífica de que falam os mitos e os discursos xamânicos: é possível um homem transformar-se em onça ou arara na medida em que é possível vestir uma outra pele.”

Estariamos assim diante de uma ‘condensação visual’ [...] Teríamos a condensação de várias ‘vestimentas’ sobre um só suporte, o corpo do homem. Teríamos então um homem (segundo o seu ponto de vista e o de sua sociedade), cuja pele é o suporte de grafismos (de motivos agentivos que são a imagem – ou parte da imagem – de outros seres segundo seus pontos de vista), vendo realizar sobre si o poder agentivo da transformação gráfica, ou seja, a realização do processo de metamorfose feito pela sobreposição e pela condensação das imagens (Macedo, 2009, p. 518)⁴⁷.

To be painted is a pivotal and contingent characteristic in differentiating the human among Amerindian peoples. This perspective was challenged by the colonial evangelization efforts that revolved around the concept of the soul-book. Following the Platonic resemblance between soul and book as discussed earlier, a story of the missionary Sanchez-Labrador recounted by Lévi-Strauss (1957) stands out. Rooted in the Christian Neoplatonic principle that man is made in the image and likeness of God, Sanchez-Labrador, upon witnessing the indigenous bodies inscribed with non-representational drawings⁴⁸, enigmatic to the cleric’s representation, felt disconcerted. He perceived the indigenous people’s act as disdainful towards the Creator’s work, as they altered their appearances, thus crafting a body unlike God’s image⁴⁹. What eluded Sanchez-Labrador was that humanity, for the natives, is a condition spread amongst all beings capable of holding a viewpoint – this being the thesis of Amerindian perspectivism⁵⁰.

Amerindian peoples do not contest the soul or humanity of the Other. This is not the sole property of any being. Instead, they believe that what sets us apart and makes us distinctively human are the body designs that mark our flesh – an indigenous book – differentiating us from Other humans – animals, plants, spirits, the dead...⁵¹, or any entity capable of holding a viewpoint. Lévi-Strauss (1957) concludes the tale of missionary Sanchez-Labrador by stating: to be human, one must be painted. With its transformed image, in the Yanomami sense (*utupè*), and pronounced dissimilarity, the Amerindian human is destined to become a jaguar (Mussa, 2009). Or, as João Guimarães Rosa (2017, v. 2, p. 767)⁵² stated in his tale “Meu tio o Iauaretê”, through jaguar-transformed language: “de repente, eh, eu oncei...”

If “um livro existe apenas pelo fora e no fora” as posited by Deleuze and Guattari (1995, v. 1, p. 18)⁵³, the book *Ounce* melds with the beast of the outside. In “A queda do céu: palavras de um xamã Yanomami”, Davi Kopenawa and Bruce Albert (2015, p. 66)⁵⁴ refer to the book as a “pele de imagens” (*utupayasiki*). This book *Ounce* is profoundly alive, perspectively human, and radically transformative. The image skins of the jaguars represent the metonymic American book – the *bookOunce*. Every body is a wild book in the cultured jungle (Descola, 1988).

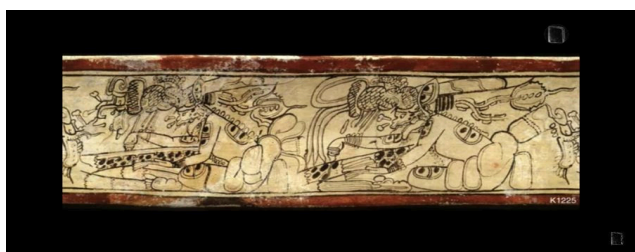
Prior to its canonical definition, the book as skin was evident in the Greek word *biblion*, the “skin” (*membranae*) or the “film” (*diphthera*) that potentially supports and facilitates any and all writings, every possible book format, without being constrained by it, as argued in Derrida’s *différance* (2004, p. 21). Between the Western and Amerindian worlds, the term “book” might be homonymous, an ideomorphic concept. However, materially, the books of the Abya Yala peoples are distinct.

In the entry titled “Book” from the *Einaudi Encyclopedia*, Alfonso di Nola (2000) recalls the lexicon of the book and its pragmatics in the “Old World.” Initially, Nola (2000, p. 216-219) points out the etymological connection associating the book with leaf, tree, and wood. An integral step in constructing a book involves preparing wooden tablets (*tabula*), scraped and readied to receive writing (*graphé*) through incised scratching on wax-coated tablets (*grammateion epitēdeiōtēs*), or, with a feather (*stillus*), on wooden tablets (*tabula*) covered in the white lacquer of the Latin world. Aligning with the series book-bark-tree-skin, in cultures distinct from the Greco-Roman world, the semantic root of the book is associated with “engraving,” “incising,” and “marking” as fundamental actions where humans inscribe their thoughts onto a medium for transmission. For instance, in Hebrew and certain Semitic languages, the word for book is *sēfer*, an incision or mark, closely related to *sipporen*, meaning “nail.”

Similarly, the Hebrew terms *kěthāv* and *mikhtāv* pertain to the “act of writing.” In modern Hebrew, *mikhtāv* translates to “letter,” but it can be found in ancient texts meaning *měgillāh* – “scroll” (akin to *gll* ‘to roll up’) – and *midrāsh* (interpreted as “sermon” or “commentary”), the former likely referring to the use of parchment for writing, which is still employed in synagogue liturgy, and the latter addressing the contents conveyed through the book, understood as an “examination of sacred writing.” The relationship between a book, engraving, and writing is evident. Such expressions from the Semitic world resonate with the notion of “incising” in the Indo-European languages or, in a later semantic development, the ideas of ‘painting’ and ‘marking’ present in Plato and the Greek synonyms for “writing” – “incising,” “engraving,” “painting” –, in Latin *scribere* “to imprint,” in Old English *writan* “to carve,” “to write,” in Old German *rīzan* “to draw,” “to incise” and in Modern German *ritzen* “to scrape” and *reissen* “to incise.”

Within this philological, anthropological, and semantic-pragmatic lexicon of the book, Nola (2000) draws attention to elements simultaneously present in Amerindian books. Employing the ethnography of Lúcia Hussak Van Velthem (1995) among the Wayana, we aim to briefly compare the vocabulary network of actions that form the conceptualization and composition techniques of the book in the “Old” and “New” worlds. “Decoração” is the term ascribed by Van Velthem (1995, p. 160)⁵⁵ to the body paintings of the Wayana. The assembly of elements applied to the body to grant it ethnic, social, and individual identity is termed decoration. Every decoration is visualized on a material base. The decorative techniques that produce the Wayana’s inscriptions can be grouped into at least three typologies: i) the binding technique, termed *tipumuhé* – furnished with threads – where, by wrapping threads around bows, arrows, and baskets (male-produced), nets, and hammocks (female-produced), the Wayana weave their texts, their patterns/drawings, and live iconographic motifs, like the *herí ié* (ant sting); ii) the carving technique (*tokoi*, sliced) whose method of incising provides an appearance to the engravings (bas-relief designs on a surface), generally adorned with red (*piré*) and black (*tariri*) pigments to enhance the drawings’ clarity.

The carving is performed using agouti and agouti fish, or god-fish, teeth, as well as allochthonous tools like knives and pocketknives. Generally, carvings are applied to benches, arrows, clubs, and gourds. The decoration of cassava bread during its baking, made using finger imprints, is also deemed carving; iii) the painting technique, distinguished by its absence of relief, is applied to a wide range of Wayana objects: ceiling wheels, arrows, clubs, baskets, benches, skirts for masks, ceramics, gourds, and the human body. Typically, these paintings are finger-painted (*tarpai*, *dampened*), offering a uniform surface in generic designs, or, when making patterns, the painted surface is scratched with nails, resembling the marks of jaguar claws (*těwüwüpkai*). Compared to the Latin stillus, Wayana brushes (*urukhem*) vary: a) palm slivers (*tiktikmatop*, dot-makers) equipped with cotton tips are used for ceramic and bench painting; b) bamboo slivers (*kurupēetop*, jenipapo-makers) are exclusively used for human body painting; c) clay and human hair (of the artist herself) are termed *umretpě* (formerly hair) and *miriktop* (pattern-maker), used in ceramic and ceiling wheel painting. The brushes are named *urukhem*, embodying an image, a human creation. The brush’s innate quality is to capture an image, an inherent habitus that enables the reproduction of designs. Thus, the book as an inscription is a conceptual homonym between Amerindian and Western worlds. The variance lies in the book’s nature, its untranslatable condition, meaning it perpetually translates since it can be articulated in more than one language (Cassin, 2022).

Figure 2 – The ceramic book (*The ceramic codex*)⁵⁶

Source: León-Portilla (2012a, p. 23).

The ambiguity between worlds is intertwined with the shamanic issue of translation (Cunha, 2017). The shaman is “o geógrafo, o decifrador, o tradutor” of the alternate worlds they navigate (Cunha, 2017, p. 114)⁵⁷. Their role involves journeying between species to discern the profound connections among different forms of beings, aiming to reconstruct the meanings from multiple perspectives. Not as a Western lawnem naming what they see, but as an interpreter of diverse viewpoints (Cunha, 2017). Shamans operate through the aleatory nature of metaphorical speech, using “twisted words” that are both selective and partial, weaving closer the entities from various worlds as perceived through the socio-cosmic relations of diverging humanities. In speaking of and quoting spirits, shamanic narration aligns with the essence of speech as *phanai* (Cassin, 2015). Given the multitude of agencies, it effaces its status as a speaking subject and the privilege of intentional meaning.

Through the effort of translation, it traces the journeys of voices from otherness, obliterating the literal identity of the statement. The shaman becomes a spirit. As Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2006, p. 322)⁵⁸ contends, “se o conceito de espírito designa essencialmente uma população de afetos moleculares, uma multiplicidade intensiva, então o mesmo se aplica ao xamã” who is “um ser múltiplo, uma micropopulação de agências xamânicas abrigadas em um corpo.”

The “wild” inhabitants of Abya Yala evoke the enchanted to shamanize their writings (Macedo, 2009; Viveiros de Castro, 2006). They summon the corporeality of the human persona to activate an ancestral cosmic bibliography, be it through written patterns materialized on the world’s skin or through invisible patterns⁵⁹ to untransformed eyes, applied as a pharmakon on the ill awaiting healing (Cunha, 2017). Envisioning a cosmic bibliographical graph is part of the yet-to-be-done labor of decolonizing our Western scriptural imagination.

Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2006, p. 321)⁶⁰ notes that “o termo *xapiripë* se refere também aos xamãs humanos, e a expressão ‘tornar-se xamã’ é sinônima de ‘tornar-se espírito’, *xapiri-pru*.” In Amerindian world multiplicity theory, to become a shaman is to metamorphose into a spirit. Regarding the Wayápi, a Tupi-Guarani family tribe found in villages in the Northwest region of Amapá (Brazil) and along the Camopi and Oiapoque rivers in Southern French Guiana, Silvia Macedo (2009) narrates the interpretative alliance between “writing and shamanic practices”. They use the same term to denote both graphic practices and writing. As Macedo (2009, p. 512)⁶¹ states, “escrita e grafismo são denominados pelos mesmos termos: *kusiwa*, *ekosiware*, palavras que descrevem grafismos, desenhos, decorações e escrita. *Kusiwa* significa literalmente um trajeto, uma vereda que se chama ‘caminho do risco.’”

This plane coexistence turns the act of “painting the skin” (*o-mongy*) into a simultaneous ornamental act of “decorating oneself”, and the patterns into transformative classifiers of the individual’s state. Graphically drawing the ancestral voices of the enchanted offers a means to access and establish vital communication with the other cosmological realms of the Wayâpi world (Macedo, 2009), in a timeless continuum without a beginning or end.

Figuea 3 – Jun Ba’tz’ y Jun Chuwe’n⁶²: Maya de Mayapán scribing gods



Source: Museo Regional de Antropología Palacio Cantón (2021).

Amerindian graphic designs are an intensive virtual map, a cosmic bi(bli)ographical book in becoming, much like the world creation myth of the Kapon people described by Abreu and cited by Cesarino (2012, p. 125)⁶³:

No começo do mundo, havia uma grande pilha de livros e cada povo retirava dali o seu volume específico. Os Kapon foram os últimos a retirar: não havia mais para eles livros inteiros, mas apenas as folhas que caíam dos volumes quando eles foram retirados. A reunião de todas essas folhas dava surgimento ao livro dos Kapon.

Studying the multiplicity of Amerindian books prompts a collapse in the classic Western conceptualization of the book. We need to connect with the wind that speaks through the leaves to hear the varied tales that belong to no one in particular, but which are mine, yours, and the Kapon’s as well.

FINICIAL ENCHANTMENTS FOR AN ANCESTRAL FUTURE: DEIFYING THINGS TO FABRICATE LIFE

Com flores, Doador da Vida,\com cantos dás cor,\com cantos sombreias\aos que háo de viver na terra.\Depois porás fim a águias e jaguares.\Só em teu livro de pinturas vivemos\aquí sobre a terra.\Com tinta negra apagarás\o que foi a irmandade,\a comunidade, a nobreza \Tu sombreia aos que háo de viver na terra.\Só em teu livro de pintura vivemos,\aquí sobre a terra⁶⁴ (León-Portilla, 2012a, p. 87)⁶⁵.

E ainda assim, diante da opressão, do saque e do abandono, nossa resposta [latino-americana] é a vida. Nem os dilúvios, nem as pestes, nem a fome, nem os cataclismos, nem mesmo as guerras eternas através dos séculos e séculos conseguiram reduzir a vantagem tenaz da vida sobre a morte. (García Márquez, 2019, p. 34)⁶⁶.

Finício is a portmanteau for the devouring of the end by the beginning. The end towards which American consumption of signs (semiofagia) points is that of logocentric teleology, the end of the book as the cessation of its absolute and completed condition. The bookOunce” is the end of the book as the end of linear writing and the beginning of Amerindian writing, its origin, its new and old beginning, a possibility reopened once more by the extramodern peoples of the Living Earth. At this juncture, this text is a writing enchanted by the material possibility of an ancestral future for the territory of the book – its ontoepistemic demarcations and polymorphic thresholds –, an ancient and contemporary contribution of geophilosophical significance and transformational relevance to the studies of Bibliography, Library Science, Information Science, and other epistemic landscapes that wish to form alliances with indigenous thought in favor of good living.

Before the unfortunate encounter with the universal peoples, the Mesoamerican peoples already had their books. Classified as “idolatrous books”⁶⁷ and, generically, as “things of the devil”, a large portion of the pre-Hispanic Amerindian books were brutally burned⁶⁸ by the colonial enterprise and its modern atrocities. However, inscribed on the border surfaces of worlds, the “bookOunce” persisted and presents itself in the ancestral contemporary on different supports: stones (stelae), murals, bones, wood, ceramics, maguey and amate paper (made from fig tree), specific skins – generally deer, but also jaguar skins (for formation texts) and the living bodies of humans –, as well as a series of other artifacts that permeate Amerindian forms of life (Batalla Rosado; Luis de Rojas, 1995).

Figure 4 – *Quetzalcóatl*, the original *tlacuilo*



Source: Vindobonense Codex cited by León Portilla (2012a, p. 257).

A common deity in various Mesoamerican pantheons, Quetzalcóatl is the first *tlacuilo* (scribe painter), giver of life and culture, and inventor of books. In some mythical representations of Quetzalcóatl⁶⁹, the god is dressed in jaguar skins in his indigenous rhetorical exercise of shaping figures and characters to shade the world in its colors, in books of florid words (Beristáin; Ramirez Vidal, 2004). The Nahua Mexicans called the book “*amoxtli*” and the libraries “*amoxcalli*”. The *tlacuilo*⁷⁰ (scribe painter) became *tlatamini* (wise) from the black and red inks (*tlilli*, *tlapalli*) of the books (*amoxtli*)⁷¹: “Él mismo es escritura y sabiduría” (León-Portilla, 2012b, p. 148)⁷².

The wise librarians (*amoxcalmatini*) of Abya Yala, the land of the living books (*amoxtlapan*), acted as *tlayoltehuiani*, a deifier of things. *Chilam balam* in direct translation, jaguar priest, was the homonymous expression for the jaguar scribe painter and for the “book of books” of some Maya peoples.

Through the graphisms of painted skins, scribe painters awakened the agency of things, as Gabriel García Márquez (2006, p. 7-8)⁷³ told us in his realistic fantastic work: “as coisas têm vida própria, tudo é questão de despertar a sua alma.” To awaken the soul, it must be inscribed in the heart of the people (*teyolía*). Among the Nahuas, *teyolía* is the “heart of the people”, a collective soul that communally branches out through the peoples⁷⁴. Constituent element of the rhizome-tree of humanity, *teyolía* makes agency with multiple peoples, from the most differed existences that compose the mineral, vegetable, animal, and cultural worlds (Pavón-Cuéllar, 2022). Quetzalcóatl is the protector god of humanity, a “deified heart” that wisely through his drawings dialogues with the heart of the people (*teyolía*). The Amerindian body and soul, gathered in the hearts of the peoples, are written and deified in the book: “él son los códices, de él son los códices... en sí mismo es como un libro de pinturas” (León-Portilla, 2012b, p. 148)⁷⁵. As observed by Brotherson (1997) in *La América indígena en su literatura: los libros del cuarto mundo*, the fact that Amerindian writings are not phonetically linked to a specific alphabetic script broadens the conceptual capillarity of the designs and allows the use of paintings by different peoples. Here is a brief bibliographic list of some Amerindian books (*BookOunce*): *Xiuhámatl*: Books of the years, *Tonalámatl*: Books of days and destinies, *Temicámatl*: Dream books, *Cuicámatl*: Ancestral songbooks, *Tlacamecayoámatl*: Genealogical books, *Tlalámatl*: Land books, *Huehuehlahtolli*: Books of old words, *Teoamatl*: Books of gods, *Titici*: Medical books, *Amoxmachiotl*: Books on books (León-Portilla, 2012a).

Figure 5 – Fac-símile of pre-hispanic Bórgia Codex



Source: Samantha Gerritse (2013, p. 8).

Dreaming in the manner of Amerindian peoples about other books and other writings is a way of studying them, filling oneself with memories long mutilated by colonial ventures. In this pragmatic exercise of conceptual imagination, dreaming is not a mode of alienation from the real world, nor a renunciation of practical life. It is a concrete and present way of conceiving practical life issues as possibilities. And these guarantees of possibilities, as taught by Oswald de Andrade (2011): we devour. Ailton Krenak (2019) argues that to follow dreams is to be informed by them, to give meaning to life through the dream experience; it is a path of learning. In this speculative dreaminess, which perhaps runs through all Amazonian philosophy, lies the revitalizing force of the book concept. Through the senses of Amerindian messages, this research is filled with vitality and seeks to transfer it to informational and bibliological studies.

The *bookOunce* is a report from the cultured jungle. The Amerindian image of time is ancestral and abundant, making the past an unpredictable excess that keeps updating, always and every time in a different way. The past never stops passing. The vision of the future is a gaze of a yesterday that will come, yet and once more. Another possible world already exists. In this way, with *differOnça* being an Amerindian formulation of virtual time, the ancient question curls up in the present: after all, what is a book?

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ENDNOTES

1 Translation: “America is a special case. Of course it is not immune from domination by trees or the search for roots. [...] The conception of the book is different. Leaves of Grass. And directions in America are different: the search for arborescence and the return to the Old World occur in the East. But there is the rhizomatic West, with its Indians without ancestry, its ever-receding limit, its shifting and displaced frontiers. There is a whole American “map” in the West, where even the trees form rhizomes. America reversed the directions: it put its Orient in the West, as if it were precisely in America that the earth came full circle; its West is the edge of the East. (India is not the intermediary between the Occident and the Orient, as Haudricourt believed: America is the pivot point and mechanism of reversal.) The American singer Patti Smith sings the bible of the American dentist: Don’t go for the root, follow the canal...” (Deleuze, Guatarri, 1986, p. 10).

2 Translation: “being-in-the-other”/ “for-itself”/ “existential orifice”/ “Can you tell me, sir, what is the present posture of the ontological problem?”/ “Your honor, you are way behind. In our age of universal devouring, the problem is not ontological, it’s odontological.” (Cândido, 1977, p. 72, editorial translation).

3 Barbara Cassin (2017, p. 168), regarding the sophist contradictions to the philosophical sense of reality, proposes a logological presupposition, as glimpsed in contemporary Lacanian psychoanalysis, which states: “a linguagem come o real”. From this semiofagic formulation of logology, I derive the conceptual expression: logological anthropophagy. Translation: “language eats reality.” (Cassin, 2017, p. 168, editorial translation).

4 Abya Yala means Mature Earth, Blooming Earth, or Living Earth. It’s an expression of self-designation from the Kuna people for the American continent, the use of which has been becoming increasingly widespread as a counter to the Western designation of America, a symbolic expression dissociated from the imagination of the original peoples. (Porto-Gonçalves, 2006).

5 Translation: “State-apparatus book” (Deleuze; Guatarri, 1995, v. 1, p. 25, editorial translation).

6 Translation: Socrates: But when one is alone, reflecting on these things, does he not continue walking, holding onto these thoughts, sometimes for quite some time? / Protarchus: Absolutely. / Socrates: What then? Do you think as I do about it? / Protarchus: What do you mean? / Socrates: It seems to me that in such moments our soul is much like a book. / Protarchus: How so? / Socrates: Memory, when it coincides with sensations about a particular object, and the subsequent reflections about it, seem to me to be like writings inscribed in our souls. When the inner scribe of our being writes truths, the result is a harmony of true belief and true discourse within us. But when what is written is false, the opposite of the truth emerges. / Protarchus: That seems right to me, and I concur with what has been said. / Socrates: Will you also accept that there exists another craftsman within our souls at the same time? / Protarchus: Who might that be / Socrates: A painter, who, following the scribe, sketches in our souls the images of what has been said. / Protarchus: How and when do we say this artist works? / Socrates: It’s when, after separating what was believed and spoken from the vision or other sensation, one somehow sees within oneself the images of the beliefs and utterances. Does this not happen within us? (Plato, 1992, p. 74-75, translation and emphasis ours, editorial translation).

7 The translations of the Aristotelian expression *grammateíon* are made notable by Albertus Magnus, in his translation of *De Anima*, but also in the *Summa Theologica* by Thomas Aquinas (question 79), in Descartes’ *Recherche de vérité*, and in Leibniz’s *Novos Ensaios sobre o Entendimento Humano*, as Duschinsky presents (2012).

8 Translation: “the oriental corpse is in the book.” (Derrida, 2013, p. 276, editorial translation).

9 This idea is found in Baracat Júnior (2006, p. 405) when he says that the material, therefore the book, is “[...] um cadáver adornado.” The “cadáver como emblema” is in the allegorical mannerisms of the Baroque (Benjamin, 1984, p. 239-243) and also in the symbolism of Mallarmé (2010, p. 181): “[...] a dobradura [livro] é um minúsculo túmulo da alma”. Translation: is “[...] a decorated corpse”; “corpse as emblem” (Baracat Júnior, 2006, p. 405, editorial translation) / “[...] the fold [book] is a tiny tomb of the soul.” (Mallarmé, 2010, p. 181, editorial translation).

10 Psychopomp is a word that originates from the Greek *psychopompós*, a combination of *psyche* (soul) and *pompós* (guide). In the case of Hermes, he is the god who guides the soul of the dead to other dimension(s).

11 Thoth – the Greek Hermes –, the scribe of the psychostasy in the judgment of the dead in Osiris’ paradise.

12 “Na tradição árabe, a criação foi, por isto, assimilada a um acto de escrita e o intelecto agente ou poético, que ilumina o passivo e o faz passar ao acto, veio, por isto, a ser identificado com um anjo cujo nome é Pena (Qalam)” (Agamben, 2008, p. 15). Translation: “In the Arab tradition, creation was therefore assimilated to an act of writing and the active or poetic intellect, which illuminates the passive and makes it pass to the act, came to be identified with an angel whose name is Pen (Qalam).” (Agamben, 2008, p. 15, editorial translation).

13 Translation: “Do you not think that rhetoric is a psychagogic art, a craft of guiding souls through words, via discourse?” (Socrates, 2000, p. 90, editorial translation).

14 “Sócrates – O seu teor [do epitáfio] é este: ‘Virgem de bronze jazo, no sepulcro de Midas / Enquanto correr a água e as grandes árvores renovarem as folhas / De pé, sobre este túmulo onde faço meu pranto / Direi a todos os que passam: Aqui repousa Midas.’ Já terás notado que qualquer um destes versos pode ocupar, indiferentemente, o primeiro e o último lugar?” (Platão, 2000, p. 99). “Socrates – Its content [of the epitaph] is this: ‘Bronze maiden, I lie in the tomb of Midas / As long as water runs and large trees renew their leaves / Standing on this tomb where I make my weeping / I will tell all passers-by: Here rests Midas.’ Have you noticed that any one of these verses can indifferently occupy the first and last place?” (Platão, 2000, p. 99, editorial translation).

15 Translation: “every discourse should be composed as a living being” (Plato, 2000, p. 98-99, editorial translation).

16 With modernity, this epistemological condition of knowing the intelligibility of the thing was named as theory of knowledge and the acquisition of knowledge, for example, from John Locke’s (1999) empiricist theory of *tabula rasa*, will be moved by the mind and the corpus of experiences acquired from the informational impressions captured by the perception of the world external to the subject.

17 In the historical-social context of Plato, the human denizens of the polis were free men. According to Plato, full-fledged humans were the aristocrats and, under specific conditions, the metics – a class comprising artisans, traders, foreigners admitted into the polis, among other groups included between the aristocratic class and those enslaved. Thus, within the gradient of humanity formulated by Greek democracy, the citizens were the full-fledged humans, a small fraction of free men, authorized to conduct the affairs of the polis. For further consideration, see Plato (2017, p. 394).

18 In Athens, intelligible humans, when convinced or persuaded by educators and sophists – individuals socially classified as dissimilar – could face punishment by death or *atimia*. The latter was a ‘republican’ mechanism for total or partial deprivation of citizen rights (Platão, 2017, p. 280).

19 Translation: “as a writing tablet on which nothing is written” (Aristotle, 2010, p. 116, §430a, editorial translation).

20 Giorgio Agamben provides a dissenting interpretation of the Western canon with respect to the *grammateíon*, an interpretation that this text aligns with. Agamben argues (2008, p. 13, editorial translation): “The mind, thus, is not a thing, but exists as pure potentiality. The image of a blank writing tablet, onto which nothing is inscribed, serves to aptly represent this state of being – pure potentiality. According to Aristotle, any potentiality to be or to do something is also invariably a potentiality of not being or not doing (*dinamis mê einai, mê energêin*). Without this aspect, the potentiality would inevitably transition into action and become indistinguishable from it. [...] This ‘potentiality of not’ constitutes the fundamental secret of the Aristotelian doctrine of potentiality, rendering all potentiality, in essence, an impotence. [...] Thought exists as a potentiality to think or not to think, akin to a waxed tablet on which nothing is yet inscribed (as proposed by the possible intellect of medieval philosophers). And, just as the sensitive layer of wax is immediately engraved by the stylus of the scribe, so too does the potentiality of thought, which in itself is nothing, permit the act of intelligence to materialize.”

21 Barbara Cassin (2005) called this Aristotelian principle of sense decision

22 The Suda, in the entry dedicated to Aristotle, wrote: *Aristotélēs tês phýseos grammateùs ên, tôn kálamon apobréchon eis noûn*. Translated by Giorgio Agamben (2013, p. 23, editorial translation): “Aristotle was the scribe of nature, who dipped the pen in thought.”

23 Translation: “[...] the scribe of nature, who dipped his quill in thought” (Agamben, 2013, p. 23, editorial translation).

24 “I referred to these inscriptions and performative palimpsests, engraved by voice and body, as ‘oralitura,’ tinting the notion of this term with the singular cultural inscription that, like a letter (*littera*), cleaves the enunciation of the subject and his collectivity, while also underscoring in the term its value of *litura*, erasure of language, constitutive signifying alteration, of the alterity of subjects, of cultures and their symbolic representations.” (Martins, 2003, p. 77, editorial translation).

25 “Se se deixa de entender a escritura em seu sentido estrito de notação linear e fonética, deve-se poder dizer que toda sociedade capaz de produzir, isto é, de obliterar seus nomes próprios e de jogar com a diferença classificatória, pratica a escritura em geral. A expressão de ‘sociedade sem escritura’ não corresponderia, pois, nenhuma realidade nem nenhum conceito. Esta expressão provém do onirismo etnocêntrico, abusando do conceito vulgar, isto é, etnocêntrico, da escritura. O desprezo pela escritura, notemos de passagem, acomoda-se muito bem com este etnocentrismo. Aí há apenas um paradoxo aparente, uma destas contradições onde se profere e se efetiva um desejo perfeitamente coerente. Num único e mesmo gesto, despreza-se a escritura (alfabética), instrumento servil de uma fala que sonha com sua plenitude e com sua presença a si, e recusa-se a dignidade de escritura aos signos não-alfabéticos” (Derrida, 2013, p. 136). Translation: “If writing is no longer understood in the narrow sense of linear and phonetic notation, it should be possible to say that all societies capable of producing, that is to say of obliterating, their proper names, and of bringing classificatory difference into play, practice writing in general. No reality or concept would therefore correspond to the expression ‘society without writing.’ This expression is dependent on ethnocentric oneirism, upon the vulgar, that is to say ethnocentric, misconception of writing. The scorn for writing, let us note in passing, accords quite happily with this ethnocentrism. The paradox is only apparent, one of those contradictions where a perfectly coherent desire is uttered and accomplished. By one and the same gesture, (alphabetic) writing, servile instrument of a speech dreaming of its plenitude and its self-presence, is scorned and the dignity of writing is refused to nonalphabetic signs” (Derrida, 2013, p. 136, editorial translation).

26 Translation: “Baniwa writing has always existed” (Baniwa, 2021, p. 1, editorial translation).

27 Translation: “only free science” / “only one that is for itself” / “free man” (Aristotle, 2002, p. 10-13, editorial translation).

28 Translation: “communication does not imply limitless interpretations; if it did, the discourse would be unattainable” / “The concept of not specifying one exact thing equates to signifying nothing”. / “one cannot conceptualize emptiness without considering something distinct” / “as it conveys emptiness and lacks the basis for conversation” / “an individual morphs into a plant-like creature” / “speaks merely for the act of speaking” / “as it conveys emptiness (an de mêthen) and lacks the basis for conversation (ton mêthenos ekhonta logon)” (Aristóteles, 2002, p. 145-147, editorial translation).

29 For the umbilical relationship between library practices and the art of grammar, refer to the text *From the library to grammar: the paradigm of accumulation*, by Marc Baratin (2000).

30 Translation: “colonial and racial misanthropic skepticism” (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 136, editorial translation).

31 “The fact that access to the written sign assures the sacred power of keeping existence operative within the trace and of knowing the general structure of the universe; that all clergies, exercising political power or not, were constituted at the same time as writing and by the disposition of graphic power; that strategy, ballistics, diplomacy, agriculture, fiscality, and penal law are linked in their history and in their structure to the constitution of writing; that the origin assigned to writing had been-according to the chains and my themes-always analogous in the most diverse cultures and that it communicated in a complex but regulated manner with the distribution of political power as with familial structure; that the possibility of capitalization and of politico-administrative organization had always passed through the hands of scribes who laid down the terms of many wars and whose function was always irreducible, whoever the contending parties might be; that through discrepancies, inequalities of development, the play of permanencies, of delays of diffusions, etc., the solidarity among ideological, religious, scientific-technical systems, and the systems of writing which were therefore more and other than ‘means of communication’ or vehicles of the signified, remains indestructible; that the very sense of power and effectiveness in general, which could appear as such, as meaning and mastery (by idealization), only with so-called “symbolic” power, was always linked with the disposition of writing; that economy, monetary or premonetary, and graphic calculation were co-originary, that there could be no law without the possibility of trace.” (Derrida, 1976, p. 92-93).

32 Translation: “The idea of the book is the idea of a totality, finite or infinite, of the signifier; this totality of the signifier cannot be a totality, unless a totality constituted by the signified preexists it, supervises its inscriptions and its signs, and is independent of it in its ideality. The idea of the book, which always refers to a natural totality, is profoundly alien to the sense of writing. It is the encyclopedic protection of theology and of logocentrism against the disruption of writing, against its aphoristic energy, and, as I shall specify later, against difference in general” (Derrida, 1976, p. 18).

33 Translation: “[...] logocentrism is an ethnocentric metaphysics” (Derrida, 2013, p. 98, editorial translation).

34 Translation: “[...] the primary function of written communication is to facilitate servitude [...]” (Claude Lévi-Strauss 1957, p. 318, editorial translation).

35 Translation: “[...] it is in the nature of meaning to be totalitarian, that is, to reduce to itself everything that is not meaning” (Cassin, 2005, p. 84-85, editorial translation).

36 Translation: “without work, that living being who, while being human, is excluded from humanity – and, through this exclusion, included in it – so that men can have a human life, that is, a political one” (Agamben, 2017, p. 41, editorial translation)..

37 Translation: “There are no non-literate cultures.” (Martins, 2003, p. 78, editorial translation).

38 Translation: “I asked a man what was Right. He told me it was the guarantee of the exercise of possibility. This man’s name was Galli Mathias. I ate him,” / “Magic and life. We had the relation and distribution of physical goods, moral goods, dignitary goods. And we knew how to transcend mystery and death with the help of some grammatical forms.” (Andrade, 2011, p. 70-71, editorial translation)

39 Translation: “Perhaps the magic would be written on my face, perhaps I myself was the end of my search. That anxiety was consuming me when I remembered the jaguar was one of the attributes of the god. Then my soul filled with pity. I imagined the first morning of time; I imagined my god confiding his message to the living skin of the jaguars, who would love and reproduce without end, in caverns, in cane fields, on islands, in order that the last men might receive it. I imagined that net of tigers, that teeming labyrinth of tigers, inflicting horror upon pastures and flocks in order to perpetuate a design. [...] I devoted long years to learning the order and the configuration of the spots. Each period of darkness conceded an instant of light, and I was able thus to fix in my mind the black forms running through the yellow fur. Some of them included points, others formed cross lines on the inner side of the legs; others, ring-shaped, were repeated. Perhaps they were a single sound or a single word. Many of them had red edges” (Borges, 2006, p. 167, editorial translation).

40 Translation: “the [Amerindian] book is a marvelous reality in the universes of men and gods” (León-Portilla, 2012a, p. 86, editorial translation).

41 Translation: A numerous band of demons inhabits the forests, rivers, and skies of the Sipáia land. [...] The indigenous people do not regard them as supernatural beings, in our sense of the term, for the simple reason that, for them, nothing is supernatural. In the indigenous worldview, what matters is the greater or lesser activity of a magical power inherent to all beings, and whether someone is capable of producing something that appears wondrous to others. This extraordinary has no bounds: simply put, everything is possible and natural (Nimuendaju, 1981, p. 18, editorial translation).

42 “Hence, the Adugo biri come to epitomise a whole philosophy of origins and social practice, in which the jaguar features large as both founding father and the sky spirit embattled with sun and moon” (Brotherson, 2001, p. 246-247, editorial translation).

43 Translation: “the lines [the writing] are the chiná-kene of the nawa-rasí [non-indigenous]. The nawa-rasí papirí kene [the paper kene of the non-indigenous] is writing” (Franchetto, 2018, v. 1, p. 94, editorial translation).

44 Translation: “crystal forests” / “virtual archi-polis” (Viveiros de Castro, 2006, p. 323, editorial translation).

45 Translation: “a casing that binds the parts and gives the body a specific identity” (Lima, 2002, p. 12-13, editorial translation).

46 Translation: “It is the skin that serves as a principle of individuation and underpins the interspecific transformation spoken of in myths and shamanic discourses: a man can become a jaguar or a parrot to the extent that it is possible to don another skin” (Lima, 2002, p. 12-13, editorial translation).

47 Translation: “We may thus be facing a form of ‘visual condensation’ [...] We witness a layering of various ‘attires’ on a single canvas, the human body. We then observe a man (from his perspective and that of his society), whose skin serves as a canvas for graphics (of agentive motifs that are the image – or part of the image – of other beings from their viewpoints), experiencing the agentive power of graphic transformation. In other words, he undergoes the metamorphic process driven by overlaying and condensing these images” (Macedo, 2009, p. 518, editorial translation).

48 Among the Amerindians, graphic systems are systematically associated with writing rather than representation. The figures that lurk within these graphics seem more like secondary effects of an inherent graphic logic, primarily interested in the relationships between the lines rather than an end in itself (Lagrou, 2013).

49 A similar relation was narrated by Derrida (2013, p. 99) when describing the encounter of ethnocentric Europeans with Chinese script, which they classified as “a kind of hallucination.”

50 “Trata-se da concepção, comum a muitos povos do continente, segundo a qual o mundo é habitado por diferentes espécies de sujeitos ou pessoas, humanas e não-humanas, que o apreendem segundo pontos de vista distintos. [...] Tipicamente, os humanos, em condições normais, veem os humanos como humanos e os animais como animais; quanto aos espíritos, ver estes seres usualmente invisíveis é um signo seguro de que as ‘condições’ não são normais. Os animais predadores e os espíritos, entretanto, veem os humanos como animais de presa, ao passo que os animais de presa veem os humanos como espíritos ou como animais predadores. [...] Vendo-nos como não-humanos, é a si mesmos que os animais e espíritos veem como humanos. Eles se apreendem como, ou se tornam, antropomorfos quando estão em suas próprias casas ou aldeias, e experimentam seus próprios hábitos e características sob a espécie da cultura: veem seu alimento como alimento humano (os jaguares veem o sangue como cauim, os mortos veem os grilos como peixes, os urubus veem os vermes da carne podre como peixe assado etc.), seus atributos corporais (pelagem, plumas, garras, bicos etc.) como adornos ou instrumentos culturais, seu sistema social como organizado idênticamente às instituições humanas (com chefes, xamãs, ritos, regras de casamento etc.). Esse ‘ver como’ refere-se literalmente a perceptos, e não analogicamente a conceitos, ainda que, em alguns casos, a ênfase seja mais no aspecto categorial que sensorial do fenômeno; de qualquer modo, os xamãs, mestres do esquematismo cósmico dedicados a comunicar e administrar as perspectivas cruzadas, estão sempre aí para tornar sensíveis os conceitos ou inteligíveis as intuições. Em suma, os animais são gente, ou se veem como pessoas” (Viveiros de Castro, 2004, p. 225-227). Translation: “This reflects the conception, common to many peoples of the continent, that the world is inhabited by various types of subjects or persons, human and non-human, each perceiving it from distinct viewpoints. [...] Typically, humans, under normal circumstances, see humans as humans and animals as animals; when it comes to spirits, seeing these usually invisible beings is a sure sign that ‘conditions’ aren’t normal. Predator animals and spirits, however, view humans as prey, while prey animals see humans as spirits or as predatory animals. [...] By seeing us as non-humans, it is themselves that animals and spirits view as human. They perceive themselves as, or become, anthropomorphic when in their own homes or villages, experiencing their own habits and traits in the mold of culture: they view their food as human food (jaguars see blood as cauim, the dead see crickets as fish, vultures view the worms of rotting flesh as roasted fish, etc.), their bodily attributes (fur, feathers, claws, beaks, etc.) as cultural adornments or instruments, and their social systems as organized identically to human institutions (with leaders, shamans, rituals, marriage rules, etc.). This ‘seeing as’ pertains literally to perceptos, not analogously to concepts, although in some instances, the emphasis is more on the categorial aspect than the sensory aspect of the phenomenon; in any case, shamans, masters of cosmic schematism dedicated to communicating and managing the intersecting perspectives, are always there to make concepts perceivable or intuitions intelligible. In summary, animals are people, or they see themselves as people” (Viveiros de Castro, 2004, p. 225-227, editorial translation).

51 “Em resumo, pessoas, carniça, vermes, urubus, mas também rio, pedra e assim por diante, existem antes de tudo como perspectivas humanas e, enquanto tais, são corpos fundamentalmente distintos em outras perspectivas” (Lima, 2002, p. 13-14). An indigenous multi-naturalistic account complementary to this other sense is that of Ailton Krenak (2019) who says everything is nature, everything that manages to think is nature: landscapes have meaning – the river sings, dances, and rejoices with the beings who share life with it. The river is the grandfather Krenak. Translation: “In short, people, carrion, worms, vultures, but also rivers, stones, and so on, exist primarily as human perspectives and, as such, are fundamentally distinct bodies in other perspectives” (Lima, 2002, p. 13-14, editorial translation).

52 Translation: “suddenly, eh, I jaguar-ed...” (Guimarães Rosa, 2017, v. 2, p. 767, editorial translation).

53 Translation: “a book exists solely by the outside and in the outside” (Deleuze; Guattari, 1995, v. 1, p. 18, editorial translation.)

54 Translation: “skin of images” (Deleuze; Guattari, 1995, v. 1, p. 18, editorial translation).

55 Translation: “Decoration” (Van Velthem, 1995, p. 160, editorial translation).

56 Polychrome Maya vase, Late Classic Period (750-800 A.D.). On the ceramic codex, an ah ts’ib, a Maya painter-scribe, is depicted with a book, teaching his disciples the art of writing.

57 Translation: “the geographer, the decoder, the translator” (Cunha, 2017, p. 114, editorial translation).

58 Translation: “if the concept of spirit essentially designates a population of molecular affections, an intensive multiplicity, the same applies to the shaman”/ “a multifaceted being, a micro-population of shamanic agencies harbored in a body.” (Castro, 2006, p. 322, editorial translation)

59 Other relational modes of body drawings are their absence or their excess, as markers of seclusion. Not painting or over-painting bodies is a way of becoming invisible to the eyes of the other, as noted by Anne Christine Taylor and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2019).

60 Translation: “the term xapiripë also pertains to human shamans, and the phrase ‘becoming a shaman’ is synonymous with ‘becoming a spirit’, xapiri-pru” (Castro, 2006, p. 321, editorial translation).

61 Translation: “writing and graphic design are named by the same terms: kusiwa, ekosiware, words that describe patterns, drawings, decorations, and writing. Kusiwa literally means a path, a trail called ‘path of the risk’” (Macedo, 2009, p. 512, editorial translation).

62 In the right hand, one holds a brush. In the left, a shell, which was used as an inkwell for the black and red inks that penned the books. Paper, made from amate (a type of fig tree), emerges from the tongue, symbolizing simultaneously the oral and written (oralitura) capacity to shade and deify worldly matters.

63 Translation: “In the beginning of the world, there was a large stack of books, and each people took their specific volume from it. The Kapon were the last to take: there were no longer whole books for them, but only the leaves that had fallen when the volumes were removed. The gathering of all these leaves gave rise to the Kapon’s book” (Cesarino 2012, p. 125, editorial translation).

64 Este é um poema oral fabricado por um histórico forjador de cantos anônimo (poeta Nahua) para o deus Quetzalcóatl e registrado através dos símbolos ocidentais por Miguel León-Portilla.

65 Translation: “With flowers, Giver of Life,\with songs you give color,\with songs you shade\those who are to live on earth.\Then you will end eagles and jaguars.\Only in your painted book we live\here on the earth.\With black ink you will erase\what was the brotherhood,\the community, the nobility\You shade those who are to live\on earth.\Only in your book of painting we live,\here on earth” (León-Portilla, 2012a, p. 87, editorial translation).

66 Translation: “And yet, in the face of oppression, pillage, and abandonment, our response is life. Neither floods nor plagues nor famines nor cataclysms, not even eternal wars lasting centuries and centuries, have succeeded in reducing the tenacious advantage of life over death.” (García Márquez, 2019, p. 34, editorial translation).

67 The ancient Indians hid these papers so that the Spaniards would not take them away when they entered the city and lands. They became lost, either due to the deaths of those who hid them or because religious figures and the first bishop, Don Juan de Zumárraga, burned them, along with many others. These were crucial for understanding the ancient matters of this land. Since all these [paintings] were images and characters representing either rational or irrational animals, plants, trees, stones, mountains, water, ridges, and other such matters, they believed it was a display of idolatrous superstition. They burned as many as they could lay their hands on. If not for some curious Indians diligently hiding parts of these papers and stories, we would not have the knowledge of them that we now possess” (Torquemada, 1975 cited in León-Portilla, 2012a, p. 65).

68 “Faltam suas pinturas, nas que tinham suas histórias, porque, no tempo em que o Marquês do Vale, Don Hernando Cortés, com os demais conquistadores entraram por primeira vez nela [em Tezcoco], as queimaram nas casas reais de Nezahualpilli, em um grande aposento que era o arquivo geral de seus papéis, no qual estavam pintadas todas as suas coisas antigas, pelo que, hoje em dia, choram seus descendentes, com muito sentimento, por terem ficado às escuras, sem notícia nem memória dos fatos de seus antepassados” (Pomar, 1964, p. 153). Translation: “Their paintings, in which they had their histories, are missing because, at the time when the Marquis of the Valley, Don Hernando Cortés, along with other conquerors, first entered it [Tezcoco], they burned them in the royal houses of Nezahualpilli, in a grand chamber which was the general archive of their papers, where all their ancient matters were painted. Today, their descendants mourn deeply, left in the dark, with no knowledge or memory of the deeds of their ancestors” (Pomar, 1964, p. 153, editorial translation).

69 “Os amoxtli eram, na verdade, tllilli, tlapalli, ou tinta negra, tinta vermelha, isto é, símbolos do poder. O sacerdote Quetzalcóatl quis, enfim, alcançar essa sabedoria quando desapareceu, encaminhando-se a Tlillan, Tlapallan, o Lugar das Cores Negra e Vermelha, uma primordial Amoxtlapan, situada no Oriente, para além das águas imensas” (León-Portilla, 2012a, p. 60). Translation: “The amoxtli were, in reality, tllilli, tlapalli, or black ink, red ink, that is, symbols of power. The priest Quetzalcóatl sought to attain this wisdom when he vanished, heading to Tlillan, Tlapallan, the Place of Black and Red Colors, a primordial Amoxtlapan, located in the East, beyond the vast waters” (León-Portilla, 2012a, p. 60, editorial translation).

70 The scribe painters were referred to by the Mayas as dz’ibob (just as the books were), the Mixtecos called them ah ts’ib, the Quiché used the word vuh (or wuj) for book, and the Yucateco named both the amate paper – made from fig tree fiber – and the book as huun (Santos, 2017).

71 “Cuida de la tinta negra y roja, los libros, las pinturas, colócate, junto y al lado del que es prudente, del que es sabio. [...] El sabio: una luz, una tea, una gruesa tea que no ahuma. Un espejo horadado, un espejo agujerado por ambos lados. Suya es la tinta negra y roja, de él son los códices, de él son los códices. Él mismo es escritura y sabiduría” (León-Portilla, 2012b, p. 146-148).

72 Translation: “He himself is writing and wisdom” (León-Portilla, 2012b, p. 148, editorial translation).

73 Translation: “things have a life of their own, it’s simply a matter of waking up their souls.” (Márquez, 2006, p. 7-8, editorial translation)

74 Concepts similar to teyolía are yolo, from contemporary Nahuas, mintsita, from the P’urhépecha culture of Michoacán, and ool, from the Maya culture of Yucatán (Pavón-Cuéllar, 2022).

75 Translation: “he is the codices, from him are the codices... in himself he is like a painted book” (León-Portilla, 2012b, p. 148, editorial translation)