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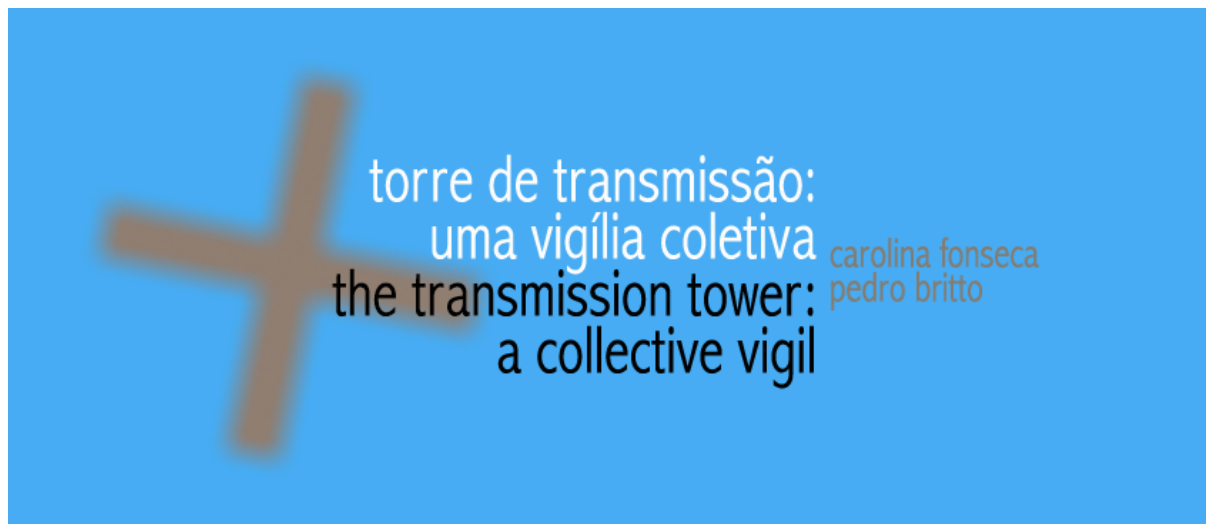
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GUEST AUTHOR ARTICLE

The Brazilian Education National Census of 2016 pointed out the closure of 60,065 rural schools from 1995 to 2016. Between 2015 and 2018, the artists Yuri Firmeza, Laura Castro, Carolina Fonseca, Renata Marquez, Pedro Britto, Pablo Lobato, Icaro Lira, Glayson Arcanjo and Filipe Britto carried out the project "Catastrophe Expedition: Towards an Archeology of Ignorance". The experiment faced - within the field of intrinsic relations between aesthetics and politics - this awesome data: the closure of 8 rural public schools in average per day in the last twenty years.



This was the research field of three expeditions in the depths of Brazil, in the states of Bahia, Minas Gerais and Goiás, which were affected the most by such catastrophe. The aim was to create new regimes of visibility of this archaeological park, and to weave an aesthetic-political positioning interested in demonstrating the agony of the modern intents and their constituent territorialities. In addition to trips to field research, images production, and an expedition through closed schools in the three states, the project's highlight was the "Transmission Tower" action.

Faced with the abstraction of a number with many decimal places (60,065 closed schools), a group, subdivided into three (Goiás / Bahia / Minas Gerais), departs to find fractions and traces, in a kind of genealogy of the debris. Going to these closed schools means producing a discontinuity, rather than witnessing or checking numbers. And it is in the meantime, in this discontinuous gap, produced in us when we enter the debris of the old schools, that the later reading in the pasture will operate. (FIRMEZA, 2017).

"Transmission Tower" is as a speech device and a system for listening, whose plastic form was generated by the materialization of the statistical bars that represent the data (names) of rural schools closed in Brazil in the last twenty years. The speech device or statistical totem, activated by the occupation principles, was implemented in September 2017 in a pasture of the Federal University of Goiás, next to the Rectory building. The rural landscape of the municipality of Goiânia and the actions of reading that occurred there in a period of 24 hours were simultaneously transmitted (by streaming) for different media, cities and channels.

The "Transmission Tower" concept questions strictly ethnographic documental approaches in favor of prospective artistic practices. It suggests an experiment articulated by the intersection between rural and urban, between remote and logical zones of simultaneity, between political processes of amnesia and forms of readability and visibility.

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One could access the "Transmission Tower" from the parking plot of an abandoned construction site, through an improvised walkway on the barbed wire fence of a schoolyard next to the Rectory building. Within the pasture plot, a tent protected a table with food, drinks, and chairs. One could barely notice a camera on a low tripod in a corner. At a distance of 20 meters, we saw the person who was reading, and the stacks of continuous forms printed on his right side as well. We also heard the weak sound of the voice without electronic amplification.

The tent was the reception place for all the visitors who ceaselessly arrived throughout the 24 hours of reading. People came in, talked about the project, and observed. Those who adhered to the reading action signed an authorization form for image use, and headed for the waiting station, a small circus grandstand positioned beyond the reading chair. Readers waited their turn according to the order of arrival. Each person could read as much as he wanted, either 5 minutes or 1 hour. Whenever he wanted to stop reading, all he had to do was get up: this was the sign for the next person to approach from behind and continue reading.

It was like an archipelago, where different islands were related, magnetized by the intention of sustaining the 24-hour vigil. There were some moments of fear between 1:00 PM and 5:00 PM. It was September, and we reached 38°C with 10% humidity in the air, almost a desert. The evening period also caused fears in the organizers, fears of the exhaustion of readers. But the exhaustion did not occur, the archipelago was

populated intensely, people moving between the islands, they took coffee, news, notices, small occurrences, an intriguing name of disabled school, someone arrived, a message came from another town.

The invitation to be a part of the continuous, dark, clear, icy and scorching vigil status had been launched. Without guarantees, we had to take up the task, even without contributions from outside. Yet, to our surprise, during the 24 hours of uninterrupted reading, we were not alone for a single minute. Magic thing! Even at the peak of dawn, various accents, ages and colors emerged without stopping in the isolated pasture plot. A flash, whose size is still beyond us, was launched towards the holes dropped by so called public policies (LOBATO, 2017).

Behind the scenes, a small crowd streamed. Between September 1st and 2nd, more than 200 people passed by the Transmission Tower. A phenomenon of unequal occupation, the establishment of a transitory public space, normally only attended by cows, oxen, termites and other animals.

Parallel to this assembly of stations of reading, waiting, filming and transmission, a camp was set up. Next to a table, a community radio antenna, two camping tents and some chairs, a radio vigil took place. The project "Magnífica Mundi", from the School of Journalism of the university, which is a researcher-militant action working for a long time within the links between the University, the Landless Workers Movement -the MST-, and Popular Communication, engaged in the "Transmission Tower" action through a 24-hour broadcast of radio programs focused on alive rural schools. It was as if, parallel to the reading ceremony announcing the death, there was something so alive produced by schools of MST camps, Women Peasant Movements, and the Youth Peasant.

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I started the first reading at 10:37 AM on September 1st, and the first school, as a epiphany, was called Mundo Encantado School [The Enchanted World School]. I felt my throat close, it was the aridity of August-disgust, in the savannah of deep Brazil, dried up by the aridity of data. To the extinct Enchanted World, they followed isolated school, extreme school, fortress school... Each name baptized the data, by giving it a singular sense. It was as if, by reading, statistical data incorporated spatial, temporal, existential substrates (FONSECA, 2017).

Reading the names of closed schools mapped throughout the Brazilian countryside is to resurrect statistics from a dead and dumb archive. It is about to superimpose dates, people, tributes and images to sterile statistical data.

To the artists already involved in the project were added other local people of the municipality of Goiânia and its metropolitan region, in the Transmission Tower occupation action. The act of collaborative speech evoked and materialized the schools: besides us, as the proponent group, many others shared the experience. Person after person were reading at their own pace, in a multiplicity of voices, a mantra of textures and bodies positioned amid cows and ticks, shuffling the piles of papers (FIRMEZA, 2017).

The solitary chair in front of the vastness-pasture, a microphone without electronic amplification, the bleachers-waiting, a meeting, sometimes empty, sometimes bed and hammock, sometimes public space. The paper sounded endless, the invaluable data, there was almost a silence - even in front of the microphone, and the bleachers. Although in a simultaneous transmission, the tiny voice seemed to be listened from the inside, as each school-number became school-name.



Archaeological reading from homages to sergeants, generals and colonels of that military patriarchy that prowls us from the countryside to the city, to the promises of hope, charm, dawns, children, worlds and so many becomings that the schools awake when they are constituted.



It was about listening to the unspeakable, quantifying the inestimable, and naming the unnameable. It was about the impossibility, even during 24 hours of uninterrupted reading, to exhaust the phenomenon¹. But it was also, and above all, about the power of the link between reading and listening, in a sense of co-moving presence and involvement.

Read aloud the list of schools and their cities is a solemn experience that evokes a particular state. A different sensitization on the catastrophe goes through the body while reading / hearing, and the sharing of

this sense with people around evokes a common understanding. This understanding sediments the idea of new readings, and the powerful book format to be read aloud.

An unusual thing happened when cows and oxen, territorially referenced subjects in this pasture-school, approached and suddenly started starring the action. The "Transmission Tower" was crossed by the emergence of cows and oxen devouring paper sheets, while readers remained seated.

Seated in an apparent solitude side by side with the readers, the cattle produced a radical synthesis of the ongoing process, and an attempt of reading the process itself. Cows and oxen began to devour the leftovers of the schools already read, eating voraciously, starved, the steady volume of continuous forms, a paper cake-like similar to an infinite white tongue. Asymmetrical bodies entangled in a symbiotic image, dead schools [names] read in inaudible voices in the pasture, while the cattle chewed their remains, their dead letters. Readers and devourers juxtaposed within a symptomatic action. Cows and oxen were like metonymic figures of the latifundio commodities and extensive livestock, gear of the destruction of schools.

I finished the last reading at 10:37 AM on September 2nd. The dawn had been cold and we were exhausted, but the heat was coming and I was able to take off my jacket just before sitting on the chair by a clear blue morning. The choking voice, the demanding body of posture to coordinate the movements of my hands passing the continuous paper stripe, reading the ruminants food. I feel the increasing movement of the support group as the 24th hour approaches, and it arrives ... "Saint John Baptist School, Saint Louis School, Tiradentes School, Together We Will Win School" ... predicts the final school of the book (BRITTO, 2017).

BraZil, May 13, 2019.

This report ends on the eve of May 15th, a day called for a nationwide strike. After having had 30% of its cost budget blocked by the central Government, Brazilian federal universities are trying to balance to keep working until August, facing an ideological embargo in a clear censorship. The visitation to the imponderable ruins of rural schools appears like an astonishing foreshadowing. That remote thing of the rural territories seems to be coming even on the Brazilian universities. In the State of Goiás, the imminence of the cut of the student pass. This present time entangled in the colonial temporal labyrinth opens a new season of distribution of the book "Expedition catastrophe: for an archeology of ignorance"². From May 21st to August 21st, we will send books to people interested in the invitation announced on the cover, which says:

The School Census recorded the closure of 60,065 rural schools from 1995 to 2016. Reading the names of the closed schools, mapped throughout the Brazilian countryside, is to resuscitate statistics from a dead and dumb file. It is to superimpose dates, people, tributes and images to a sterile statistical data. The first action of reading these data was initiated in Goiânia at 10:37 on September 1, 2017, and ended 24 hours later. The data had been printed on continuous forms and read by volunteers sitting in front of a microphone. We call the action "Transmission Tower", executed on a pasture of the Federal University of Goiás and transmitted live. In the frame was a chair, the microphone, the stacks of form, and a grandstand in the distance, in which we waited to substitute the readers. As they flipped through the forms, the readers turned their compacted volume into a loose set of papers scattered in the pasture, at the mercy of the reader's gestures, the voracity of the cows, and the speed of the wind. The reading time was unable to read all data. CATASTROPHIC EXPEDITION FOR AN ARCHEOLOGY OF IGNORANCE catalogs, in the alphabetical order of municipalities, the names of dismantled rural schools. That action of reading in the pasture, pressing and incomplete, becomes portable and multiple in the hands of new readers in unforeseen contexts. This is a book to be read aloud.

Interested parties, please send an e-mail requesting the book and instructions, until August 21, 2019: leiturasdaexpedicaocatastrofe@gmail.com.

Post-trial testimonials:

Cacá Fonseca

Pablo Lobato

Pedro Britto

Yuri Firmeza

1 Through the 24 uninterrupted reading, approximately 9000 schols, or 14,98% of the total number of schools were cited.

2 Campos, A.; Fonseca, C.; Britto, F.; Arcanjo, G.; Britto, P.; Lira, Í.; Castro, L.; Lobato, P.; Marquez, R.; Firmeza, Y. Expedição catástrofe: por uma arqueologia da ignorância. [city?]: [publisher?], 2018.