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The Contingency of Authenticity

Intercultural Experiences in Indigenous Villages of Eastern and Northeastern Brazil¹

Rodrigo de Azeredo Grünewald²

Introduction

Indigenous populations in Brazil have been more and more involved with different social segments and global subjects, despite all governmental protection in trying to define and control the flow of external agents into Indian territories. However, many people – driven by different interests – end up having encounters with those populations, and, whether or not intentionally, they also end up experiencing intercultural encounters, which are evaluated by means of reflections on the authenticity of native traditions.

From a wide range of possible actors involved in such interethnic encounters, we come across those who, seeking leisure, may be ultimately divided into tourists and travelers (Errington and Gewertz 2004). This article focuses more intensively on some such experiences, and considers the social (ideological) representations associated with the construction of the assessments made by those people who encounter Brazilian Indians.

Therefore, I will present three ethnographic cases of traditions displayed to visitors at indigenous villages in Eastern and Northeastern Brazil, in order to evoke the situatedness of the authenticity, and its magic. These data were essentially collected during my fieldworks among the Pataxó people, from 1995 through 1999, and the Kapinawá people, in 2002 and 2003, as I endeavored to make a movie about their Jurema's ritual, then,

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subsequently, to produce a Compact Disk with their traditional songs. To keep focus on the Kapinawá case, however, the example herein used came from a trip to their indigenous village made by a number of foreigners. The story was passed on to me by both the Indians and the visitors. Cultural experiences used to illustrate the debate are supported by an ethnographic approach analogous to that carried out by Bruner (2005), who considers history while constructively emphasizing the notions of performance, experience, process, and practice.

Plenty has been written on tradition and authenticity in the last twenty years. Following contributions by Handler and Linnekin (1984) and Linnekin (1983; 1997), I suggest a general constructivist approach for the understanding of tradition. Besides, I emphasize that the aspects of cultural politics (Briggs 1996) and agency (Otto and Pedersen 2005) are actually important to weigh up cultural creativity through intentional human actions. Moreover, Christen (2006) has showed that, in (intercultural) processes of cultural construction, authenticity must be constantly negotiated, in order to establish a native cultural patrimony. Finally, Graburn (1995) has pointed out how nostalgia is important to provide people with the experience of past-oriented authenticity.

I argue, in fact, that authenticity can also be rather experiential than categorical. I understand, according to Handler and Saxton (1988), that living cultural or historical elaborations of tradition and authenticity do not hold a universal sense. Besides they sustain another conception of authenticity that would be an *authenticity of experience* which can eventually occur, leading individuals to fulfill themselves (as subjective self-realization) “by having experiences they can define as authentic” (Handler and Saxton 1988: 247). This leads us temporarily to the issue of authenticity individuation, which is purportedly supported by Heidegger’s existentialism.

In tourism anthropology this was straightforwardly highlighted by Wang (1999) and Reisinger and Steiner (2006) as they supported the idea of an “existential authenticity,” while Cohen (1988) and Graburn (2004) pointed out that the personal background for authenticity was not monolithically experienced. By recognizing a gap between experience and representation, Cary (2004) reinforced a serendipitous moment, constitutive of authenticity, which seems like a momentary, existential synthesis between culture, history and the experiences eventually recreated or represented through narratives.

By my turn, I may argue that fixed criteria cannot be established to understand how authenticity is elaborated for social subjects in the variety of concrete interactions, as each meaning for the word *authenticity* must come from the specific context where it occurs. As in other categories (for instance, “spirit” or “possession”), such meaning and the manner in which the experience of authenticity is lived out vary contextually. To narrate authenticities means, therefore, to narrate specific discourses rather than anything aprioristic, or of a universal apprehension. In every case, the drive that renders authenticity a significant issue (whenever it is so) is proper and contingent.

Thus, this article concentrates more specifically on the imponderability of authenticity. Considering the link between tradition and authenticity while specifically focusing on the authentication of traditions in intercultural encounters, some thought should be given to the kind of focus to be pursued by the ethnographer in order to extract from the research situation a semantic key capable of *consecrating* a social experience as unequivocally authentic.

The Pataxó Cases

In 1500, when the Portuguese discoverer Pedro Álvares Cabral anchored his ships on the islet of Coroa Vermelha (extreme South of what is now Bahia State), he was greeted by the Tupiniquim natives – a Tupi group who inhabited that coastal area. The Botocudos – at war against the Tupi – cut their expansion along Southern Bahia and Northern Espírito Santo shoreline. Pataxó, Maxacali, and Camacã natives moved in small bands in the forests near the coastal belt and began to attack colonial installations after the enslavement of the Tupiniquins and their settlement in Jesuitical missions.

After the economic breakdown in Porto Seguro *Capitania* (Administrative District) between the 17th and the 18th centuries as a result of investment discontinuation by Portugal, those native populations started coming out of the forest to go down to the coast to exchange their goods, although as late as the 19th century they still attacked sugarcane plantations around the municipalities of Porto Seguro and Prado. Consequently, in 1861 the Provincial Governor of Bahia decided to found a village (Barra Velha, in the southernmost limit of where Porto Seguro stands today) to bring together those “Indians.” The village had to survive without government support from its early beginning,

and natives had only sporadic contact with fishermen, small traders, and farmers up to mid 20th Century, when, seeing their lands being measured for the creation of a National Park, they looked for the Indian Assistance Office (at that time, the Indian Protection Service – SPI) in order to have their lands demarcated. Even counting on that support, though, plus the creation of Monte Pascoal National Park in 1961, the Brazilian Institute for Forest Development did not allow “Indians” to hunt or plant on their land, which caused serious subsistence difficulties, and resulted in the Diaspora that originated other indigenous nuclei in the region.

With the extinction of SPI, National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) was created in the late 1960s. As it became acquainted with Barra Velha, the new indigenist agency found a destitute population there, speaking only Portuguese and lacking “exotic features.” FUNAI defines this population as a Pataxó group, and rules that all individual members should keep “indigenous names” rather than Christian names, which they had incorporated upon their contact with Catholic priests in previous decades.

Otherwise, in the early 1970s, construction of the highways BR 101 and BR 367 promised progress for the region to be developed around the historical tourism referring to the site of Brazil’s discovery, with colonial installations and recreational tourism around the area’s fine beaches. For that reason, the head of the indigenous post of the FUNAI, noticing the pitiful situation of the Indians in Barra Velha caused by the creation of de National Park of Monte Pascoal, decides to show them items of handicrafts (particularly necklaces) made in another indigenous area (Xerente) where he had worked, in addition to items displayed in FUNAI’s indigenous art shops, thus proposing the commercialization of crafts for the tourists that arrived in Porto Seguro following the opening of the road.

Today, we estimate that approximately 9,000 Pataxós live in 20 nuclei in the Extreme South of Bahia and Minas Gerais states. All of them (with the exception of the Pataxó Hã-hã-hãe, whose distinct history belongs to another social context) refer to Barra Velha as their “mother village,” as it gave rise to all other villages with which close relations are still kept. Besides, even being aware that they have other ethnic backgrounds (Maxacali, Tupiniquim, etc), they see themselves as one people. Most Pataxós live on agriculture or tourism, although other economic activities can also be found among them. In some places, Pataxós live in serious conflict with farmers over territorial

issues. In others, the discrimination they face results from the assistance they get (health and education) from FUNAI, for being Indians, and which the poor population is not provided, rather than from the fact that they are “Pataxó Indians.”

The villages we are directly concerned with here are Barra Velha (estimated population 3,000) and Coroa Vermelha (population 3,500) in particular, since they are within the tourist flow along the farthest southern Bahia coastline. In Barra Velha, the Pataxós make a living out of the sale of their handicraft to tourists as well as out of agriculture (manioc and coconut, in particular), canoe fishing, seafood, and mangrove. Initially (1970s to early 1980s) craftwork was limited to necklaces made from tree seeds, these days many other pieces are manufactured from a variety of materials. Major sales are wood items, in particular the *gamelas* (serving bowls), in various shapes and sizes, plates, spoons, combs etc. They also make earrings, necklaces, loin-clothes, rattles, and the widest variety of decorative objects made with feathers, seeds, straw, and wood. Men usually work on raw materials, while women and children work on finishing the pieces and weaving. The Pataxós themselves sell the goods to tourists who visit the village. Such visitors come across Indians wearing shorts and T-shirts, manufacturing and displaying their handicraft, but they are not exposed to Pataxó’s dances or rituals. Women and children typically offer the items when tourists enter the village, or simply have them on display at their home entrance, though very often they accept exchanging them for tourists’ objects, such as shorts, sunglasses, T-shirts or anything else of their interest. Wholesale of artifacts also takes place: to foreigners, for resale abroad; or to Brazilians, acting as go-between for the shops in Porto Seguro.

North of Porto Seguro, and already within the limits of Santa Cruz Cabralia, is the village of Coroa Vermelha, located exactly at the spot where Cabral established the first on-shore contact with natives on April 22, 1500, and where, four days later, the first mass on Brazilian soil was celebrated. This reservation has its origin in 1972, when a native known as Itambé, who lived in the outskirts of Barra Velha, moves to Coroa Vermelha, where he begins to sell craftwork in the historic site of the Discovery of Brazil. By 1973, families from Barra Velha seeking in the sale of crafts an economic alternative for their lives also move to Coroa Vermelha. In 1974, the historic mark of the Cross of the First Mass and the highways BR101 and BR 367 are

inaugurated simultaneously. From this occasion onwards, business, and commercial investments (property, hotels etc) in Porto Seguro and Santa Cruz Cabrália, which virtually used to be visited only by hippies previously, already began to concentrate almost exclusively on tourism. Therefore, this village was originally formed and characterized as unequivocally urban and commercial, its only economical activity being the sale of handicrafts. The eventual development of Coroa Vermelha did not occur without conflicts against land speculators and local tradesmen interested in profiting from the ever-growing tourist flow.

Distinctively from those of Barra Velha, most of the artifacts from Coroa Vermelha are produced with the use of machinery for sanding and polishing wood. If in the 1970's necklaces, loincloths, and bows and arrows spread out on the ground for display were the main items, in the 1980's pieces in wood – in particular the serving bowl from the Boca da Mata (farthest West of Barra Velha village) – take sales lead, although many other pieces are produced such as: head-dresses and straw rattles decorated with artificially dyed chicken feathers; seed necklaces and bracelets; wooden spoons etc. Craftwork not considered “indigenous” but with high penetration in Coroa Vermelha can also be found. These are flour pans, small statues, earrings, rings, forks, combs and even serving bowls in new shapes and typically kitsch in their aesthetics (such as heart-shaped serving bowls for instance), which are sold wholesale by white tradesmen to the Pataxó Indians, who re-sell them to tourists.

In reality, the charter tourists who arrive in Coroa Vermelha with the purpose of visiting the cross – the symbol of the first mass celebrated on Brazilian soil (known as the Cross of the First Mass) and therefore a national landmark – usually buy cheap souvenirs, and thus commercialization of those items became fundamental for indigenous commerce, since white tradesmen established unfavorable competition against the Pataxós. Thus, in addition to the items crafted by the Pataxós themselves for direct sales to tourists, there is also the wholesale purchase of “non-Indian” items for sale by the Pataxós to the tourist. Profit from the latter is small, though, since the craftwork pieces are also sold at souvenir shops, by white peddlers, and even by white tradesmen who have rented stalls in the very Indian village.

During the three last decades of the 20th Century, real-estate speculators and entrepreneurs from the tourist industry proceeded managerially to disqualify the Pataxó Indianness, in an attempt to take over the Coroa Vermelha

administration. Local population at large, in consonance with pronouncements by local politicians, used to see the Pataxó as an obstacle to a profitable enhancement of the Brazil's Discovery area. Actually, the media were never keen on promoting the Pataxós or fostering their culture, as if they had been subjected to such an acculturation process that nothing else was left for the region's touristy development. Accordingly, it was important for the Pataxós to build their image as the Indians of the Discovery (Grünewald 2001), a historic invention that, becoming the banner under which their tourist marketing is sustained, is also an instrumental presentation of a tradition *articulated* (Thomas 1992) *against the White Culture* (MacCannell 1992a).

Besides showing themselves as the Indians of the Discovery, it is well worth noting that, following the footsteps of crafts, other traditions have been adapted by the Pataxós as a result of wide-reaching social interactions generated by the tourism flow, such as Indian names, a new Pataxó language, dances and songs, body painting, and so on. Such cultural construction led to a conscious production of identity, to a certain extent politically orchestrated, and with the consequent enhancement of ethnic unity feelings through the new traditions that had been created (Grünewald 2001; 2002; 2006).

However, such movement about an increment of indigenous culture did not take place without intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic problems. For instance, the Coroa Vermelha Craft Center offers a mixture of different kinds of goods, varying from indigenous and regional, to T-shirts, sandals, hammocks etc, all sold by the Pataxós and by non-Indians, very often indistinctly. In addition, trading in Coroa Vermelha includes several "beach stalls," where food and drink is sold on the seashore, and where there are many peddlers, indigenous or otherwise. In this village, there is neither indigenous ritual nor dance performance for tourists, who often have difficulty recognizing a Pataxó, having the perception that they are too "civilized," and show a lack of "authentic traditions."

Actually, tourists arrived to the craft selling stalls and found different indigenous names for identical things, and different justifications for original languages or even their original ethnic belonging. Indians used to accuse one another of denigrating the Pataxó image by offering cultural or historical items hardly appropriate for their Indianness. A discourse about their authenticity was extremely needed by them. It was important to show "authentic Indians," though they themselves did not know exactly which criteria

defined their authenticity in relational terms, i.e. diacritically. That is to say, it was embarrassing that each magician should go on with his magic, pulling from the old top hat any cultural item that he should find suitable to mark his individual Indianness on the commercial arena. Diacritical enchantment should be collective in order to mark the indigenous group's ethnicity.

However, if for over twenty years the Pataxós from Coroa Vermelha were nothing else than an attraction at craftsmanship points of sale on the Discovery and First Mass historic sites – where they formed an urban, almost exclusively commercial village – as the village expanded and faced demarcation by FUNAI was expected, its population also needed agricultural land and wood for their crafts. Therefore, two strips in the forest, close to the shore, were occupied. The first “forest,” occupied in 1990, belonged to a state company and a real estate agency. There the Pataxós went logging, selling the timber to logging companies – either local or alien – and developing agriculture, especially pineapple, but also manioc, beans etc. In the second “forest,” occupied in 1997, the wood was protected for environmental reasons, especially because it represented a source of raw materials for handicrafts such as seeds used in necklaces and bracelets.

The Jaqueira and the Shaman-for-Tourists

As of 1999, the Coroa Vermelha Pataxó developed the activity they called “ecotourism” in this second “forest,” when they created the Pataxó Association for Ecotourism (ASPECTUR) and founded the Jaqueira Ecological Reserve with the expressed purpose of “experiencing and showing the beauty of our culture as well as preserving the environment.” Then, they built some small, round-shaped hut, and a large one (Meeting Center), where the Pataxós “celebrate the traditions” every Friday.

Since then, the Jaqueira Reserve has been open for tourism to tourists, students, and researchers, guided by ASPECTUR Pataxó guides. Visits take place in the morning and in the afternoon. Buses from specific travel agencies bring the tourists and park in assigned places at the Reserve entrance gate. Visitors take a short walk on a trail through the woods up to the tourism (cultural) center in the Reserve. From there, they proceed to another trail where the Pataxós show their expertise on local flora and fauna. Visitors are also taken to the nursery for the replanting of endangered tree species, such as

Brazilian rosewood (*jacarandá*) and brazilwood (*pau-brasil*), or where trees are kept for seeds or crafts wood, in addition to other species that are fundamental for the social reproduction of their traditional culture. Then, visitors can attend a lecture at the Meeting Center on the history of the Indian fight against “White men,” and on their tales, their habits, and customs. Questions that can be asked are attentively answered by the Indian lecturer. Then, visitors are invited to talk to the shaman and to get to know about their medical practice. That is followed by a taste testing of their traditional cuisine (fish and manioc baked on a palm leaf) and their traditional drink (*Aluá* or *Cauim*). Tourists will then be able to watch artisan work that uses raw material exclusively from the forest, and they may buy items. Finally, the visitors attend a “cultural representation” - dances and songs in Pataxó language (the tourists are often invited to participate in the dance cycle). The visit lasts three hours - tourists are then led back to their buses, usually taking Pataxó souvenirs along.

In the Pataxó Jaqueira arena it is also worth pointing out the type of ecotourism classified by Smith (1996) as “Indigenous Tourism,” based on four characteristics (the 4 H’): Habitat (Pataxós give a good demonstration of man’s adaptation to Atlantic Forest habitat); Heritage (they exhibit the cultural diversity they have inherited from their predecessors); History (they give lectures on their historic insertion from their point of view as opposed to that of the colonizers); and Handicraft (offering visitors the opportunity to watch the making and choose to buy the different handcrafted items that are marketed, in addition to many used for ceremonies, at households, etc.). Chambers (2000) adds a fifth H - Healing - also found in the Jaqueira Reserve, since the shaman is always there to meet the tourists, to show medicinal plants and appropriate treatments. All are Pataxó inventions - and I choose to focus component number 5 (which best compares to examples of “shamanism for tourism” to come) for the analysis this paper.

The shaman case is indeed interesting. Until 1998, in Coroa Vermelha, two Indians claimed to be shamans. However, the members of the group denied their legitimacy and disqualified their presentations as “personal marketing,” and saying that they were, so to speak, shamans-for-tourists. Since the Jaqueira Reserve’s creation, one of them has occupied a hut in the “ecotourism” forest, introduced to tourists as a healer by the same Indians who had originally condemned his position. Apparently, he is still a shaman-for-tourists, having earned a legitimate place in the group.

Therefore, we see that the Jaqueira Pataxós would not consider him a shaman, and would only authenticate him after the creation of a legitimate performing space, where the presence of a shaman was mandatory. Even though this is an authentic shaman-for-tourists, as the anthropologist sees him, such authenticity may actually not be much relevant to Jaqueira visitors since, according to the “post-tourist” style (Feifer 1985; Urry 1990), they seem to be people not worried about authenticity, but rather enjoying the experience playfully, even cynically – which, according to Urry, is an integral part of post-modern traveling. The shaman displayed at this arena must adjust his character to the landscape and to the tour (or to a previously defined role to be played). Jaqueira visitors do not question authenticity, but learn from a people who take on their volatile historical condition and hold examples and perspectives of an alternative life, which is worthy of appreciation – all presented as a pleasant outing.

At this point, it is relevant to realize that a new cultural context has emerged. For Simpson (1993), whatever is successful for tourism consumption also defines the parameters of legitimacy and authenticity for native audiences. Whatever is offered to tourists’ eyes as images of the dominating host culture is what local population groups should also look at and consider as the mirror image of who they are. Tourism is thus turned into a relevant means through which the sense of shared aesthetics and collective identity emerge, or that to which Anderson (1983), against the context of nationalism, referred as “imagined community.” In that trend, tourism would be truly culturally creative, and traditions built by the Pataxós, once enhanced by tourism, are authentic, legitimate, positive, and connotative of their inherent cultural creativity.

Culture elements displayed by the Pataxós in tourist arenas are operated by them as part of *their traditions*. It is relevant, then, to make it clear what tradition stands for. Firstly, according to Linnekin (1983) and Handler and Linnekin (1984), tradition is “inevitably “invented” and selectively “reconstructed in the present.” According to these authors:

“The origin of cultural practices is largely irrelevant to the experience of tradition; authenticity is always defined in the present. It is not pastness or givenness that defines something as traditional. Rather, the latter is an arbitrary symbolic designation; a designated meaning rather than an objective quality” (1984: 286).

All of this is very important in order to understand the herein analyzed Pataxó, since their ethnicity is invoked based on the elements of an “invented tradition” and a discontinued historic narrative that strives to establish their continuity as “Indians of the Discovery,” that is, as representatives of the natives who received the Portuguese discoverer Pedro Álvares Cabral in 1500. It is difficult, however, for the majority of Pataxó Indians to recognize a process of “invention of traditions.” They prefer to communicate a “cultural revival.”

Many neighbors of the Pataxós, especially tourists, are not concerned with the question of authenticity as they see Pataxó items as lovely *souvenirs* to take home for themselves, or as gifts for friends. The question, however, is, people usually think that what should be displayed is something not specifically prepared for the tourist arena, but rather more “natural,” something that has existed historically (ancestrally) – since this is how that the collective sense still hopes to authenticate (or legitimate) traditions. If the Pataxós see as legitimate such process of cultural creation for utilitarian ends, they are nonetheless hesitant about the authentication of such invented or politically articulated traditions, which they dissimulate as a group “secret.” Many Pataxós seem to hold the same notion held by spectators in their audiences of what authenticity is.

In addition, the Pataxó example shows us that cultural commoditization does not necessarily destroy the significance of cultural products that, while tourist-oriented, acquire new meanings (as in the case of the shaman-for-tourist) for their crafters, “as they become a diacritical mark of their ethnic or cultural identity, a vehicle of self-representation before an external public.” (Cohen 1988: 383). This applies to the shaman who once again becomes important for Pataxó identity through tourist demand.

The Jaqueira Reserve is now the site at the Coroa Vermelha Indian Land where this new cultural configuration (traditions built through intensive indigenous “cultural revival”) is being exhibited to tourists through a sustainable development project. The Reserve is not a show like “Fantasy Island,” and it does not seem to be productive for anthropology to consider such a situation as if it were a construction of the unreal. It would be ungenerous towards the social actors to relegate their creativity to the realm of farce, and to fail to perceive that this inventive dynamic belongs to the realm of tourism activity, to authentic tourist arenas where new objects are available in a post-modern bricolage that is no less authentic.

Additionally, such space is not a simulacrum; neither do its actors make up a “pseudo-community” (MacCannell 1992b). It is rather a vigorous ground for cultural production and ethnic identity strengthening, managed by a fraction of Indians who promote cultural revival and ethnic tourism, and who can build up an “ethno-tourism community” (Grünewald 2003). It also serves political purposes, since indigenous groups often end up transforming arenas like these into sites wherefrom they can speak about themselves to a world that has always taken “primitive” for strategic counterpoint.

Barra Velha and the hunt dance

Another example, able to account for our considerations on the phenomenon of authenticity comes from the Pataxó Land of Barra Velha, the (original) “mother village.” We have dealt with contextual data from that village, and it is worth arguing that it did contain a systematic work of cultural production based on native traditions – especially along the last ten years of the 20th Century. In that village, according to the Indians, an “ever-existing tradition” was the Auê dance following a single “step,” which, always performed in their ceremonial gatherings, represented “the spiritual reunion of Indians in happiness.” The only parts of core memory surviving are a few adornments (particularly a “tanga” – a small loincloth) and crafts for the Pataxós’ own use. All the other traditions currently held by the Pataxós were generated by a cultural production movement, started in the early 1970s, supported by the marketing strategies all-around the Discovery of Brazil. Such “culture representations” are important for the Pataxós, not only “marketwise” (for their economic value), but also because their keynote was making themselves being seen, becoming visible as legitimate Indians before the public who watched them. Although those Indians did not have their Indianness questioned, like their relatives from Coroa Vermelha, they were seen as an assortment of poor folks with hardly any attractive of their own. It is actually remarkable how the loss of an original culture causes Indians to lose their attractiveness through exposure, and occupy the space pertinent to miserable populations.

It was in the 1970s as well that the Pataxós from Barra Velha learned to commercialize their artisanship. However, if in the 1970’s Barra Velha natives used to go on walks to sell their objects, today tourists come to the village. Barra Velha handcraft is also sold in Caraíva, either by natives that get out

there (especially children), or at tents that belong to natives” friends or relatives, usually open in the high summer season. Caraíva is, actually, a small fishing village where locals and entrepreneurs who moved in do not allow mass tourism to have access. They have dedicated their efforts to attracting youngsters – not interested in comfort, but rather a meeting point for fun, lively summer parties – and couples as well as people in general, who are looking for a quiet place to rest and to retire. Those very visitors were the ones to start making suggestions for objects to the Pataxós at those locations, many times placing orders for wholesale market, and thus instigating changes or innovations in Barra Velha craft.

As for other current traditions, if in 1995 there were fewer than six dances performed at Barra Velha, by 1998 the village already counted over twelve of them. The task of “collecting the pebbles spread out by tradition,” that is to say, “cultural revival,” was also associated with the movements of language creation, of new Indian personal names, of body painting and ritual ornaments, everything with the purpose of rebuilding their own cultural heritage. Because those cultural elements had only recently been created, neighbors in general did not see them as authentic, since they did not match the perspective of an unchanged heritage, which should have been transferred just as “genuine” traditions supposedly should, i.e. through generations since ancient times.

It should be noted that during the cultural production movement a dance was created. Male Indians dance around a roasted piece of a dead animal (at the time, a cow that had been given by a farmer to be killed and roasted for the celebration of Indian Day on April 19, 1998), to “represent,” in Indians’ words, the times when they used to hunt in the woods and share the hunted animals at a village party. The dance was created for the party to celebrate Indian Day, where most Indians at the party saw it for the first time, since it was brand new. Even the Indians dancing it were unfamiliar with it – they had rehearsed the steps the day before for the first and only time. Visitors to the party – whether FUNAI local authorities or from the Brasilia central office in the District Capital, or video makers from TV channels, missionaries, Indians’ friends and relatives from other villages and neighboring towns, especially those staying at hotels in Caraíva for Holy Week holiday – could enjoy the visit. Also present were many local residents, merchants, and business people from village lodges. All respondents I interviewed – coming from

all the above-listed social segments – unanimously stated that this was an “authentic Indian dance.” Even those who said the Pataxós no longer had any tradition admitted they were “wrong,” adding that Indians should be encouraged, rather than to look for jobs at the villages or farms, to be able to stay in the villages where they could preserve such heritage.

Contrary to the Jaqueira situation, authenticity here is an element of utmost relevance in visitors’ discourse. However, if that dance was performed for the first time in such context, what does time or history have to do with the authenticity of tradition? Apparently, in such situation, those elements are not essential to the legitimacy of tradition, which must be perceived as a representation whose authenticity awakens a symbolic guideline that has been achieved. A contributing factor is that the dance is compatible with an easy representation of what an “indigenous dance” should be.

On the other hand, in the same way as Jaqueira, this is when the particular image of what an Indian should show is satisfied. This is when authenticity is granted by the visitors, even if it is no longer a significant reflexive topic, because the fact of indigenous alterity has been consolidated (and naturalized), and the tension represented by the authenticity discourse has been dissipated in intercultural co-fraternization. That is, a magic, or serendipitous moment (Cary 2004) where temporarily spontaneous experience takes place, allowing “an unexpected discovery of something valuable that is perceived to be true at that time,” which is how Cary refers to serendipity (2004: 66).

Curiously, Cary compares the mid-16th Century experience of Huguenot missionary Jean de Léry, as he watched ritual dances by Tupinambá natives in Brazil, to the serendipitous modern tourist moment. In the Pataxó Hunt Dance’s case, in Barra Velha, the serendipitous moment does not configure complete alterity from early colonial encounters, but rather a modern context where previous representation of the cultural indigenous inauthenticity took place and, owing to the magic of the experience, the dance is experienced as authentic.

The Kapinawá Example

I would like to add another example – from a reservation in the *sertão* (semi-arid interior) of Brazil’s Northeast region. The indigenous peoples of this

region were considered to be acculturated – “indigenous remnants” (Ribeiro 1982) – to the Brazilians who came to occupy it with their cattle raising activities during the 18th and 19th centuries. Toré – their basic ritual manifestation – was treated as a subject for folklorists, and between the 1930’s and 1950’s folklorists were interested in the game playing of those they saw as descendants of indigenous people.

Associated with this ritual, we have found records of the “Jurema cult.” This sacred plant (*Mimosa tenuiflora* (Willd.) Poir.) is central to indigenous mystical representations (and those of other non-indigenous popular religious channeling-based groups) in the region, and at that time the records reported a syncretic survival of indigenous cults.

It was in the middle of the 20th century that Indians in Northeastern Brazil started gaining visibility, while being recognized by the Brazilian Federal authorities. Many groups come forward in the regional scenario through strong processes of ethnic emergence, which aimed quite directly at the recapture of territories that, in possession of farmers, were deemed traditionally occupied by the Indians. Toré and the use of Jurema drink – which were not used on that occasion by all of those groups – were “retrieved” by practically all groups as the general icon of both Northeastern Indians and of specific ethnicities in each group. That is, to the extent that people expected local Indians to dance the Torés, they did it by mystically strengthening a political movement that largely marked the Indianness of the area. However, each group developed religious (spiritual) forms of working with the Jurema cult and held spiritual sessions in the ambit of Torés, to mark their specific ethnicities.

Besides, although Jurema is quite well defined as an indigenous diacritical symbol, Northeastern Indians do not deny their mixture. Many of the Indians recognize the presence of Afro-Christian elements in their rituals. For them, that does not lessen their ethnicity, since they confirm they are historically mixed with black people as well, while incorporating the contributions of all ethnic contributions that are positively operational in their rituals and their daily life (Grünewald 2005).

However, during those years and still today, those rituals, their dances and songs are seen by Brazilians as hybrid, rather than traditions that are historically untouched from a Pre-Colombian, autochthonous past, and which, in a regional discriminatory rhetoric, disqualifies them as authentic or legitimate

representatives of Brazilian Indian Autochthony. Effectively, such rites – and their music and dance – have emerged from a long course of experimentation and composition. For instance, the Kapinawá of the State of Pernambuco's *sertão* are a group emerging from a historic process as described earlier, in which their music and their rituals were created for today's exhibition of a complex tradition to support the cultural identity of each group.

The Kapinawá are descendents of natives who were settled in the Serra do Macaco in the 18th century, between the municipalities of Buíque, Tupanatinga, and Ibimirim, in the State of Pernambuco. In the 1970', they were threatened by large property farmers who were interested in their lands. After having been informed by a neighboring group of Indians (the Kambiwás) that they could look for help with the Federal Government to defend their traditional territory, they had access to a copy of a 19th century document (signed by the then Emperor Dom Pedro II and Princess Isabel) that donated the lands to the descendents of the old Macacos village. The document was used by the Indians to have the squatters expelled from their lands. At the same time, they were encouraged by Indians from other ethnic groups to develop the Toré ritual in their village as a sign of their Indianness. In 1979, a cross was erected on the grounds where the Tore had started. In 1984, the area was recognized by the Brazilian government as Indian Land and squatters left for good (Albuquerque 2005).). Nowadays 2,500 Kapinawás occupy a territory homologated in 1998 with 12,403 hectares, where they essentially make a living from agriculture.

However, if Toré was “retrieved” based on the memory of the “elderly” and on the participation of Indians from other ethnicities as their instructors, it was not the only element “retrieved” from the Kapinawá traditional culture in this process. In the area around Kapinawá land, the *samba-de-coco* is a special musical tradition. While building mud-wall huts, this was the beat to be followed as the floor was being laid. As brick and cement houses eventually predominated, the ‘*samba-de-coco*’ beat lost its place. We may put across that such “dance” performed simultaneously with the building represented ludic ground, whereas that of the “*benditos*” (Catholic praying folk songs), in the village chapel, became sacred ground. These two cultural elements were practiced by the Kapinawá up to the moment when the Toré was introduced – with the Toré, the ‘*samba-de-coco*’ gained a new location to be played. Therefore, the co-traditions (Barth 1984) little by little intertwined to make up a rich,

complex tradition. The Toré is today central to Kapinawá culture – it brings together, in the same space, religion, and game playing; at the same sacredness, Christianity, and indigenous enchantments (Albuquerque 2005). Therefore, although discriminated by the locals who see them as racially mixed or mestizos rather than authentic Indians, we are hereby stressing a Kapinawá cultural specificity historically built, at any rate, during the last century.

Holy Smoke?

On one occasion, when I was in Acre – an Amazonian Brazilian state – two travelers, whom I had met, asked me to attend a Northeastern Indian ritual. One of them I had met before – a New Age-styled, of Egyptian extraction, a United States resident since he was a child and well-acquainted with Brazil, which he has been visiting every year, at least, for the past six years in his attempts to deepen his knowledge on Indian shamanism. The other was an American friend of his, a merchant of Asian medicinal products, well acquainted with the North American Native shamanism involved with the use of peyote (*Lophophora williamsii*).

Well, after they insisted quite strongly, and upon their promise that nothing would be taped or filmed (following Brazilian laws governing indigenous intellectual property), being aware of the Kapinawá's playful spirit and how approachable their Torés were, also taking advantage from a graduate student's fieldwork, I consulted the village administration about the visit, and referred the foreigners along with the researcher. They were all quite welcome: a beautiful ritual, and in addition to dances, they tasted the sacred drink. To please the visitors, the Indians added some sugar so that they would not feel the unpleasant bitter taste.

Although the visitors were repeatedly invited to dance the Toré around with the Indians, they preferred to stay apart and away from their ritual, with their eyes closed, sitting on the floor in a lotus-flower position, still trying to reach spectacular altered states of consciousness through possible hallucinations from the drink, supposedly very rich in N-N, dimethyltryptamine (DMT). However, the beautiful ritual was not fit for the *psychonautic* posture of "light reception," but rather for dancing with the illuminated spirits on the ground, centered by the Cross, some Indians dressed with "caroá" fiber (*Neoglaziovia variegata*), most of them in regular outfits worn in their daily lives of Brazilian citizens.

Although emphatically alerted about the aesthetic and religious style of Northeastern Indians, the visitors apparently believed they would find something in the Kapinawá “back region” (Goffman 1959), which Brazilian researchers had not yet discovered – especially in regard to the magic effects of the drink. At the end, the visitors were deeply disappointed at the ritual, which they considered “clearly inauthentic” since, as if being “acculturated” were not enough, Indians had allegedly “lost” their “Native wisdom” as they prepared the Jurema drink.

Although a village like this can count on a number of healers, only one shaman (*pajé*) is responsible for the collective health of the tribe as a whole. He is their mystical representative. The shaman was not present at the ritual attended by the two foreigners, since he was in a neighboring town, drinking sugar cane brandy with friends. In the following morning, the two visitors called on this shaman quite discredited by the tribe because of his indifference to rituals – and gave him presents (agricultural tools, etc.). Then, in English, they asked the shaman to blow “holy smoke” on them, but the shaman did not understand what they meant. He was actually embarrassed when he did eventually understand it, since he had never heard of or seen such thing or anything similar. Since the visitors insisted so much, the shaman – with the wide smile he usually had on his playful face – decided to blow smoke on them, as they wished. The visitors took their shirts off and sensed the smoke from the shaman’s pipe on their backs. They made gestures as if receiving something spectacular, and heartily thanked the shaman after that “authentic healing session,” which had made them feel “really cleansed.” They believed they had undergone ‘spiritual cleansing.’ They told me that, despite the inauthentic, acculturated ritual they had been to the night before, the trip had been well worth because they had met the shaman the next morning, and had had a “healing session.” Although the shaman, like the tribe as a whole, had seemed to be poor acculturated people, he still ironically kept some sort of expressed “wisdom” in that holy smoke the shaman was taught to do at that very moment in order to adjust the foreigners’ visit to the village to their perspective of close shamanic contact of what they had pre-idealized and of what in their mind was “legitimate.”

The Kapinawá do not seem to question the authenticity of their traditions. Although under constant updating, they exhibit marked social vitality – which, in itself, according to Duggan (1997), is sufficient to legitimate the

authenticity of a tradition. Nevertheless, in this intercultural experience, if no complicity occurred, there was no cultural enchantment, either, since visitors expected something that did not belong to that place and were not open Kapinawá so gently had to offer them.

Authenticity, social representation, and nostalgia

We could quite simply establish three different ways to experience the intercultural encounters herein presented. In the shaman-for-tourists at the Jaqueira Reserve, we see *cultural complicity*, when visitors are interested in Pataxó's performance (and discourse), at that point quite unconcerned about deeper reflections on indigenous authenticity. As for the Pataxó's hunt dance in Barra Velha, we see the experience of *cultural enchantment* reaching beyond recognized acculturation, when visitors (and indigenous people not familiar with the dancing) experienced the feeling of authenticity brought forth by Indian dancing. Finally, when visitors of the Kapinawá Reservation decided not to accept the tradition that was being presented, but rather impose what should be authentic, they gave a good example of *cultural arrogance*.

From the three examples, I consider the authenticity of the first through the lens of recurrent constructivist and post-modern perspectives. In fact, at Jaqueira, the shaman-for-tourist is a fruit of social (historic) negotiation, and his display does not refer to a fixed, invariably objective reality. Visitors are somehow accomplices of such symbolic construction, as they do not question its veracity – and, as Handler and Linnekin (1984) affirmed, tradition must be conceived as a symbolic construction whose symbolic value (which authenticates tradition) does not depend on an objective relationship with the past, but rather on a current semiotic designation. Therefore, the fact that tradition, the location or the shaman (play, scenery and actor) are modern constructions does not mean they will necessarily be included in the logic of being granted (or not) authenticity. The last example brings forth a reflexive posture that post-colonialism (since Said, 1978) tries to send away. I might put forth that, politically, authenticity seems to implicate an intercultural agreement about the cultural criteria to be more or less exposed, but there actually is a colonialist hegemony (and therefore a cultural asymmetry), which claims to delimitate or demand a form and a substance for the natives. Finally, while eventually evoking an atmosphere compatible with a

representation of the Indian, the second example of hunt dance also hints at pondering on the boundaries of anthropology as it faces such phenomena on account of the magical authenticity that it causes to emerge.

In fact, it seems to me that, while authenticity is a representation or an objectification, the anthropologist's task consists neither in verifying culture substance nor in focusing methodologically and theoretically on substantive elements, which would qualify traditions as authentic. The anthropologist should rather understand the significant, ideological processes of social representation that are concerned with the authenticity discourse, that is to say – with issues concerning magic and power.

Fabian (1983) pointed out how the West saw “Others” in a timeless, static “ethnographic present.” Bruner (2004a: 129) extended this critique by pointing out that even tourists take the evolutionist view which freezes the other as timeless and a-historical. If the image of the “happy primitive” (Bruner 2004b) was a way for colonial control “in part constructed by ethnography itself,” Bruner sees it as ironic that the tourist now chases the discourse the ethnographer discarded, “pursuing an a-historical view that anthropologists have long abandoned” (*ibid*: 220). In any case, this “frozen” other – or the nostalgia for it – is what would confer authenticity to the encounter with Indians. It is authenticity seen through a native cultural content, which represents a Western construction of a Native culture. Still, why would the ethnic, the sacred, or the authentic require original purity?

Reaching beyond the arrogance or the complicity of visitors and natives, I would like to move on to the unusualness of enchantment in the intercultural experience, where authenticity emerges not from reflection, but rather where the representation of tradition enchants through a “driving force,” common to tourism attractions – nostalgia – in other words, “the sentimental longing for feelings and things of the past” (Graburn 1995: 165). These days, according to that author, nostalgia means the “anguish occasioned by *temporal displacement*, the loss of something past, presumably once familiar, or something which is a symbol or an affective marker of the past” (Graburn 1995: 166). The author also reminds us that Rosaldo (1989) named “imperialist nostalgia” a “kind of regret that people of the Western world have wrought on other ways of life through colonization, or on nature through industrial exploitation” (Graburn 1995: 166). That nostalgia is the source for “more authentic” experiences of people who try to connect with small communities, with their

culture and even with untouched nature, which, when emerging as authentic, gets to be sacralized (the notion of the *ecological sanctuary*).

Perhaps another characteristic of some new contemporary religiosities – such as the “alternative mysticism in Brazil” itself (Soares 1994) – is to operate with fragments of religious narratives and to seek, through them, authentic divine manifestations. I am not sure if the nostalgia mentioned as a characteristic of this segment in (post)modernity is that new, or if it has come along the course of time with humankind since segments started representing its separation from the divine in daily life, pointing out the relevance of its *reconnection* through ritual. The performance would suffice, since at that point in time sacredness would be recomposed and Authenticity, revealed and exhibited. Well, exactly where the search for authenticity is relevant (as in ethnic, cultural, historic tourism, as well as tourism on nature, and where the representation of the Other or of the past is involved) the notion of nostalgia is also fundamental (although not necessarily relative to sacred things as nostalgia for the Belle Époque, etc).

Indeed, when referring to the past, many cultural elements gain a nostalgic air and authenticity arrives by that path. As the Pataxó dance around the roasted meat evokes a past moment, although not experienced by any of the Indians or any of their ancestors who could have transmitted the history of the performance of this dance as something that actually happened. The idea that the dance might have been performed in the past, even if differently, is a conjecture – and the objectification of that conjecture is a legitimately authentic, current tradition, based on the nostalgic element being evoked. Its authenticity is not in its past use, but rather in the vitality of the nostalgia, which it provokes. This is equally applied to the case of the shaman-for-tourist of the Jaqueira reserve, although the Kapinawá perhaps were not seen as authentic, in their rituals etc., because they were not willing to engage in an effort to generate the nostalgia that would act as the counterpart for Western civilization.

Beyond social representation

The examples along this manuscript show that the authenticity of cultural phenomena is not necessarily defined by the substance of the cultural elements objectified by social groups, and that some reflection on the topic may

expand to less palpable aspects of experiences observed. Authenticity does not depend on time or history (although most times these may be relevant factors), but rather on how the experience is understood by those experiencing it.

Wang has noticed that many tourism motivations or experiences cannot be explained in terms of any conventional concept of authenticity – i.e. its object-related version – pointing out, as a counterpart, to the “existential authenticity” as an analytical focus to the extent that it is a Heidegger-inspired “existential state of Being” (Wang 1999: 359), which would activate the experience of authenticity. Despite the existential face of the cases herein narrated, I still cannot say that the described phenomena could be brought to bear on what Wang has called “existential authenticity,” even if that specific notion would point towards a pathway for the transcendence of the concept of authenticity (Wang 1999). I believe the possibilities for building the authenticity that ethnography may bring forth are the ones to transcend the intellectualist typologies that try to immobilize authenticity as a theoretical concept when in reality it should receive the status of a native concept for relative application to situations and contexts of reflexive interest for social actors.

Nevertheless, we could also research in another direction. If the shaman-for-tourists is legitimated by the “(post)-tourist” and other social segments – irrespective of any questioning about his authenticity –, if an authentic performance was demanded by the Americans among the Kapinawá, and if the hunt dance of acculturate Pataxó was experienced as *truly authentic* for the social nostalgia that it brought forth – since it is associated with a collective representation of how Indian feasts *should be* in the forest – is there such a thing as authentic, effective content, irrespective of what may come to be “retrieved” by the actors or conceptualized by social scientists and philosophers? Would authenticity then transcend social representations?

Anthropology may have to admit – likewise some of its studies on religion – some epistemological limits for reflexive movements concerning authenticity that moves beyond its realm, and extends to other spheres (theology, philosophy, magic, etc) not reached by anthropological authority. This may be the reason why articles by Graburn, which discuss the “search for the Holy Grail” or the “sacred journey” (1989), and the “altered states” (2004), are so relevant for understanding not only tourism experiences but also more general intercultural encounters. The metaphor of the sacred is relevant because it brings exactly that same dimension. While it may make it harder for

anthropology to penetrate the intimacy of the magical-religious phenomenon, it does otherwise for authenticity, and such words (*sacred* and *authenticity*) may not be so far apart. In fact, if religion originates etymologically from *re-ligare* (re-joining, re-connecting) – with something (the Creator, the authentic, etc.) to which we have no ordinary access – the experience of authenticity may not be so foreign to that reconnection, which one can assume as being the source of the encounter with a primary essence that, as a consecrating force, is overall sovereign (of time, history, culture, etc). For that matter I do not find it odd that religion can be thus important for the herein-approached Indian ethnogenesis where we can perceive the operation of sacred secrets, which causes Indians to *re-indianize* themselves, and to reconnect (*re-ligare*) themselves with an autochthonous authenticity even in mixture.

Generally (but this is not mandatory, as we verify), the past plays an important role as regards authenticity. According to Handler and Saxton (1988), “for much of us, everyday experience is ‘unreal’ or inauthentic” (Handler and Saxton 1988: 243) and people (afflicted by latent nostalgia, I would say) occasionally or regularly seek to regain an authentic world through diverse processes, however these people do not always try to yield “a restoration or re-creation isomorphic with the original” (e.g. the Pataxó hunt dance, which is now performed with a cow handed over by a farmer) – like the quoted authors suppose as regards living history (Handler and Saxton 1988: 243). Besides, if through re-creation one looks for the authentic, what should ultimately be recreated, and before whose eyes? Can there be a consensus about original authenticity? Is authenticity possible, if thought of substantively? Or else, does authenticity not search for transcendence rather than for the past? Would authenticity be in the thing itself rather than in the spirit of the thing? (E.g. at the Jaqueira Reservation what is sought after is rather retrieving the Pataxó indigenous spirit than recreating the past). Furthermore, what to say about the extraordinary “magic moments” that contingently instigate social actors to be marveled at episodic experiences outside of the authenticity script?

One may consider, according to Cary (2004), that, “given the temporary illusion of the truth associated with serendipity, it in turn becomes a mechanism for inventing authenticity” (2004: 66). We could further try to couple such impressions with existential speculations in the nature of Heidegger’s ontological perspective, as outlined by Wang (1999) and by Steiner and

Reisinger (2006), and clarify some ideas on the inadequate use of a concept of such *spectrum*.

However – despite religion – the next step does not seem to me to lie in the recognition of this, but rather in that anthropology – which for over one hundred years has focused on the most diverse ways to explain magic and has kept dialogue with different knowledge areas (theology, sociology, history, biology, linguistics, literary criticism, psychology, etc.) – may have to turn to what may be extracted from magic itself, away from its ways of intellectual speculation, in order to advance the knowledge of a cultural experience transcending its substance, objectivity, intentionality, even its history. Perhaps, seen this way, *transpersonal* psychology may still contribute, alongside with anthropology, to further exploration of the debate on nostalgia and authenticity.

Additionally, magicians are very objective in what they do, and anthropology can perhaps reiterate what Mauss and Hubert (1980) seems to have pointed out long ago as the key element to magic – an indeterminate, significant capacity, ready to be filled with intention – so as to reflect cultural questioning in interculturality, specifically in regard to the rhetoric of authenticity, which, if effectively carried out by social actors (and anthropology must include the concepts used by those actors), must, as tradition, be thought of in situational terms since its experiences and meanings are situationally constructed and experienced.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to some reflections on the idea of cultural authenticity while evoking issues that raise the complexity of the subject when contrasting ethnographic illustrations. Therefore, this contribution does not focus on the meaning or the use of tradition, but rather, and more specifically, on the imponderability of authenticity. I have sustained that fixed criteria cannot be established to understand how authenticity is elaborated for social subjects, in the variety of concrete interactions, as each meaning for the word *authenticity* must come from the specific context wherein it occurs.

Moreover, for Briggs (1996) we must be watchful for the existence of meta-discursive practices “in creating and legitimating authority in discourses that ‘invent’ cultural traditions as well as in those that deconstruct them”

(Briggs 1996: 439). The competition between native meta-discursive practices and other practices (particularly ethnographic, but including those practices originated from public policies or extracted from common sense) seems important to relativize the academic or Western authority in the authentication of such traditions. According to Briggs, “if the discursive authority” of native subjects is “not predicated on truth claims regarding historical and ethnographic accuracy, on what is it based? What constitutes appropriate grounds for contesting it?” (Briggs 1996: 436). Maybe the procedure of resorting to the epistemological mapping of tradition generation in substantive terms covers up aspects of cultural politics (or of internal cultural dynamics), which can be quite significant, and which might end up unmasking our arrogance in the attribution of authenticity toward traditions in general – especially native traditions which often reinforce, through ethnicity, the deepest and the most intimate aspects of any social group.

Tradition is fundamental for the Indians’ ethnicity to the extent that it is a significant vehicle for their authenticity, which is manifest through different ways, and can be channeled to differentiated social or cognitive processes. This article has brought up a few such possibilities and thus contributed to unmake a tightly held notion of what ought to be understood as authenticity, as far as it happens in situational and relational terms.

Furthermore, beyond whatever authenticity is consciously understood by the social subjects, Handler and Saxton (1988) also detected the presence of another conception of authenticity, related to the individual experience, unconscious for the actors, of being “in touch with a ‘real’ world and with their ‘real’ selves” (Handler and Saxton 1988: 243), thus underscoring an *authenticity of experience*, which individuals eventually (and magically) define as authentic. This led us to the issue of authenticity individuation, supported by Heidegger’s existentialism, and which has been the starting point for Wang’s (1999) Steiner’s and Reisinger’s (2006) intellectualist schemes. Indeed, Graburn (1995) and Cary (2004) have also highlighted nostalgic or serendipitous moments constitutive of such (sometimes epiphanic) experiences, which I have understood as an enchantment that magicians (or shamans) first learned to provide with intentionality and significance.

My argument is, in short, that authenticity is something experiential, however, as referred to culture, also relational – not only because culture is public, and in it people construct their social interactions but also because,

whenever intercultural encounters are involved, such as in a kiss with its ever-fresh, involved delights, there is the need of at least two individuals for the experience to happen. Therefore, one should not look for cultural authenticity in the cultural elements being exhibited, since culture cannot be narrowed down to its objectified items, but rather implies that a significant process (and sensitive elements) should involve it as a collective experience. Dance, music, ritual, or shamanism are felt, perceived, or experienced as authentic. Ultimately, it befits experience to bring (or not to) the aura of authenticity and this can even be transient. Who can guarantee that Pataxó's neighbors would still consider that hunt dance as authentic – if they can still remember it?

By hereby resuming the topic of authenticity in anthropology, I would like to point out its inapplicability towards general models, and confirm that ethnography is the way to underline its significant expressiveness, which is contingent, and which ought to be directly derived from the minds of the concrete social subjects. Furthermore, I would urge my colleagues to rethink the contours of our discipline when dealing with the phenomenon (or should I say, different phenomena we approach through a single concept?) that, because it is experiential (as well as magic), manifests itself in groups or in individuals in such a subjective, contingent or unusual way as to make general models for the approach of cognitive translations inappropriate for capturing the phenomenon's full magnitude.

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