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Atmosphären

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SONDERDRUCK



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PAULO GAJANIGO

Relevance of the public atmosphere concept based on study of the redemocratisation period in Brazil

ABSTRACT

This article presents a proposal to work on a concept of public atmosphere in light of recent contributions to the concepts of atmosphere, Stimmung, mood and structure of feelings. Aspects of the concept relevant to study of the public sphere are presented in dialogue with criticism of the Habermasian concept of the public bourgeois sphere, particularly its focus on discourse and rationality. Throughout the article, there is analysis of the process of transition from military dictatorship in Brazil (1974–1985) to the establishment of a »climate of openness« to deal with the operational concept of public atmosphere and the affective dynamics of attunement and misattunement in the public sphere.

KEYWORDS

atmosphere;
Stimmung;
public sphere;
democracy;
structure of feelings

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The aim of this text is to address the relevance of the concept of public atmosphere. Although the term is often used in studies about the public sphere, strangely it has not received conceptual treatment. It is possible to identify its use as a descriptive category even in Jürgen Habermas,¹ but a question remains in the air: Why is it necessary to describe social phenomena from this angle? What can this concept do? Here I present some aspects that can help answer these questions. These aspects contributed, I think, to my research on the Brazilian redemocratisation process (1974–1985). It will be on the basis of this experience that I will argue for the relevance of this concept.

The current moment seems quite timely for such research. If it is not possible to talk about an atmospheric turn, we can at least identify, as Tonino Griffero does,² that there is a mood for mood studies. From the last decade, it is possible to list articles, books, event initiatives and dossiers,³ such as this, whose emphasis is on the atmospheric aspect of the phenomena. The *Stimmung* concepts, mood, atmosphere, and climate are being re-operationalised, and today these form part of a broad research agenda. Although much of what was accumulated about these concepts was dispersed throughout the 20th century (Heidegger, Schmitz, Böhme, etc.), it was in the early decades of the 21st century that its renaissance occurred,⁴ an intense moment of discussion and investigation of the various potentialities of these concepts.

Immersed in this climate, I am led to the question: Why add *atmós* (Greek) to sphere in the public sphere? What are the analytical gains? My hypothesis is that the concept of atmosphere, guided by these recent discussions, aids the process of updating the understanding of the public sphere, particularly in

the absorption of some criticism of the Habermasian theory of the bourgeois public sphere.⁵ In a nutshell, considering the public sphere to have atmospheric characteristics helps reading it in the sense of its affects, thus displacing the analytical axis of discourse and rationality, causing the undemocratic aspects of its functioning to be felt more strongly.

In particular, I was led to look at this atmospheric character of the public sphere through the discourses that were the focus of attention in my research. In studying the process of transition from the dictatorship in Brazil (established in 1964 and ended with a direct presidential election in 1989), I was attentive to the way the period was configured, baptised by the agents themselves at the time of the »abertura« (redemocratisation). The period was marked by an inflection in the dictatorial government, upon General Ernesto Geisel coming into power in 1974. After strong repressive measures in force as of 1968, with the publication of Institutional Act 5,⁶ the new president assumed power indicating a relaxation of repression, such as the decrease in press censorship. In seeking to make a genealogy of this periodisation, I realised that government agents (those who first termed the moment as the »opening«) often used the idea of establishing a »climate of openness.« They were interested in influencing the public sphere through a climatic configuration that would help them build a transition to democracy in a »slow, gradual, safe« way, as Geisel stated.⁷ My argument is that the evocation and action via a new climate was not an epiphenomenon of the dictatorial proposal,⁸ but a decisive practice of polit-

1 Habermas/Michnik: *Overcoming the Past*, 5.

2 Griffero: *Neo-Phenomenological Mood*, 121.

3 I mention some recently published dossiers: Felski/Fraiman: *In the mood*; Highmore/Taylor: *Mood work*; Bille/Bjerregaard/Sørensen: *Staging Atmospheres*; Krebs/Ben-Ze'ev: *The Meaning of Moods*; Tedeschini: *Moods*; and Sauer/Wang: *Atmosphere and Mood*.

4 Griffero: *Neo-Phenomenological Mood*, 124.

5 See Kluge/Negt: *Public sphere*; Fraser: *Rethinking*; Gilroy: *After the Love*; Dahlberg: *The Habermasian*.

6 The Institutional Act 5 represented a strengthening of the repressive nature of the regime, allowing the president to take measures such as temporarily closing the National Congress, revoking the mandates of parliamentarians, and intervening in states and municipalities.

7 Geisel: *Discurso*, 122.

8 In Brazilian historiography, the »climate of openness« has not received adequate attention thus far. Even the concept of an »openness period« has been primarily treated as



ical transition, as it was a successful action focused on the participants' affective disposition in the public sphere. With this »climatic policy,« but not only with it, the dictatorial government undertook the difficult proposal of a power transition with a slow expansion of the public sphere, only possible with modulation/containment of the political opposition. This approach to the public »atmosphere« then became the central aim of the research.

In this article, I will deal with some aspects of the concept of public atmosphere relevant for understanding the dynamics of the public sphere covered in the research on the political transition process in Brazil. At this point, I should emphasise two aspects. The first refers to attunement (*Einstimmung*) as an aspect highlighted by the concept, which can bring new elements to the understanding of the recognised centrality of the media in the public sphere. The second aspect deals with the non-containment of the public sphere, also enhanced by the use of that concept. Finally, I will discuss how these aspects help to provide an understanding of the dynamics of sentiments and disputes in the public sphere, especially in the reinforcement of inequality and struggles for equality.

ATTUNEMENT AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

As indicated above, the renaissance we observed in atmosphere studies is part of a broader movement

a descriptive category, except for Bresser-Pereira (*Os limites da »abertura«*), who provides a political genealogy of the term »openness,« emphasizing its prevalence over the opposing term »democratization.« The scarcity of studies on the »climate of openness« can be partly attributed to the recent discussion on mood and atmosphere studies in Brazil. This discussion essentially initiated with Gumbrecht's book on *Stimmung* (*Atmosphere, Mood, Stimmung*), translated into Portuguese in 2014. However, its impact has predominantly been felt within aesthetic discussions. In Brazilian architecture and urban studies, there are noteworthy research efforts that engage with Thibaud's concept of *ambiance* (Duarte/Miranda/Pinheiro/Silva: *Experiência do lugar*). Within the realm of Social Sciences in Brazil, the use of mood or atmosphere is still incipient.

that includes articulation with the *Stimmung* concept.⁹ What has mainly attracted researchers to this concept is its strong ambiguity, present since its emergence in philosophical discussion in the 18th century. Until treated as a concept, the term was a noun derived from the verb *stimmen*, which meant »raising one's voice« or »tuning a musical instrument.«¹⁰ In music, it could mean: the latter; the condition of being in harmony with other instruments, and the condition of an instrument prepared to be played.¹¹ Contemporarily, the concept has been mobilised in order to distance it from metaphysical aspects that can be derived from the sense of harmony.¹² This distancing does not mean abdication from the sound metaphor, *Stimmung*, which leads one to think of the attunement processes as ways of producing presence.¹³ Within the scope of the phenomena, the proliferation of media devices makes the close relationship between attunement and the environment increasingly noticeable. It does not suffice to be in a certain environment to be present, something that any parent who sits at a table with a teenager with a cell phone and headphones knows. Presence is produced through access to a shared frequency.

The articulation between frequency/sound and the environment that the approximation of the *Stimmung* concepts and atmosphere allow is welcomed by media studies. Richard Coyne has recently worked on the concept of mood (as the translation of *Stimmung*) to deal with digital media and the everyday life. For the author, »[u]sers take possession of devices and adapt (calibrate) them to their own circumstances, needs, uses, and local context. To focus on calibration is also to recognise the need for sensitivity to place.«¹⁴ The contemporary process of space virtualisation reinforces the relevance of working with concepts that al-

9 Griffero: *Neo-Phenomenological Mood*.

10 Wellbery: *Atmosphere*, 10.

11 Wellbery: *Atmosphere*, 10.

12 Griffero: *Neo-Phenomenological Mood*, 124; Gumbrecht: *Atmosphere*, 20.

13 Gumbrecht: *Atmosphere*.

14 Coyne: *Mood and mobility*, 19–20.

low one to think of the dynamics between attunement and space.

The formation of the bourgeois public sphere is inseparable from the the process of developing the means of communication, as already shown by Habermas,¹⁵ Michael Warner argues that, in the Habermasian sense, the public sphere can be understood in a virtual way, as a mode of addressing: »A ›public‹ in this context is a special kind of virtual social object, enabling a special mode of address.«¹⁶ This process of virtualisation is deepened with the development of the new means of communication. John Thompson states that »[w]ith the development of communication media, the phenomenon of publicness has become detached from the sharing of a common locale. It has become *de-spatialised* and *non-dialogical*, and it is increasingly linked to the distinctive kind of visibility produced by, and achievable through, the media (especially television).«¹⁷

Further on, I will deal with how this definition of addressing modes states what the public is and who is or is not included in it. What I draw attention to now is attunement as a decisive action of access to the public sphere. For Warner, the public »commence with the moment of attention, must continually predicate renewed attention, and cease to exist when attention is no longer predicated.«¹⁸ Doing publicly is more than doing in public. It is to have public attention and evoke public interest. This mode of addressing can be understood as syntony. The media appear as well as the public sphere itself. Media attention is understood as the possibility of acting in the public sphere, and tuning its channels is understood as being aware of public opinion.

Therefore, to act on the public atmosphere is also to act on the media atmosphere. When the Brazilian government announced the construction of a new climate in 1974, its first measure was to reduce censorship

(far from ending it, which lasted until the end of the military government). Thus, the public sphere became more plural, with more divergent expressions, and, at the same time, acted on the very mood of the media. The opening policy of the Brazilian dictatorial government was a set of actions, advances and setbacks, towards democratisation for the purpose of ensuring maximum control over the process. The dynamics of incorporating new political actors (legalisation of parties, return of exiles, negotiation with unions, etc.) was hesitant. To understand the opening climate, it is important to take this into account. The focus on building a new climate is part of surrounding the process, insinuating political and administrative measures, and focusing on a preliminary field of political struggle. This is one of the reasons that make me argue that the »climatic« policy of the dictatorship was not an addendum, but one of the principal focuses for controlled driving of the opening process. Here it is worth thinking of the media as this »aura«¹⁹ of actions, the locus of reverberation, where the political acts are insinuated and where they echo. Therefore, the public atmosphere as a virtual space of attunement has a media nature. The media, or the industrially produced media complex, is its atmospheric infrastructure.²⁰ Its access channels and simultaneous functioning are the very design of this public atmosphere.

THE NON-CONTAINMENT OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Another atmospheric feature that aids understanding the public sphere dynamics is the impossibility of its

19 Ingold: *The Atmosphere*.

20 Although this expression could sound a bit strange, unifying structure and atmosphere, this articulation is inspired by two contributions. Rebecca Coleman (*Theorizing the present*) employs Raymond Williams' concept of the »structure of feeling« to assert that media can be seen as an infrastructure of feelings. Additionally, Christiane Heibach argues that »electronic media can be deemed atmospheric because they focus on emotional and implicit, even un- or subconscious effects« (*Convincing atmospheres*, 54).

15 Habermas: *The Structural Transformation*.

16 Warner: *Publics*, 55.

17 Thompson: Review, 187.

18 Warner: *Publics*, 88.



containment. The entire atmosphere is fluid, its limits impossible to define. Although the atmosphere evokes a location, since the whole atmosphere is in relation to a sphere, it affirms the locality whilst indicating its withdrawal, such as what lies around something. Ben Anderson states that: »If atmospheres proceed from and are created by bodies, they are not, however, reducible to them.«²¹ Or as Gernot Böhme states, they are »[n]ot something that exists by itself in a vacuum, but quite the opposite. It is something that emanates and is created by things, by people, and by the constellations that happen between them.«²² In Habermasian formulation, the public sphere appears to be in opposition to private life.²³ This opposition, as well pointed out by feminist criticism, ends up concealing political processes that have the environments of domestic life as their locus. When looking at the public sphere under the lens of atmosphere, sensitivity to subtleties can be broadened.

Darci Sprengel uses the concept of atmosphere to draw attention and provide relevance to the silence of artists in the period of post-demonstrations against the regime in Egypt in 2014. How can the action of silence in the public sphere be qualified? Sprengel shows that silence is mostly understood as a refusal to act or the impossibility of acting in the public sphere, of retreating to private life. In the case under study, she states that silence is audible and is part of the public atmosphere: »the public atmosphere in Egypt after 2014 emerges from profound tensions as well as the relative absence, or what I would more accurately describe as illegibility, of certain activities and sounds.«²⁴

Although Sprengel presents criticism of the meaning of atmosphere that gives much attention to harmony and positivity in its configuration, it is with this concept that she finds means to make one feel silence. If silence, or illegibility, also configures the atmosphere, what is outside it? It is in the public atmosphere that

one can be made to feel what falls short and lies beyond discourse and actions. This is where there are prospects for changes in the public sphere, and also where records are kept of what has been defeated or silenced. This aspect, in my view, can draw the sense of atmosphere closer to the structure of feelings, as developed by Raymond Williams. This author understands the structures of feelings as emergent forms of social experiences, and in them it would be possible to perceive what begins, what insinuates itself pre-discursively.²⁵ One can also perceive that which has been muffled, which no longer finds forms of representation in the public sphere.

AFFECTS AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Among the innumerable criticisms of the Habermasian concept of the public sphere, some of them highlight its excessive idealisation, arising as a consequence of his disregard for the exclusionary character of the bourgeois public sphere. Nancy Fraser offers one of the most complete criticisms of this aspect in *Rethinking the Public Sphere*. The focus on discursive rationality, according to Fraser, would have prevented Habermas from visualising that »the bourgeois public sphere was governed by protocols of style and decorum that were themselves correlates and markers of status inequality. These functioned informally to marginalise women and members of the plebeian classes and to prevent them from participating as peers.«²⁶ As Lincoln Dahlberg suggested, looking at the aesthetic-affective modes of communication helps us to see the conflicts in the public sphere better, beyond an idea of a discursive dispute: »...the exclusion of aesthetic-affective modes of communication and hence certain groups' voices; the assumption that power can be separated from public discourse, which masks exclusion and domination; and the promotion of con-

21 Anderson: *Affective Atmospheres*, 80.

22 Böhme: *New Aesthetics*, 33–34.

23 Calhoun: *Introduction*, 35.

24 Sprengel: *Reframing*, 249.

25 Williams: *Marxism*, 133–134.

26 Fraser: *Rethinking*, 119.

sensus as the purpose of deliberation, which marginalises voices that do not readily agree.«²⁷

The striving for representativity in the public sphere would then undergo incorporation of ways of feeling and be expressed as estranged from the established patterns of discursive rationality.²⁸ For Warner, »movements around gender and sexuality seek to transform fundamental styles of embodiment, identity, and social relations – including their unconscious manifestations, the vision of the good life embedded in them, and the habitus by which people continue to understand their selves or bodies as public or private.«²⁹ As Heidegger states, it is impossible not to be in some mood (*Stimmung*),³⁰ and the idea of an absence of mood would already be a mood. Similarly, the idea of a suspension of particularities that would be the mark of the public sphere already demands a mood, favours a *habitus*. Thus, »it is not possible to assume the habitus according to which rational-critical debate is a neutral, relatively disembodied procedure for addressing common concerns, while embodied life is assumed to be private, local, or merely affective and expressive.«³¹

Renouncing certain incorporations is not an easy or desirable task for many actors in the public sphere. Sara Ahmed deals with this relationship between mood and various forms of engagement: »I have implied that one enters not only *in* a mood, but *with* a history, which is how you come to lean this way or that. Attunement might itself be an affective history, of how subjects become attuned to others over and in time.«³²

27 Dahlberg: *The Habermasian*, 113.

28 Hartmut Rosa (*Resonance*) offers a valuable contribution to approaching the public sphere by proposing the primacy of affects (resonance) over rationality (recognition). According to the author, in a more democratic public sphere, the plurality of actors can resonate with each other. In a more authoritarian sphere, chambers of resonance block some of them.

29 Warner: *Publics*, 51.

30 Heidegger: *Being and Time*, 173.

31 Warner: *Publics*, 51.

32 Ahmed: *Not in the Mood*, 18.

As dealt with above, the articulation between the concepts of atmosphere and *Stimmung* helps one to think of the process of attunement to a mood and thinking about the various ways of relating to an atmosphere. It is noteworthy that Sprengler's concern arose upon identification of a tendency to treat atmosphere as a given. For the author, »although scholars acknowledge that not everyone within a given atmosphere becomes attuned to the same mood, they have primarily theorised atmosphere as all-encompassing by grounding their analyses in positive/sought-after examples of shared belonging (such as in weddings, worship and music rehearsal).«³³

The public sphere is a space of attunement and misattunement, of delimitation of what is heard or not. Ahmed claims: »To be attuned to some might simultaneously mean not to be attuned to others, those who do not share one's leanings. We can close off our bodies as well as ears to what is not in tune.«³⁴ Thus, what is created is »the figure of the stranger not necessarily or only by making the stranger into an object of feeling (the stranger as the one we recognise as not being with), but as the effect of not leaning that way.«³⁵ The author uses the novel by Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*, to deal with dynamics between misattunement and estrangement. The character, Claudia, a black child, having a different affectation from that expected from a white doll, is seen as violent: »Claudia encounters the doll she is supposed to wish for, that she is supposed to love, as an unlovable thing. Her misattunement is expressed in how she handles the thing (she pokes and twists the doll rather than clucks), a handling that would, no doubt, be registered by others as violence and aggression, or as disaffection. You can be alienated by virtue of how you are affected by things.«³⁶

This production of the stranger can be understood as one of the ways in which informal impediments are configured when participating in the public sphere,

33 Ahmed: *Not in the Mood*, 6.

34 Ahmed: *Not in the Mood*, 18.

35 Ahmed: *Not in the Mood*, 18.

36 Ahmed: *Not in the Mood*, 20.

»informal impediments to participatory parity that can persist even after everyone is formally and legally licensed to participate.«³⁷ According to Fraser, »unequally empowered social groups tend to develop unequally valued cultural styles. The result is the development of powerful informal pressures that marginalise the contributions of members of subordinated groups both in everyday contexts and in official public spheres.«³⁸

The focus of »climatic« policy on the part of the Brazilian dictatorial government is also justified by this aspect. The opening process was one of reducing formal barriers to participation in Brazilian political life, whether it was by reducing censorship, legalising political parties, or rehabilitation of political figures via the Amnesty Law (1979). Still under the dictatorship, this reduction of barriers needed to be compensated with a focus on informal impediments, a patrol dealing with the affective dispositions. So, the evocation of a new climate responded to this need for control during the opening, also bringing with it a force emanating from its naturalistic image. The striving to establish a climate in the public sphere, thus helping produce its strangers, is also a struggle to make the impediments to participation invisible. This occurs, for instance, when governments or certain sectors of society seek to incite a climate of terror. These impediments should exist as the air we breathe, about which we neither debate nor disagree.

This process of creating a climate is what Ben Highmore³⁹ termed mood work. The author initially used it to refer to orchestrations of elements of a scene that produce a mood. Ahmed also uses it to highlight power relations. The author indicates that, in a situation where we intend to be happy, »one might try and convince oneself to be happy to feel the way we are supposed to feel in that situation. It is the happiness of the situation (and not just one's own happiness) that one labours to preserve. Once it has worked,

attunement returns. So it might be that we just happen to be attuned. But attunement can be an effect of work, of how some labour to be in tune with others. If the labour is successful, it disappears as labour. The smoothness of attunement might even require the disappearance of labour.«⁴⁰

I propose that the evocation of the opening climate did not create the climate, but it was part of this mood work, part of its production. The evocation served as an organiser of political actions, the establishment of a grammar that, in turn, goes on influencing the dispositions, the initiatives. Evoked by powerful figures, they were being incorporated into the ritual of the public demonstrations. Even when there was contestation, the climate was affirmed as desired by the defenders of unprivileged agendas, who requested that the openness be also felt in their agendas.⁴¹ The mark of this process was the successful labelling of the opening period, and this had a strong element of perception of the public atmosphere, and, at the same time, the relegation of malaise. As a model of presentness in the public sphere, the climate of opening recorded and denied the malaise at the same time. It denied because the image of the opening did not express the presence of repressive force and control. It recorded because, effectively, the evocation was accompanied by this malaise, of its dissonance. Griffero states that an atmosphere is hardly designed, and some are harder to design than others. The »climate of openness«⁴² was

40 Ahmed: *Not in the Mood*, 21.

41 Gajanigo: *The Mood for Democracy*.

42 In this paper, I use the term »climate« often as a synonym for »atmosphere.« As an emic term, I choose to maintain it. While in meteorology climate and atmosphere have relevant differences, in the philosophical and social sciences approach these distinctions are somewhat unclear. In Portuguese, the ordinary use of the word »clima« (climate) is close to »mood« in certain situations—i. e. [,] when it is used to convey that someone is not in the mood for something. Unlike »atmosphere,« the term usually highlights a more intersubjective aspect of the situation. For a synthetic framing, and using the typology proposed by Griffero (*The atmospheric »we«,* 38), I would relate the term »climate« used here more to the derivative-relational

37 Fraser: *Rethinking*, 119.

38 Fraser: *Rethinking*, 120.

39 Highmore: *Feeling our way*.

not designed by the »promoters« of this label. Despite the authoritarian relation, the public atmosphere emanates not only a soft mood of dialogue or even a more vibrant mood of the seething political discussions and disputes. It also emanates a tense mood, stemming from a silenced fear of repression.

The approval of the Amnesty Law, which was a response to mobilisation for the liberation of political prisoners and the return to the country of exiled militants, was approved in 1979, whilst still under the dictatorship. Without distinction, amnesty was granted to those who had been persecuted, arrested and tortured by police forces, as well as to state officials who had violated human rights. Forgetfulness was exalted as a virtue and as a condition for the country to advance to openness. Being in the climate of the opening meant tuning out the violations of human rights, the memories of repression. The stimulus for oblivion was a mood work. According to Ahmed, »[w]hen attunement becomes an aim, those who are not in tune or who are out of tune become the obstacles; they become what gets in the way not only of attunement, but all that it promises: life, connection, empathy, and so on.«⁴³

Not being in the mood, therefore, may have more relevant political meanings than »mere« indisposition. In another article,⁴⁴ I deal with how Gonzaguinha, a Brazilian singer and songwriter, was stigmatised with the label of »grudge singer.« The production of dissonance in his music and in his public presentation was regarded as a »juvenile tantrum,« as if he had refused to abandon his bitter tone. This case aids understanding the dynamics between atmosphere and mood⁴⁵ in

atmospheres (»objective, external, and intentionally produced«) than to the prototypical (unintentional) or spurious (subjective) ones.

43 Ahmed: *Not in the Mood*, 20.

44 Gajanigo: *The Mood for Democracy*.

45 In Griffero's neo-phenomenological approach (*Neo-Phenomenological Mood*, 143), moods and atmosphere are not distinct phenomena but names to describe a fluid process of more localised or blurred feelings. Here, a more localised feeling of openness, within a political context, is

the public sphere. Being in the climate means sometimes having to forget, renounce bonds and ignore trauma. It is a temporality reconfiguration operation.

Another collective experience also offered resistance to entering the opening climate. In a novel published in 1978, at the height of the debate on the opening climate, Oswaldo de Camargo, a black Brazilian author, dealt with cold weather in relation to black people. The protagonist, Zé Antunes, seems to be the only one who believes the cold only affects blacks, and that it had something to do with the history of the Black people. When the first case in the city appears, one in which Josué Estevão is affected, the fact that only he feels the cold and expresses this feeling led to his presentation as a stranger, not just a different feeling, but revealing that, in fact, it was he who was strange. Zé Antunes launches himself into the task of proving that the cold does exist, that it is not the delirium of an individual. In conversation with a friend, Laudino, he is told: »Remember what we arranged? That the cold should be announced among the newcomers, those who will have, for reasons you know, difficulty detecting it.« And he adds: »But cold, taking away the singular case of Joshua, disguises itself as a breeze, and blows, and disintegrates, and whittles away people's hope.« It would be necessary to »announce the cold,«⁴⁶ name it, prove its existence. The proof, however, would not be in demonstrations of the biological/physical body, but seeking to gather the experiences of blacks in the collective memory:

»– Where did the cold come from, Zé?

– It is not known. I have been thinking: before my interview it is necessary that Father Antonio Jubileu speaks of the bones of eighty black fugitives succumbed to the Piracaios Hills in 1746. His amazing memory will be useful to indicate from where it may have come such a cold breath.«⁴⁷

associated with moods expressed in a more diffuse manner by the music industry.

46 Camargo: *A Descoberta do Frio*. My translation.

47 Camargo: *A Descoberta do Frio*. My translation.

The novel has been understood as part of the claim of the specificity of black experience and its visibility in public debate.⁴⁸ In the context of discussion about amnesty, the black movement struggled so that the debate would not be restricted to the »political and military dissident binomial.«⁴⁹ It was necessary to include in the debate the »torture and dehumanisation of those of African descent and the indigenous as elements that fill the relationship of continuity between the acts of state violence and the exercise of colonial and slave power in the country. However, the Amnesty Law kept the practices of human rights violations over any one who was not able to be interpreted as a political activist against the regime.«⁵⁰

Here, again, temporality is decisive in whether or not to be in the climate. If in a more superficial layer, being in the mood of opening required a forgetfulness of the repression of the military regime against militants of leftist political organisations, then, in a deeper layer, a forgetfulness of secular repression against blacks and indigenous people was required. These are dissonances that are anchored in different temporalities: the military regime (1964 onwards) and colonisation (1500 onwards). Because it is a synthesis of a situation, the atmosphere depends on imagined totalisations; therefore, the articulation between the temporal elements, the relationship between one today and one yesterday, give the conditions for the variety of dispositions. Highmore uses the idea of disjunctures to address these encounters of temporalities. The author's mention of Ernst Bloch is timely here: »people are simultaneously living different historical trajectories. He [Bloch] called this ›non-synchronous simultaneity‹ (...) A historical moment might always involve the immediately simultaneous, but this doesn't mean that this [is] a synchronized moment.«⁵¹

Within a hegemonic line of interpretation, the social movements of the late 70's, including the black move-

ment, would be immersed in the climate of opening and would benefit from it to expand its performance, with the progressive expansion of the public sphere. What this view ends up reinforcing is the idea that the atmosphere is an objective field of influence under the subjects. Ahmed helps us understand that the relationship between affects and the public mood necessarily involves the particular processes of affection that the mood instigates. The process of misattunement and attunement that seems to be the case of much of the black movement in the 1970s is much tenser than the idea of the movement being wrapped in a new climate.

For Robert Seyfert, the term atmosphere excessively enhances the objective aspect and can hide the interactive aspect of the relationship between the parties and the environment.⁵² Riedel takes Seyfert's criticism to propose that, still within the atmosphere spectrum, we look at the affective resonances of these interactions. Thus, »a focus on the modes in which a situation coheres as atmosphere enables us to consider atmosphere with respect to the abundant cultural, historical, and physical diversity of embodied and even disembodied existences.«⁵³

In dealing with a public atmosphere and, therefore, conflicts involving ways of feeling, an articulation of the concepts of atmosphere and structure of feelings can be quite profitable. For Anderson, »structures of feeling and affective atmospheres are two partially connected ways of thinking through the affective conditions that mediate how encounters take place and how apparatuses form and operate.«⁵⁴ They differ by the way they act; structures of feelings »link different sites, occurring across them, and create something like a predisposition to self, others and the world.«⁵⁵ Already atmospheres are linked to the place and through it provide an experience of immersion. What structure of feelings wants to see is the articulation between pre-semantic cultural forms and feelings. It

48 da Silva: *A Descoberta do Insólito*.

49 Ventura: *O Significante Racial*, 5. My translation.

50 Ventura: *O Significante Racial*, 4. My translation.

51 Highmore: *Disjunctive Constellations*, 30.

52 Seyfert: *Personal Feelings*, 30.

53 Riedel: *Atmospheric Relations*, 92.

54 Anderson: *Encountering Affect*, 161.

55 Anderson: *Encountering Affect*, 160.

wants ways to feel that are part of culture but not captured by representation. The cited case of Oswaldo de Camargo's novel seems exemplary to think about this relationship between experience, feeling and meaning production. The cold, to be a collective feeling, a mood in the public sphere, must be named. But to name it successfully, you must first have found your collective experience that will make sense of what you feel.

Therefore, in order to grasp a public atmosphere it is essential to consider the contemporary theoretical

contributions to atmosphere and their articulation of closely related concepts, such as *Stimmung*, structure of feeling, and mood. In my view, this conceptual framework allows a non-objectivist approach and provides a useful means of analysing affective aspects of the public sphere, capturing the subtle dynamics of the dispute among interests, the political definition of the common, and the struggle over the boundaries that determine who is a citizen or not.

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