Surrendering to the Streets in Mid-Century Recife: The Living Legacies of Slavery in Black and White

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Department of
History in the Graduate School
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2021

ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This dissertation is a cultural history of the port city of Recife, the capital of the Northeast Brazilian state of Pernambuco, from the 1940s to the late seventies. Its focus is on the Mercado Público de São José, a bustling commercial node where affect, sex, and culture were exchanged as often as physical commodities. It examines the denizens and cultural practices of this storied space using an extraordinary 10,000 pages of handwritten diary entries produced by a municipal functionary who sympathetically documented the stories shared with him by poets, sex workers, entertainers, policemen, and vagrants. This material is supplemented by a rich array of sources from multiple subject positions, including music, published erotica, chapbook poetry (*literatura de cordel*), photographs, films, material objects, and expressive culture. This dissertation foregrounds two neglected forms of Black culture that take the form of black dolls. It first looks at mamulengo, an improvised form of puppet play historically practiced by and for poor and nonwhite men. Two chapters show how this practice, predicated upon interpersonal violence meted out by Black heroes, is simultaneously a form of Black protest and a perpetuation of anti-Black racism. The project then analyzes calungas, regally dressed tar black dolls that are highly visible components of Recife's maracatus, as royal corteges of queens, ladies-in-waiting, and percussionists are known. It holds that calungas and maracatus are expressions of an alternative blackness to mamulengo, a female-centered practice whose prestige draws from a grammar of Africanicity. By illustrating the tight braiding of the "people's" and "learned" culture, this dissertation confronts head on the enduring influence of racial hierarchy and domination on descendants of the slave quarters (*senzala*) and the big house (*casa-grande*).

"Surrendering to the Streets" thus offers a fully contextualized urban cultural history of slavery's afterlives in the capital of the northeastern state that received one-fifth of the enslaved Africans that landed in the Western Hemisphere. In presenting the broad resonances of slavery as "living," the dissertation does not assume that these sociocultural inheritances are immutable, nor does it contend that poor and overwhelmingly nonwhite Brazilians are perpetually condemned to domination. Rather, it examines Brazil's "public secret" of racism while exploring how Recife's nonwhite majority contested these hierarchies through humor, religiosity, and forms of popular entertainment that proved capable of influencing the literate upper-class, with a chapter each focusing on the multitalented artist and documentarian Liêdo Maranhão (1925-2014) and Recife's famed playwright and novelist Hermilo Borba Filho (1917-1976).

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Acknowledgments

I first embarked upon the path to becoming a Latin Americanist—first as an Argentinist and later a Brazilianist—in the undulating hills of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. At James Madison University, it was in Kristen McCleary's introductory course in Latin American and Caribbean history that I caught the cultural history bug vis-a-vis the scholarship on subjective experiences of Peronism. Working with Kristen on my senior honors thesis—an analysis of *Mundo Peronista* magazines—planted the seeds for the themes and approaches that have found their way into the present dissertation over a decade later. Kristen's upper-division course on Latin America and the United States through film connected me with the mysteries of Brazil. I wrote a term paper on Orson Welles' aborted film *It's All True* (1941-2), which won first place in the category of world history at a regional meeting of Phi Alpha Theta. I was awarded a hardbound copy of Brodywn Fischer's 2008 work *A Poverty of Rights*, my first scholarly introduction to Rio de Janeiro as well as the violent inequalities that pervade the Marvelous City and Brazil more generally.

As a master's student in global history at JMU, I explored questions of citizenship, gender, and state violence in Brazil's impoverished Northeast. Guided by the ever sagacious and supportive Bill Van Norman, I wrote a thesis on the Canudos War (1896-8), when the Brazilian military laid siege to a sprawling millenarian community in the arid interior (*sertão*) of the northeastern state of Bahia. Led by an itinerant lay preacher and self-proclaimed enemy of the infant Republic (declared in 1889), the settlement of Canudos drew several thousand poor and majority nonwhite inhabitants, including several hundred single mothers. Republican soldiers forced scores of surviving children into domestic servitude or prostitution. It could be said that these orphans opened opportunities for advanced research as they won me admittance to Duke University for the study of Brazilian history in 2014.

Looking back on my six years at Madison, I am most grateful for the guidance of several mentors. Lilian Passos Wichert Feitosa assisted with my *primeiros passos* in Portuguese, even having me read Jorge Amado and José de Alencar by my second semester. Jessica Davidson, who pushed me to take a position on whether Peronism was fascism as an undergraduate, was a friendly face on two thesis committees. Chris Blake (an alumnus of Duke Political Science) indulged my interest in Peronism and challenged me to write my first (and only) policy brief on education in Rio de Janeiro. During my first semester as a master's student, Mike Gubser helped me find my voice as an historian by putting my writing through the wringer. Alison Sandman helped me navigate graduate school admissions and patiently reviewed no fewer than ten versions of personal statements. Gabrielle Lanier and David Dillard, the department head and director of graduate studies, respectively, deserve special recognition for cultivating an intellectually stimulating and respectful community supportive of all graduate students.

Upon arriving at Duke University in August 2014, I found an academic home at the newly launched Global Brazil Lab (2014-2017). Serving as the lab's graduate student coordinator powerfully accelerated my growth as a humanist scholar. Working in an open concept space offered exciting opportunities for disciplinary cross-pollination, where free-flowing discussions with the lab's four co-directors—John French, Esther Gabara, Paul Baker, and Christine Folch—enlivened my knowledge of Brazil from the vantage points of politics, culture, and environment. Each invested an enormous amount of faith and trust in me as I helped get the lab off the ground, encouraging me to take on projects of increasing complexity and responsibility over the years. John, Esther, Paul, and Christine undoubtedly knew that assuming a leadership role on interdisciplinary, vertically integrated research teams would help distinguish me on an increasingly distressed job market. I am grateful for the chance to refine my skills in project management in the context of the collaborative humanities. It means a great deal to me that, even though the lab formally concluded in May 2017, the GBL co-directors have followed the evolution of my project and professional trajectory with much interest.

It always felt somewhat disingenuous to study Brazil without having set foot in the country until 2015. My first trip was made possible thanks to a summer Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowship that supported intensive Portuguese training at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo. The talented pedagogue Maria do Carmo

Ribeiro made cultural and linguistic immersion a real treat, as did Rebecca Atencio of Tulane University, who taught a course on culture, citizenship, and justice with a focus on São Paulo.

Summer research funding provided by The Graduate School helped me travel to Pernambuco first in early July 2015 and again in the summer of 2016. Like many foreigners before me, I stepped into the muggy night air at the Gilberto Freyre International Airport without knowing what to expect of the city that had seized my attention in Durham. For two or three days, I struggled to master the geography of the amphibious city in addition to the form of Portuguese that is affectionately known as "Pernambuquês." It seemed as if the entire city had opened up to me after a lunch date with a "retired" militant of ALN (Ação Libertadora Nacional). Before departing São Paulo, Rebecca Atencio connected me with Amparo Araújo, whom she had interviewed for her own work on truth and reconciliation in Brazil. Amparo spent no fewer than two hours after lunch telephoning her friends and colleagues to arrange informal chats with the "jovem pesquisador norte-americano." As a result of her patience and kindness, I made the acquaintance of Edval Nunes Cajá, Anacleto Julião, Manuel Ayres, and Reginaldo Velasco. Each of these early conversations powerfully shaped my understanding of society and politics in Pernambuco, Brazil, and, indeed, the entire world.

Shortly after advancing to doctoral candidacy, I returned to complete nearly 20 months of fieldwork with the support of a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad fellowship. Several individuals and research entities made my stay an exciting and rewarding one. Dr. Antônio Campos generously granted access to the archive of his late grandfather, the four-time governor of Pernambuco, Miguel Arraes de Alencar (1916-2005). Sandra Maia and other functionaries at the Miguel Arraes Institute (Instituto Miguel Arraes, IMA), many of them employees of the ex-governor, helped me navigate the immense collection and, over numerous coffee breaks, debated the mythos of Arraes. I was touched by Maia and others' insistence that I work at the governor's desk, where I would listen to his vinyl recordings of Sergei Prokofiev, Chico Buarque, and Jackson do Pandeiro as I thumbed through six decades' worth of materials.

Recife's Fundação Joaquim Nabuco (Fundaj) was an institutional home away from home during my fieldwork. Albertina (Betty) Lacerda Malta connected me with the institute's legions of full-time researchers and arranged for me to photocopy materials that proved central to this dissertation. Rosi Cristina da Silva helped me locate photographs and deepened my exposure to Recife's gastronomical delights. Our weekly lunches and trips to local bakeries brought calm to my frenetic archival expeditions. Sandra Cavalcanti, Carlos Ramos, Lino Madureira, Manuela Araújo, and Renata Barros and Albino Oliveira, Henrique Vasconcelos, Clara Nunes, of the Museum of the Northeastern Man (Museu do Homem do Nordeste, muHNE), were also indispensable to my time at Fundaj. Oliveira and Vasconcelos saved many hours of on-site research by providing me with a copy of the museum's acquisition records.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Lúcia Falcão for serving as my institutional sponsor at the Federal Rural University of Pernambuco (Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco, UFRPE). Between her teaching engagements and legions of undergraduates, Lúcia always made time for us to discuss my ideas and findings. I am grateful for her guidance as well as that of Humberto Miranda and Juliana Alves de Andrade, who also joined a panel at the 2018 meeting of the Brazilian Studies Association in Rio de Janeiro. I am especially appreciative of Marcília Gama, whose useful introduction to Pernambuco's Delegacy of Public and Social Order (Delegacia de Ordem Pública e Social, DOPS) allowed me to spend time reviewing the most relevant materials in the archives of the state's defunct secret police. Romerito Arcoverde and Geane Cavalcanti, two graduates of the history program at UFRPE, acquainted me with local university life and connected me with archivists at the archdiocese and Arquivo Público Estadual Jordão Emerenciano, respectively. I also benefited from the insights and encouragement of professors at the Federal University of Pernambuco (Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, UFPE). During my exploratory trips in the summers of 2015 and 2016, Socorro de Abreu e Lima and Christine Dabat lent essential studies on labor struggles in the zona da mata and Marcus de Carvalho made important contributions to an article I published as an "anonymous" reviewer.

At the Pernambuco State Public Archive, André Luiz Tognoli Lima, Diogo Barreto, and Hildo Leal da Rosa agreed to pull DOPS materials that were undergoing digitization during my stay. Historian Sandro Vasconcelos of the Museu da Cidade do Recife pointed me in the direction of a photograph that would serve as the inspiration behind two chapters on mamulengo puppet play. Diego Rodrigues, an historian and archivist at the Arquivo Dom Lamartine, patiently retrieved boxes upon boxes of radio scripts and base community reports associated with the church's Base Education Movement (Movimento de Educação de Base) and Meeting of Brothers (Encontro de Irmãos), respectively. The quality material I encountered at the archdiocese may easily lay the groundwork for a follow-up project.

In Recife, I am most indebted to Roman Maranhão Ruiz. Roman warmly invited me into his home in early 2018 and granted unrestricted access to the thousands of photographs, newspaper clippings, and diary entries that were generated by his late father, Liêdo Maranhão de Souza (1927-2014). Roman gave me free reign of his father's one-story house in Olinda, always ensuring that I had ample amounts of Cirol coffee and dunkable biscuits while I inventoried and photographed items of interest. Sadly, Liêdo passed away before I could meet him, but I imagine that the warmth and acerbic wit of Roman stems in part from being raised by the great Liêdo. My contact with Roman and his father's personal archives dramatically altered the course of my research and laid the groundwork for the present dissertation. Scholars of Recife, Pernambuco, and perhaps Brazil more generally will one day realize that practically all roads lead back to Liêdo Maranhão, the unsung amanuensis of the *povo*.

I pivoted to full-time writing and part-time teaching after returning to Durham in December 2019. I thank Malachi Hacohen for inviting me to teach The Global Sixties and James Chappel for allowing me to adapt the course he engineered. The 15 students enrolled in the seminar were my first as an independent instructor of record. I could not have asked for a dynamic and more incisive group of undergraduates. Piloting and refining assignments in this space improved later iterations of the course, particularly for the second cohort that enrolled the following term.

My writing and thinking grew by leaps and bounds in the months that followed my return to the United States. Participating in the 2019 summer school in critical theory at the University of Bologna equipped me with a rich theoretical language that would prove especially useful for my chapter on Liêdo Maranhão and the short geosocial vignette of Recife in the introduction of this dissertation. Achille Mbembe, Sarah Nuttall, Ranjana Khanna, Debjani Ganguly, Niccolò Cuppini, and Keller Easterling made important contributions to how I approach urban space and planetary scales in both my research and teaching. During my two weeks in Italy, I made the acquaintance of new friends and colleagues from around the world. I especially enjoyed debating new ideas over Aperol spritzes and exploring the city with Stefan Yong, Sam Gotler, Sadiq Toffa, Russ Coldicutt, Nick Scott, Jill Pope, Emily Mellen, and Alex Demshock. This transformative experience would not have been possible without the logistical knowhow of Chris Chia and a travel and accommodation grant from the John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute.

Supported by an Anne Firor Scott Award in December 2019, I made a final trip to Brazil before the global pandemic shuttered international travel. At the time, I approached this three-week stay as a means of gathering additional material for my dissertation, especially photographs of puppets at the Museu do Mamulengo in Olinda. I look back at this time with nostalgia and longing after more than a year of social distancing and sheltering in place. The short amount of time I spent with Amparo, my friend, confidant, and Brazilian "mother," and Suzana, Leonardo, Alina, Artur, and Joãozinho—my Recifense family—was special. I am happy to have reconnected with José Antônio Rufino, a *figura de referência* in Pernambuco's Black movement, and Rosi da Silva, who invited me to indulge my sweet tooth at our favorite bakery in Casa Forte. This short visit was especially meaningful because I made my first trip to Palmares, the birthplace of the dramaturg and folklorist Hermilo Borba Filho (1917-1976). Walter Portela opened his small rural *sítio* to me and showed me around the city, pointing out the landmarks that figure prominently in Hermilo's erotic tetralogy (chapter 5) and introducing me to over a dozen noted Palmarenses, several of them Hermilo's relatives. I sincerely thank Walter and his family for their hospitality and time, and I anxiously await the time when I can return to the *terra dos poetas*.

In spring 2020, COVID-19 brought unparalleled challenges. Duke wasted no time in finding ways to support its graduate students during the summer months. Deans Valerie Ashby and Paula McClain and provost Sally Kornbluth undertook a project of pharaonic proportions by finding (and in many cases creating) work assignments for several thousand students. The Humanities Unbounded MicroWorlds Lab became a virtual haven for those whose research plans and livelihoods had been upended by the pandemic. I thank Tom Robisheaux and the undergraduate and graduate student fellows for bringing community and a much-needed degree of normalcy to the first part of my summer.

The second half of my pandemic summer was spent laying the groundwork for a virtual exhibit on the movements for Black lives in Brazil and the United States. Courtney Crumpler, Marcelo Ramos, Chloe Ricks and I worked alongside a talented group of undergraduate student curators who elaborated their vision for the project and how it would engage with the summer's racial unrest vis-a-vis systemic racism and police violence. Catherine McMillan, Veronica Niamba, Christian Sheerer, Christopher Simmons, Cydney Livingston, John Markis, Kristen Rigsby, Rahel Petros, and Sarah Simmons each made vital contributions to this public-facing project. Juliet Irving designed a beautiful website, and faculty mentors John French and Silvio Almeida provided much-needed encouragement and support to all team members. Working on this team strengthened my dissertation in more than one way, not least because the group devised a compelling framework for assessing the deep scars of slavery.

Regrettably, I have been unable to visit physical archives in over a year. Nevertheless, I am touched by the generosity of two researchers who furnished me with materials in the eleventh hour. Without asking for compensation, Susan Strange sent high-quality U.S. Air Force film footage of Recife's streets, markets, beaches, and port, which I transformed into photographic stills for this dissertation. Matt Gorzalski, an archivist at Southern Illinois University, digitized and emailed a photograph taken by Katherine Dunham during her 1950 visit to Recife.

Over my seven years at Duke, I have benefited tremendously from an institutional and interpersonal support system. Natalie Hartman and Ken Maffitt always lent a sympathetic ear as I weathered the ups and downs of fieldwork and dissertating. The Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies funded several exploratory research trips in addition to travel to two international conferences in Mexico and Colombia. At Duke Libraries, Holly Ackerman deftly handled purchase requests from my advisor and I. As if by magic, both Holly and Cheryl Wilkins arranged to have exceedingly rare materials arrive at the circulation desk in a matter of days. In the History Department, Robin Pridgen, Carla Ivey, Cynthia Hoglen, Jamie Hardy, and Ruebe Holmes made each day brighter with their good cheer and humor. I am most appreciative of Sumathi Ramaswamy, Dirk Bonker, and Pete Sigal, whose uncompromising support and encouragement has made my academic journey especially rewarding.

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I am most indebted to John French, who was the best advisor I could have hoped for. John's keen interest in each facet of my growth, both professional and personal, instilled the confidence I needed to weather the vicissitudes of writing and research. He never turned me away to review one more draft of a chapter, cover letter, grant application, CV, or teaching materials. John also tailored no fewer than 60 letters of recommendation over the years. In terms of the progress made on this dissertation, he sometimes marveled at the fact that I did not struggle with writer's block. Hardly the result of my immunity, I credit John for my ability to keep writing—chapter drafts, outlines, memos, and thought fragments—because of the attention and genuine excitement he expressed in my findings. This dissertation is easily dwarfed by the abundance of material exchanged between John and I over the years. This sort of “off camera” collaboration—incalculable hours of phone calls and hundreds of emails—made me a more incisive and self-assured scholar. While I may not be an heir to his prodigious memory, John taught me the art of asking probing questions that challenge and inspire.

Finally, I would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to my family, especially my mother and two brothers, who lent a patient ear and much-needed levity at each step of my graduate studies. My mother deserves special recognition for helping me find strength and fortitude over a period of nine years. I may not be the first “doctor” (my uncle holds a juris doctorate), but my extended family is happy to claim a non-garden-variety Ph.D.

Introduction

Prologue: A Foreign Flâneur Discovers the Streets of Recife

In March 1960, a smartly dressed stranger stepped onto the tarmac at Recife's Guararapes Airport having arrived at the onset of a rainy winter, when heavy downpours and blustery gusts brought momentary reprieve from the humidity. The wearied traveler arrived three weeks later than expected and he was reproached for the delay by his host Hermilo Borba Filho (1917-1976), a prominent writer and man of the theater. The imposing foreigner, the accomplished Argentine dramaturg and poet Ítalo Túlio Carella (1912-1976), was to teach at the School of Fine Arts (Escola de Belas Artes) affiliated with University of Recife. His presence would elevate the prestige of both the institution and his sponsor Borba who revealed, Carella wrote, that they imagined the visiting professor would be an old and likely portly Frenchman; the man who stood before them, however, was a vigorous six-foot five-inch Argentine of forty-eight-years-of-age.[1]

Carella barely had time to absorb his new surroundings as his sponsors whisked him from one introduction to another. A large automobile belonging to the city government took him to what he supposed was the architectural and cultural gem of his new home: the Santa Isabel Theater (Teatro Santa Isabel). In his diary, he described the neoclassical structure as projecting a "false seignorial atmosphere" while noting that his home city of Buenos Aires had dozens of theaters that were far more beautiful.[2] Although Carella remarked on the still, crystalline waters of the Capibaribe, one of the two rivers that carve the storied center of the city into three islands (see Figure 0.1), he would have scoffed—as a man with European travel under his belt—at hearing city boosters speak about their "Brazilian Venice" (*Veneza brasileira*); the Italian city, after all, has 400 bridges to less than ten in Recife. Although a principal city from the 16th to 18th century, Recife by the 20th century was a big city in a peripheral region suffering from the condescension of the country's largest and most modern cities in the southeast like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Even the Venice sobriquet reflected a straining for prestige with most attributing the observation to the French existentialist Camus, who made the analogy during a visit eleven years earlier in late July 1949.[3]

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[1] Synthesis of Túlio Carella, *Orgia: diário primeiro*, trans. Hermilo Borba Filho (Rio de Janeiro: José Álvaro, 1968), 46-8.

Túlio Carella settled across the river from Recife's historic center (*centro histórico*), first in a hotel and later a bachelor's apartment in Boa Vista, a middle-class neighborhood. If Carella turned left upon exiting his seven-story apartment building, he would reach the Faculty of Law (Faculdade de Direito) in a matter of seconds.

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[2] Carella, 51.

[3] In his travel diary, Camus wrote that he "definitely [did] like Recife. Florence of the tropics, between its coconut forests, its red mountains, its white beaches." See *American Journals*, trans. Hugh Levick (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1987), 99.

Luminaries in politics, education, and the fine arts studied in the halls of this grand Belle Epoque building. During his much-anticipated 1949 visit, Camus had delivered a public address for an audience of 100 in the institution's great hall. Hermilo Borba Filho, an alumnus of the faculty, served as a moderator and discussant.[4]

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[4] Camus, 99. "Chega hoje ao Recife o escritor francês Albert Camus," *Diário de Pernambuco* (July 21, 1949), 3. The Faculdade de Direito was established in 1827 by imperial decree. At the time, it was one of two law schools in Brazil, the other being in São Paulo. The institution was first located in the neighboring city of Olinda but moved to Recife in 1854.

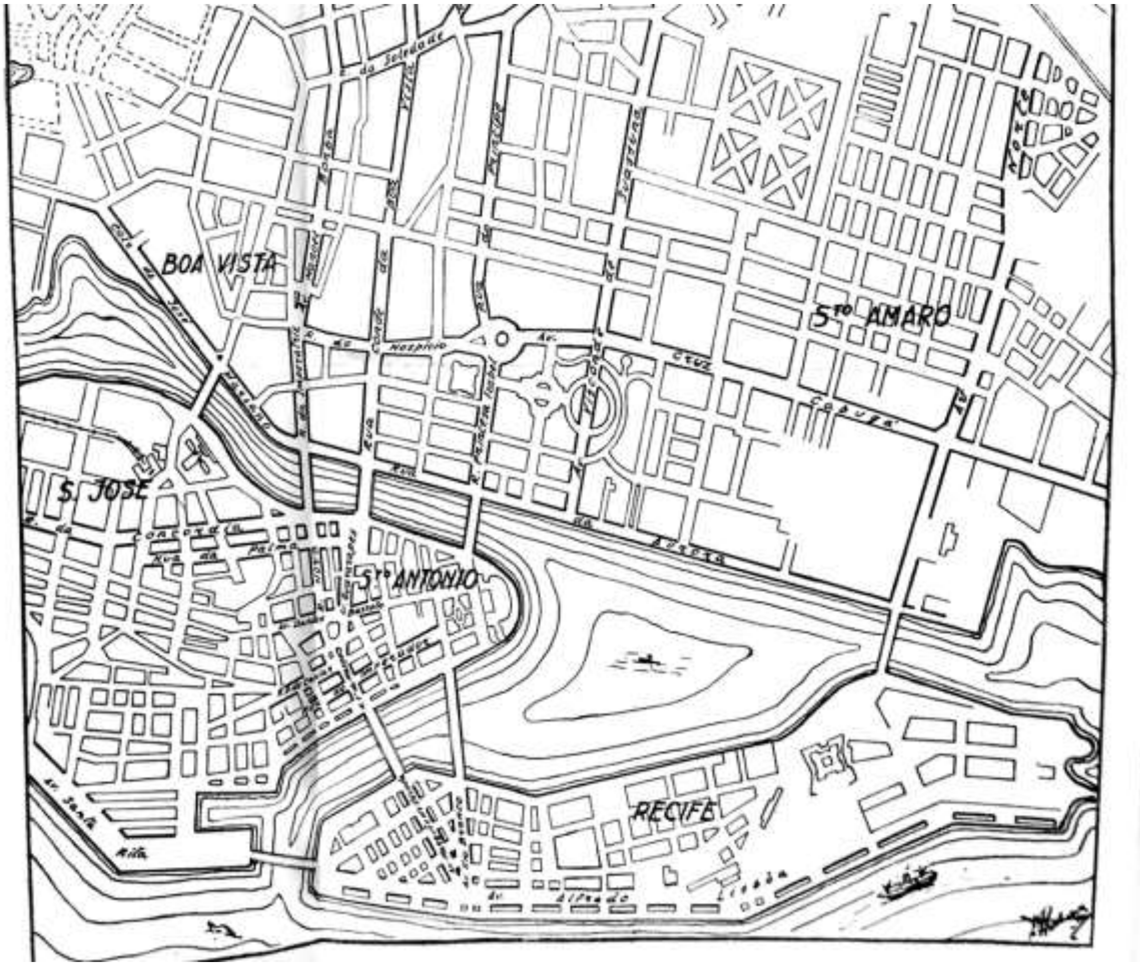

Figure 1: An undated map of downtown Recife. Photographed by the author from a touristic brochure contained in the archive of Katherine Royal Cate. Fundação Joaquim Nabuco.

Across from the imposing structure stands Boa Vista's stately Parque 13 de Maio. This 17-acre oasis commemorates Brazil's Golden Law (Lei Áurea) of 1888, when Princess Isabel abolished slavery by imperial decree. 13 de Maio consists of nearly four symmetrical quadrants and remains a favorite place for picnics, strolls, and cruising. Heading north along the road that bears the regent's name, Carella would reach Rua da

Aurora. The waters of the Capibaribe famously reflect the street's colorful townhouses (*sobrados*) and midcentury apartment buildings. Recife's renowned Cinema São Luiz, inaugurated in 1952, is a well-known feature of the street as is the state's Legislative Assembly building several blocks to the north. The Rua da Aurora's famed restaurant Buraco da Otília was a mainstay for many decades. There, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir enjoyed a meal of lobster, oysters, shrimp, and cashews during their 1960 visit.[5] Crossing the Duarte Coelho Bridge toward Santo Antônio, the Argentine would find a string of buildings similarly reflected in the river, particularly on a clear day. Crustaceans are abundant in the Capibaribe's mud and mangroves. He no doubt encountered men lifting crab pots and nets up the sides of the bridge and heard the muffled rumble of small fishing boats as they slipped beneath him. The view from atop the bridge would probably call to mind Recife's postcard images of the 1950s. A mixture of mid-century buildings not to mention steady streams of buses and foot traffic gave the provincial capital the air of a bustling metropolis (fig. 2). A more impressive view was to be had under the cover of darkness. Neon signs for Bayer, Firestone, Cinzano vermouth, Suerdieck cigars, and Guaraná soda seemed to float in the darkness, and the mercury-vapor streetlamps contouring the major thoroughfares gave the waters below an incandescent quality (figs. 2 and 3).

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[5] Simone de Beauvoir, *Force of Circumstance*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965), 511.
Mário Camarinha, "Sartre (no Recife) fecha o Congresso," *O Cruzeiro* (September 3, 1960). Cited in Luís Antônio Contatori Romano, "A passagem de Sartre e Simone de Beauvoir pelo Brasil em 1960" (Ph.D. diss., Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 2000), 94.

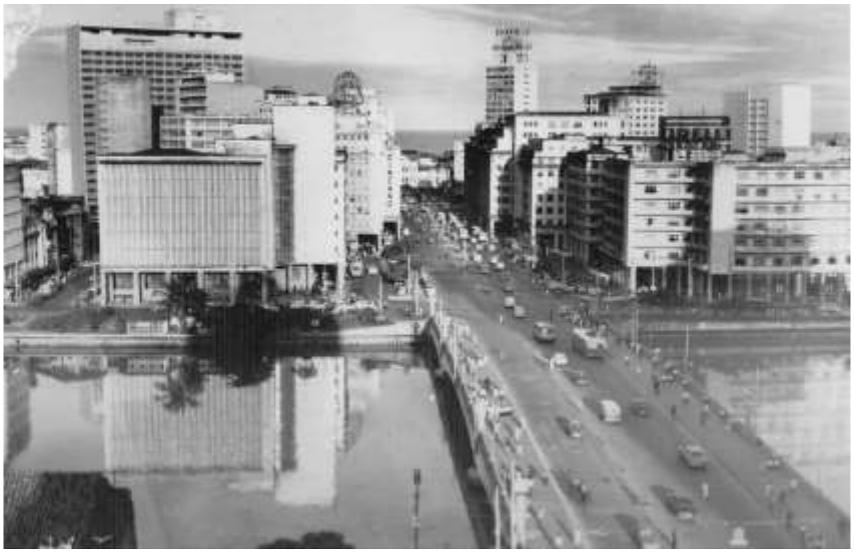

Figure 2: Duarte Coelho Bridge (foreground) and Guararapes Avenue (background). The Post Office and Telegraph Building, whose reflection can be seen in the river, is the first structure on the left. 1965. No. 9305. Museu da Cidade do Recife.

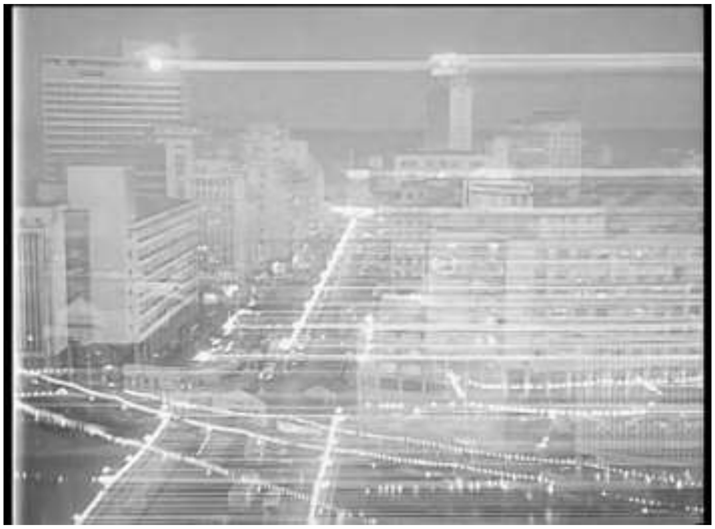

Figure 3: An evening shot of Santo Antônio from Boa Vista. The Ponte da Boa Vista, which traverses the Capibaribe River, can be seen in the foreground. The post and telegraph office is the first art deco building on the left. Stills from Video Recording 342-USAF-29932, "USAF Tracking Vessels at Recife, Brazil," 1959-1960, reel 1; Records of the Department of Defense, Record Group 342, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

Although the buildings along Avenida Guararapes do not vary significantly in their architectural styles, their utilitarian designs benefit pedestrians. These modernist structures "step out" onto the sidewalk, thus shielding passersby (and, quite often, mendicants) from the harsh sun and winter rains. Carella would pass beneath these overhangs on his way to Avenida Dantas Barreto, a cardinal street that bisects the island of Santo Antônio. Here pedestrians dallied in front of storefronts and "television-vitrines" (*televitrines*). No fewer than a dozen colonial Catholic churches are found in this portion of the city. Carella, like Albert Camus before him, was drawn to these ancient houses of worship. The Frenchman found their "Jesuitic" style refreshing in that they did not feature the "excessive heaviness of European baroque."[6] Our Lady of the Rosary of the Blacks is one of the most historically significant. The Baroque and Rococo church was initially constructed in 1630 by the Brotherhood of the Rosary of Black Men, a confraternity composed of enslaved blacks. The altar depicts Black saints like Baltazar, Sebastian, and Anthony.[7] The church is also at the heart of the most famous Afro-Recifense religious traditions, including a long history of crowning kings and queens during investiture ceremonies. Accompanied by music and drumming, these celebrations were precursors to the modern maracatu, a uniquely Afro-Pernambucan cultural form.[8]

A few blocks south of Our Lady of the Rosary of the Blacks is an eighteenth-century construction: the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rock.[9] This Renaissance Revival structure is the prominent neighbor of the São José Public Market, supposedly Brazil's oldest prefabricated iron structure (fig. 4). Constructed by the French architect J. Louis

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[6] Camus, 98-9.

[7] In Portuguese, these religious institutions are the Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos and Irmandade do Rosário dos Homens Pretos.

[8] We will explore maracatus in chapter 6. On Afro-Brazilian lay brotherhoods in the state of Minas Gerais, see Elizabeth W. Kiddy, *Blacks of the Rosary: Memory and History in Minas Gerais, Brazil* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005). On Brazil's history of lay investiture ceremonies, see "Who Is the King of Congo? A New Look at African and Afro Brazilian Kings in Brazil," in Linda M. Heywood, *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 153-182.

[9] Nossa Senhora da Penha

Lieuthier and engineer Louis Lèger Vauthier (1815-1901), also responsible for building the Santa Isabel theater, São José remains a bustling, if mostly tourist oriented, place of commerce. Carella made numerous visits to the market and the adjacent street fair where he marveled at the colors and odors and wondered if this was one of the famed "tropical" markets he had only encountered in books.[10]

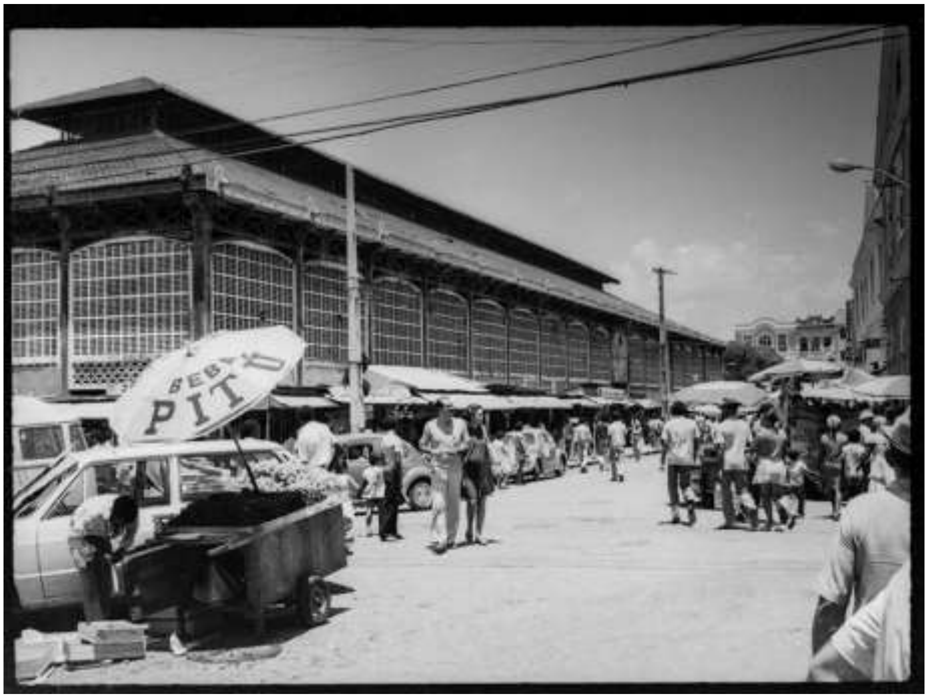

Figure 4: Recife's Mercado Público de São José. Photograph by Liêdo Maranhão de Souza, 1970s. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco.

Carella would reach the Santa Rita Pier (Cais Santa Rita) by walking along either of the market's lateral edges. Here one has an unobstructed view of the city's namesake:

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[10] Carella, 71.

the large stone reef (*recife*) that runs parallel to the shoreline, thus carving out a harbor. Until the 1970s, this region was a major port. The Argentine visitor would have watched mostly nonwhite dock workers load sugar onto waiting ships (fig. 5) and met sailors from around the world when they disembarked for shore leave.

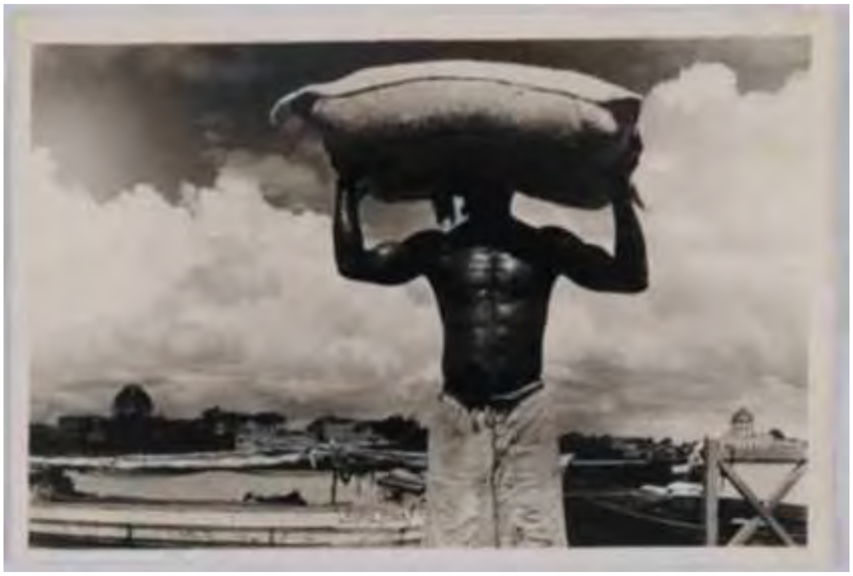

Figure 5: Nascimento, a stevedore at the port of Recife (Nascimento, estivador do porto do Recife). 1939. Benício Whatley Dias. No. 1432. Villa Digital, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco.

Taking the iron Boa Vista bridge back to his home neighborhood, the flaneur would arrive at a small triangular plaza. The Ukrainian-born Brazilian novelist Clarice Lispector (1920-1977) spent nine years of her childhood overlooking the Praça Maciel

Pinheiro.[11] The square had two grassy plots where sunbathers could relax in the shade of palm trees. It was probably also space for flirting. In figure 6, two women playfully signal to technicians of the U.S. Navy who were testing new camera equipment in the square in early January 1960. No less than seven young men eye the pair from the benches surrounding the central water fountain. Carella might then catch a bus along the Avenida do Conde da Boa Vista to reach his place of work, the School of Fine Arts. The now-defunct institution operated out of a nineteenth century *palacete* (small palace) on Rua Benfica, a street famous for its elegant homes.[12] Túlio discovered that Borba too lived in a grand palacete when he shared a lunch with his host in Aflitos, a "noble neighborhood" (*bairro nobre*) located in the northwest part of the city. Carella wrote that Ariano Suassuna, another man of the theater and lifelong friend of Borba, lived in a "mansion" (*mansão*) that seemed like a "temple where one must enter on the tips of their toes."[13]

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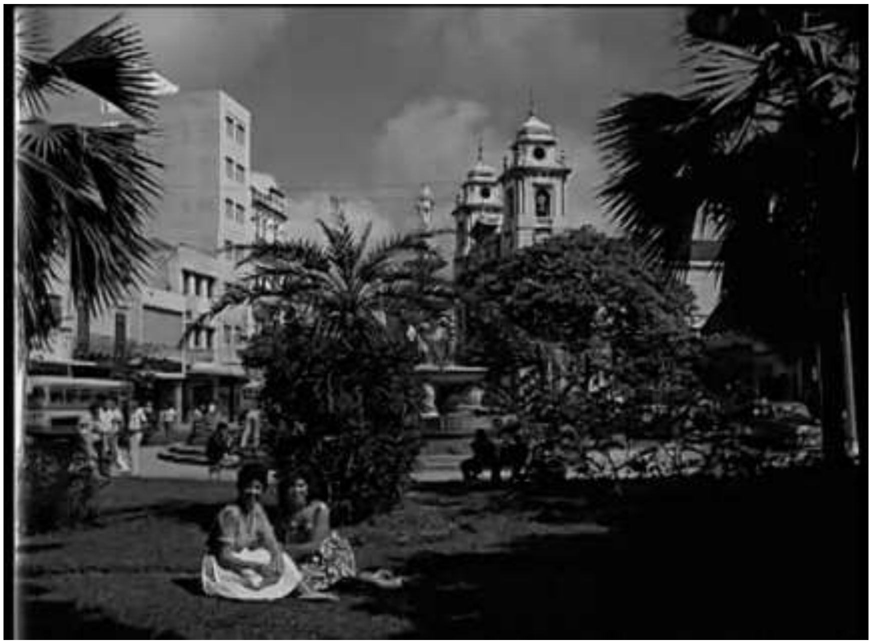
[11] Although Lispector's childhood home is in ruins, a statue of the writer in her youth is to be found in the center of the contiguous square. Chronicler Rostand Paraíso (1930-2019) explains that the square is named in honor of Luiz Ferreira Maciel Pinheiro, an attorney, prosecutor, and judge who enlisted in the Paraguayan War (1864-1870). Paraíso, *A esquina do Lafayette e outros tempos do Recife* (Recife: Editora do Autor, 2001), 168.

[12] Virgínia Barbosa, "Escola de Belas Artes de Pernambuco," *Pesquisa Escolar Online*, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco. Accessed November 14, 2020.

[13] Carella, 49 and 51.



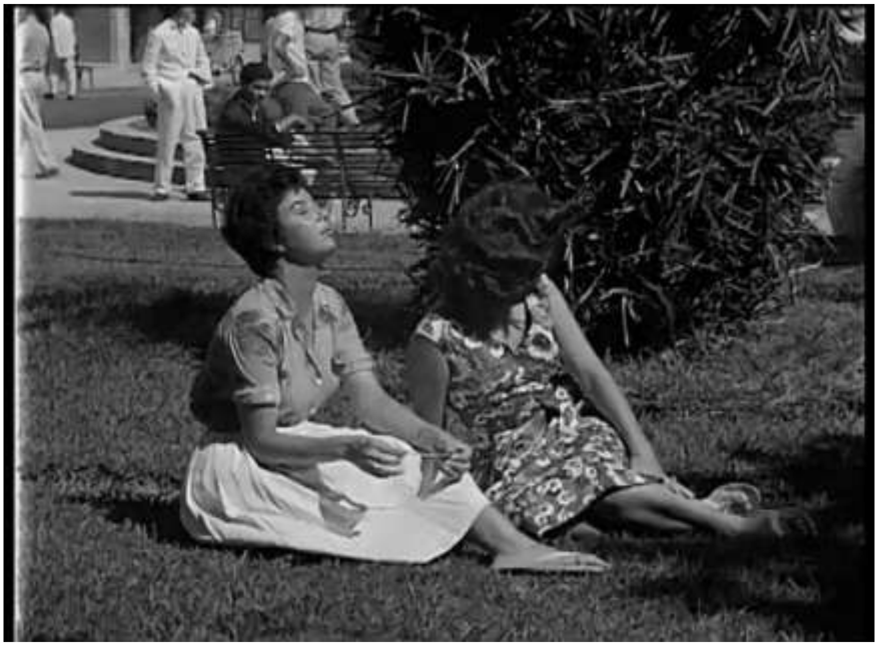


Figure 6: Praça Maciel Pinheiro in Boa Vista (facing the Igreja da Matriza da Boa Vista). January 13, 1960. Stills from Video Recording 342-USAF-29932, "USAF Tracking Vessels at Recife, Brazil," 1959-1960, reel 1; Records of the Department of Defense, Record Group 342, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

Perambulating the streets, squares, and public markets of Recife, the visiting professor commented on a wide array of human types including street vendors, shoe shiners, students, waiters, and police officers. They seemed, he surmised, intrigued by the well-dressed white giant with his cosmopolitan style of dress. One of Northeast Brazil's famed *repentista* singers made him the subject of an improvised song. The performer referred to Carella as "doctor" (*doutor*), the term of respect employed for all educated men in Brazil.[14]

Being a foreigner relieved Carella of certain social protocols, but the rules associated with being a university professor were less forgiving. Hermilo Borba Filho and Ariano Suassuna rebuked him for refusing to wear the customary jacket and tie as he wandered the city. On another occasion, he surmised that the school's mulatto bus driver hesitated to accept the foreigner's handshake because "professors d[id] not give this trust (*confiança*) to employees."[15] Another faculty member revealed his disgust when he found Carella idly chatting with the same functionary. On the beaches of Olinda, a university colleague policed his mannerisms when they mocked Carella for drinking coconut water from the fruit. They asserted that this practice, unremarkable among common people, was "folkloric" (*folclórico*) and thus unseemly for a respectable litterateur (*letrado*).[16]

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[14] Carella, 55.
[15] Carella, 293.

Many aspects of street life were hardly picturesque. Mendicants presenting physical deformities and malnourished children were to be found on nearly every street corner, square, and bridge. Although these actors were desperately poor, to Carella it seemed like they "exercised a kind of profession."[17] Indeed, Carella was not the only foreigner to comment on Recife's population of *mendigos* (beggars). In the early 1960s, a French visitor was told that there was a "beggar under every palm tree" in Recife.[18] In 1967, a North American academic from the Institute of Current World Affairs (ICWA) did little to distinguish between the city's ambulant vendors and beggars, both comprising a "pathogenic sire of marginal occupations." Nevertheless, they acknowledged that these as a symptom of what he termed "macrocephalia": a city growing too fast too quickly.[19] Between 1940 and 1960, the city nearly doubled in size while the job market lagged far behind, leaving newcomers from the rural interior to earn a living through disparate forms of hustling.[20]

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[16] Carella, 130.

[17] Carella, 66.

[18] Beauvoir, 516.

[19] Francis M. Foland to Richard H. Nolte, November 4, 1967, *Latin American Pamphlet Collection*, Robert J. Alexander Papers, Arquivo Edgard Leuenroth, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, reel 43, sheet 2.

[20] The 1940 census discloses a population of 348,424 in the capital. By 1960, this number had swelled to over one million. Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, *Recenseamento Geral do Brazil (1o de Setembro de 1940)*. Série Regional, Parte IX (Pernambuco), tomo I (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço Gráfico do Instituto de

Coming from an overwhelmingly white metropolis composed of the children of European immigrants, the Argentine was especially fascinated by Recife's complex racial and color typologies. In a city in 1960 where sixty percent of its 800,000 inhabitants identified as nonwhite, Carella learned that the term "negro" was offensive and that someone of a darker complexion should be referred to as a "black" (*preto*) or "brown" (*moreno*). As he noted, however, blackness and brownness were themselves sub-divided according to one's hair color and texture and skin tone. For instance, white men with traces of "African" features combined with blonde, curly hair were called *cabras*. There were also Black men with "European" features. Furthermore, Carella gathered that black skin could be ashen (*cinzento*), blue (*azul*), reddish (*avermelhado*), and golden (*dourado*).[21]

The depth of Afro-Recifense culture revealed itself during Túlio Carella's experiments in flanerie. In the São José Public Market, he found vendors selling herbs and devotional objects for the city's African-derived derived religion of Xangô (now known as Candomblé). A peddler invited the Argentine to a *macumba*, a popular but sometimes derogatory term for black magic or sorcery. That Carella did not write an evening of dancing, drumming, and spirit possession in a *terreiro* (religious house) might

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Geografia e Estatística, 1950), table 62, 208. For 1960, see *VII recenseamento geral do Brasil. Censo demográfico de 1960: Pernambuco*. Série Regional, volume I, tomo VI (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, Departamento de Estatísticas de População).

[21] Carella, 94.

be due to their outlaw status and location in distant, often inaccessible neighborhoods, on the outskirts of the city.[22] A Black hotel worker revealed himself to be a son of Exu, the master of crossroads, sexuality, and communication. The young man shared that Exu often asked for sugarcane rum (*cachaça*), the god's preferred beverage. He could drink two liters of the potent spirit without becoming drunk because Exu, who took possession of the mortal, absorbed the alcohol before it could affect him. Carella gave the man a tip so he could satisfy his obligations to Exu.[23] Besides the market, he encountered even larger numbers of devotional objects at the State Museum of Pernambuco (Museu do Estado de Pernambuco) located in the upper-class neighborhood of Graças. These materials, which were seized during police raids in the 1930s and 1940s, were unintelligible to the Argentine who wished someone who could explain their meanings because the docent, whether due to language difficulties or their distance from Black Recifense culture, apparently could not.[24]

Even as he watched those around them so intensely, Carella himself was being watched in late April 1961, no less carefully, by men in the course of their regular employment: the *tiras* (cops) of Pernambuco's political and social police DOPS.

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[22] Anthropologist J. Lorand Matory writes that these three characteristics, in addition to divination, healing, and sacrifice, are common to many Afro-Atlantic religious traditions. In Brazil, we find Xangô, Candomblé, Umbanda, and Batuque. See *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 1 and 5.
[23] Carella, 103.
[24] Carella, 266.

Although Brazil was under electoral democratic rule, the Fourth Army had the foreigner's daily activities put under surveillance by four functionaries of DOPS which was commanded by the state government's Secretariat of Public Security (Secretaria de Segurança Pública). At 9 o'clock on the evening of April 19, they observed Carella make contact with a "strange man" at the Sertã, a bar housed in an art deco apartment building in Santo Antônio. The individual in question, a light brown man (*moreno claro*) with brown hair, seemed to be approximately 25 years of age and wore creme colored clothing and driving shoes and carried a large file in his hand. After conversing for around ten minutes, Carella stopped to buy a piece of cheese at a luncheonette.[25]

Carella conversed with five "elements" en route to Avenida Dantas Barreto and stopped to converse with a 23-year-old, brown (*moreno*) traffic officer in the median. After saying goodbye to two other strangers, the Argentine headed back to his apartment across the river. He met another man on the Boa Vista Bridge, who accompanied him to his condominium on rua Sete de Setembro. The functionary tasked with reporting the group's findings admitted that he wanted to detain Carella on the spot and subject him to questioning. Nevertheless, he was ordered to keep observing. At midnight, the visitor exited the building. When he arrived at Avenida Conde da Boa Vista, he pulled a 100 *cruzeiro* bill from his pocket and disappeared into the night.[26]

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[25] Bernardo Pereira Xavier to Comissário Supervisor, Delegacia Auxiliar, Secretaria de Segurança Pública, April 19, 1961, fl. 7. Prontuário 14.600, Ítalo Túlio Carella, 1961. Arquivo Público Estadual Jordão Emerenciano, Acervo DOPS, Recife, Pernambuco.

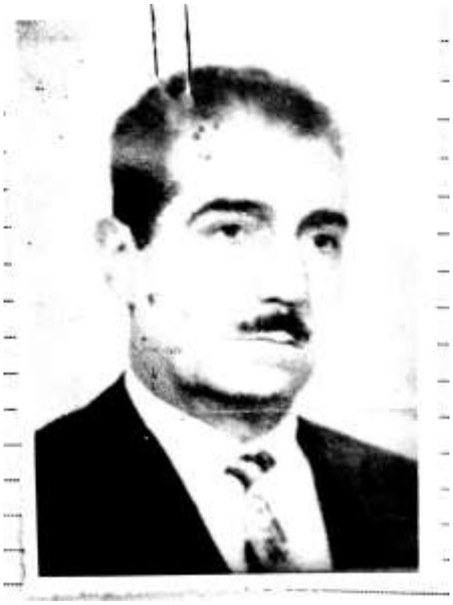

Figure 7: A photograph of Ítalo Túlio Carella appended to his secret police file (*prontuário*). Prontuário 14.600, Ítalo Túlio Carella, 1961. Arquivo Público Estadual Jordão Emerenciano, Acervo DOPS, Recife, Pernambuco.

In 1961, Carella made a hasty return to Buenos Aires. Four years later, in 1965, the Federal University of Pernambuco, state Secretariat of Education and Culture, and the municipal government published a small collection of the Argentine's poems. Given the title *Recifense Itinerary* (*Roteiro recifense*), these verses of "pure Pernambucan nostalgia," 96 poems in total, were dedicated to the "dark rose of the Brazilian

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[26] Xavier to Comissário Supervisor, Delegacia Auxiliar, Secretaria de Segurança Pública, April 19, 1961, fl. 8.

Northeast."[27] Published in the original Spanish, Carella's poems invoke the evocative characteristics of this fluvial city: the lingering scent of sugarcane; the narrow streets with "snake-like" faces; and the legions of beggars who leave a "stamp … of ardent misery" on the more fortunate.[28]

Hermilo Borba Filho arranged for the collection of poems to be published. This maneuver was probably conceived to strengthen the relationship between host and visitor, as publishing the account of an award-winning porteño enhanced the prestige of Carella's sponsors while also affirming litterateurs' conviction that their city was as important as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. In 1967, Borba dedicated the second volume of his pornographic tetralogy *The Gentleman of the Second Decadence* (Um cavalheiro da segunda decadência) to Carella.[29]

Túlio Carella's evocative poems reveal a similar problem in that a sequence of fragmentary episodes are not threaded into a more totalizing view of the city and its disparate meanings. Frances M. Foland, the North American recipient of an ICWA, expressed difficulty interpreting and conveying his new surroundings. "The ears suffer all simultaneously," he wrote to New York. And the foreign visitor has the uncanny ability to "see all things at all heights, also simultaneously."[30] Carella's host, Hermilo Borba Filho, offers one of the most captivating renderings of Recife. The second volume of his tetralogy skillfully and evocatively relates this complex sensorium as it existed in the 1940s. The narrator surveys the "water-city" from above. He contemplates the fetid mangroves wherein "obscene, prophetic" crabs burrow inside their mudflats and the "mating" Capibaribe and Beberibe rivers. Like the rivers "sinking and rising in the force of the tides," Borba's portrait is fluid and meandering. His account of the city shares with Carella a focus on the nonwhite *povão* ("the people"):

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[27] Túlio Carella, *Roteiro recifense* (Recife: Imprensa Universitária, 1965), 9.
[28] See, for example, the poems "Smells" (Aromas), "Side Streets" (Callejas), and "Those Who Ask" (Los que piden).
[29] The tetralogy was published between 1966 and 1972. It is considered the most significant of Borba's published works.

> Children with large stomachs and dirty hands, ugly women, muscular blacks and mulattoes, arrogant adolescents capable in the art of fish mongering, they discharged into the colored and oriental street with shouts, music, dancing, cloth sheets, bibelots, dishware, fruits, especially the fruits that put off sickly-sweet smells and aphrodisiac tastes [...][31]

Borba then turns to the teeming microcosm of actors and products gathered around the São José Public Market, where the "multitude" arrives, unbothered by the strong odor of seafood and the bloody slabs of meat. Denizens purchase essentials such as beans and flour and take abundant gulps of sugarcane juice (*caldo de cana*) and rum, everything "accompanied by laughter, shouting, singing, spitting in the gourds of the beggars …" Men and women stop to listen to heroic stories of struggle read from writers of Northeast Brazil's famed chapbook poetry (*literatura de cordel*).[32] Along the neighboring pier, wheat and flour dust is "glued to the naked torsos of bulls transformed into men": those stevedores who unload the warehouses. At nightfall, mariners from around the world descend upon the city and empty their semen into "rented vulvas"—sex workers—who pass through bars, cafés, pubs, and cabarets. Partners copulate beneath the trees and in rented rooms inside the "old seigneurial residences of the sugar lords."[33]

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[30] Foland, 5.

[31] Hermilo Borba Filho, *A porteira do mundo*. 2nd edition (Porto Alegre, RS: Mercado Aberto), 11-2.

Borba writes that this great "mass" of plebeian Recife did everything—dying, eating, having sex, sleeping, and walking—in opposition to the city's other half. Living in neighborhoods where the water was "filtered, cool, or hot," the rich ride in first-class tram carriages and take automobiles to parties, movies, games, and picnics. Yet paradoxically, he adds, white Recife made the "same gestures and the same movements" as the Black. In this locus of violent contrasts—of income, education, culture, health, and occupation—all Recifenses utter the same words but, as Borba sagaciously remarks, they speak completely different languages.[34]

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[32] Borba, 12-3.
[33] Borba, 13.
[34] Borba, 13.

The Living Legacies of Slavery

This dissertation is a fully contextualized urban cultural history of slavery's twentieth century afterlives in Recife, the capital of a Northeast Brazilian state that received one-fifth of the enslaved Africans that landed in the Western Hemisphere.[35] In approaching the broad resonances of three and a half centuries of slavery as "living," the dissertation does not assume that these sociocultural inheritances are somehow immutable, just as it does not contend that poor and overwhelmingly nonwhite Brazilians are perpetually condemned to domination. Rather, the project emphasizes Brazil's indefatigable antiblackness and white male supremacy, demonstrating how the worldviews of *all* Brazilians have been shaped by the underlying logics of an institution that was formally abolished in 1888. While it seeks to understand Brazil's "public secret" of racism, it also explores how Recife's nonwhite majority contested these historical orthodoxies through humor, religiosity, and forms of popular entertainment.[36]

"Surrendering to the Streets in Recife" examines these themes in the storied heart of the city. Much of the dissertation takes place in Old Recife (Recife Antigo), the historic urban center and site of the first Portuguese settlement in the sixteenth century. While downtown Recife underwent significant change beginning in the 1940s, processes of urban decline and renewal are handled indirectly, as the focus falls on a smaller subset of cultural practices that are firmly rooted in this geographic space. These include flânerie, sex work, improvised puppet play, literary costumbrism, and Carnaval. The core of this project revolves around a nineteenth-century public market, incidentally an architectural facsimile of the Marché Grenelle in Paris. While it is not a community study, this portion of the project analyzes the vicissitudes of everyday life in and around the São José Public Market, a bustling commercial node where affect and culture were exchanged as often as physical commodities.

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[35] Here I refer to the *Slave Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, particularly map 6, "Countries and regions in the Atlantic World where slave voyages were organized, by share of captives carried off from Africa," map 8, "Major regions where captives disembarked, all years," and map 9, "Volume and direction of the trans-Atlantic slave trade from all African to all American regions." See "Introductory Maps," Slave Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, accessed April 13, 2021, https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/maps#introductory-.

[36] Jan Hoffman French, "Rethinking Police Violence in Brazil: Unmasking the Public Secret of Race," *Latin American Politics and Society* 55, no. 4 (2013): 161-81.

Despite its focus on a geographically demarcated microworld, it does not assume the boundedness of bodies and practices.[37] Indeed, country dwellers and urbanites, northeasterners and southerners, and Brazilians and foreigners all traversed this fixed set of coordinates. Moreover, cultural practices and international ideation far exceeded Old Recife. We will look at how midcentury Recifense intellectuals saw their city through the eyes of an imagined Europe, especially Paris, while European and North American visitors were perhaps convinced that they had been transported to an "Africa in America," as Túlio Carella reported in his published diary.[38] Foreign intellectuals were not alone in bringing Africa to America. Afro-Pernambucan groups held that a timeless Africa unmarred by the horrors of slavery awaited the children of the diaspora on the other side of the Atlantic.[39]

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[37] In characterizing this space as a "microworld," I draw on the spirit of the Humanities Unbounded MicroWorlds Lab, where I served as a graduate fellow and mentor in the throes of the pandemic summer of 2020. For an inventory of the individual projects and events sponsored by the lab, see "The MicroWorlds Lab," accessed April 13, 2021, https://sites.duke.edu/microworldslab/.

The dramaturg Hermilo Borba Filho's remarks at the end of the prologue speaks of the immense chasm between Black and white, poor and rich, uneducated and highly educated, and the weak and the powerful in Recife. The prologue introduced the sights, sites, odors, colors, and bodies that formed the historical thickness of a midcentury urbanscape, helping readers fix their moorings in geographic space and space-making. This project uses a unique body of underutilized or unknown primary source material to capture with an unrelenting concreteness both white or Eurocentric and Black/African-derived culture. Simultaneously "bottom-up" and "top-down" in scope, it draws on source material that traverses the aural, written, visual, and corporeal, including music, diaries, published erotica, chapbook poetry (*literatura de cordel*), transcriptions of popular entertainment, photographs, films, material objects, and expressive culture. Incorporating such a broad array of materials suggests that notions of "high" and "low" do not adequately capture the complexities of cultural interchange between litterateurs and the povo. Juxtaposing these materials illustrates the tight braiding of the people's culture and "learned" culture, on the one hand, and the broadly "participatory" nature of antiblackness, misogyny, and male supremacy, on the other.

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[38] Carella, 172-3.

[39] José Jorge de Carvalho, "A força da nostalgia: a concepção de tempo histórico dos cultos afro-brasileiros tradicionais," *Série Antropológica* 59 (1987).

From its inception, this study of the Recife urbanscape has been deeply concerned with the visual and especially, but not restrictively, with photography. We began with a handful of photographs that form part of an even larger number of figures (over 70 in total) reproduced in this dissertation. Although several dozen images are subjected to systematic visual analysis (see for example chapters 3 and 6), many more are included because they present small slivers of Recife's broader sensory ambit, particularly its anthroscapes and thingworlds. Indeed, these supporting photographic stills give life to the city's ambiance as the dissertation passes through several locales and epochs, ranging from Recife's meandering streets and alleyways to the bustling public market.

In at least two instances, photographs are the product of creative curation. Nearly all the images referenced in the introductory prelude were adapted from audiovisual materials held at the U.S. National Archives in College Park, Maryland. In May 2017, I learned that the United States Air force generated two rolls of film in which camera operators recorded Recife's port zone, public squares, streets, markets, beaches, and churches as part of a maritime vessel tracking project. I created reasonably high-quality stills from the original footage (many more than I could include in this dissertation), which was produced in late 1959 and early 1960. Similarly, in chapter 6 I assembled a grid composed of calungas' faces. This photographic collage, consisting of archival materials as well as my own images, calls attention to grammars of blackness and Africanicity as they are expressed through color and material composition.

Besides photographs, the project also draws on material culture as well as museum objects, films, diaries, and textual transcriptions of performances. In the cases of mamulengo and maracatu—hybrid practices whose communicative channels include the spoken word, music, bodily movement, and materiality—I examine select registers on their own terms while also looking at the interdependency of these interlocking domains. Equal analytical weight is given to the individual fibers as well as the texture of the larger weave. Careful attention also falls on what objects look like, what they are made from, and how they are manipulated in performance.

From a still wider angle, the dissertation juxtaposes source material that are indicative of a broad array of subject positions. This inventive but empirically grounded exercise in historical bricolage helps unsettle thickly sedimented notions of "low" and "high" culture in a city where these notions are viscous. However, this approach was also born out of a certain sense of methodological and interpretive malaise. Many historians are reluctant to look "over the shoulder" of learned interlopers who document, categorize, classify, and define—in short, those who whittle subjects out of social subordinates—for fear that they will reproduce acts of archival violence. It should be remembered, however, that folklorists and cultural entrepreneurs like Hermilo Borba Filho and Liêdo Maranhão are an idiosyncratic bunch who at least attempt to capture voices at the wellspring of oral traditions. The act of transcription does not immediately disqualify these sources because, as the late Africanist anthropologist and historian Jan Vansina (1929-2017) pointed out in an early treatise on oral tradition, comparing forms of testimony helps resolve problems of singularity and representativeness.[40]

How then are we to deal with the evidence generated by the Liêdos and Hermilos of the world? One must first learn to relativize the learned compiler through judicious source critique. Our discussion of mamulengo is instructive. Rather than relying upon one or two transcribed performances, such as those jotted down by Liêdo Maranhão in the square of the São José Public Market, or even Borba's classic 1966 study, chapter 4 reads broadly across documented puppet shows from neighboring states, whose very existence reveals the deep roots of jocular puppetry in northeastern culture. Cross-referencing these materials throws light on several overlapping themes but zeroing in on interracial conflict and stereotyping was an intentional choice.[41] The very paucity of such documentation is itself an indication of how Black plebeian culture is ignored, undoubtedly because this practice is racially conflictual.[42] Of course, it is hard to know how the textual transcriptions we have at our disposal compare to the tens of thousands of puppet shows that went undocumented. Our understanding of this vehicle of Black protest will thus evolve as new transcriptions—or better yet, audiovisual recordings—come to light.

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[40] Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 114-40.

The Dissertation as a Creative and Evolving Project

Prior to undertaking 20 months of fieldwork, the primary focus of this dissertation was to be on a preliminary group of 12 lettered persons (*letrados*) whose creative works spanned the aural, written, and visual. Without precluding future additions or exclusions, this included eleven males and one female, ten Brazilians and two foreigners, all but two "white" by Brazilian standards. The focus of my research shifted when I realized Liêdo contributed far more than his archive of striking photographs, many of them freely available on the website "Liêdo: the photographer of the people" (Liêdo: o fotógrafo do povo).[43] As will be examined in chapter 2, this municipal dentist generated close to 10,000 pages of handwritten diary entries in which he recounted stories shared to him by poor, largely nonwhite denizens of the São José Public Market between 1971 and 1986. A fortuitous encounter with Liêdo's sprawling archive fundamentally altered my approach to field research. As I worked to make sense of Liêdo and his unusual project (chapter 1) and reconstitute in broad brush strokes the social ecosystem that he so richly detailed in images and words (chapter 2), I detected a curious presence in the market: ventriloquists manipulating black male puppets. Liêdo's photographs and transcriptions of comical, often suggestive exchanges between these mischievous beings and market people led me to a ludic universe crosshatched by interracial conflict and shaped by an indefatigable anti-blackness.

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[41] It might be useful to give a better sense of what someone else might look at.

[42] Ari Lima challenges scholars to revisit the rigid distinction between Black and working-class culture. See "From African Survivals to a Working-Class Afro-Brazilian Culture," *Latin American Perspectives* 41, no. 5 (2014): 157-66.

Freediving in the play worlds of mamulengo led me to Hermilo Borba Filho, another one of the figures I had set out to study while still in the United States. This dramaturg wrote the earliest study of mamulengo (1966) that transcribed performances in Pernambuco. As I had done with Liêdo Maranhão, I examined transcriber and the cultural practice he studied in tandem. It became clear that the jocular spirit of mamulengo had taken ahold of this inveterate son of the big house, whose pornographic four-part epic *A Gentleman of the Second Decadence* (*Um cavalheiro da segunda decadência*, 1966-1972) featured a salvo of grotesqueries that befit a puppet show.

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[43] Unfortunately, the website envisioned by Liêdo's son Roman is inaccessible as of early April 2021. For local press coverage of the project's July 2016 debut, see "Site reúne fotos feitas pelo pesquisador e 'sacanólogo' Liêdo Maranhão," *Diário de Pernambuco*, July 26, 2016, https://www.diariodepernambuco.com.br/noticia/viver/2016/07/site-com-fotos-do-pesquisador-liedo-maranhao-e-lancado-nesta-terca.html and "Projeto disponibiliza acervo fotográfico de Liêdo Maranhão," *Jornal do Commercio*, July 18, 2016, https://jc.ne10.uol.com.br/canal/cultura/noticia/2016/07/18/projeto-disponibiliza-acervo-fotografico-de-liedo-maranhao-244972.php.

In six months of exploring mamulengo and Hermilo Borba Filho's "mamulengification" of his society, I came across many different terms for the puppets that amused popular spectators. In the northeasternmost state of Rio Grande do Norte, these puppets have been called *calungas*, a term of Bantu origin whose meanings include truck drivers, puppets, and, in Pernambuco, the anthropomorphic, often black, dolls so central to Afro-Pernambucan religious practices, particularly the Recifense form of Candomblé known as Xangô and the maracatus thought to be associated with them. Calungas had already seized my imagination in the initial stages of fieldwork when I spent several weeks surveying emblematic objects (including ex-votos) of interest. I made countless trips to contemplate four uncanny calungas—three females and one male—who peer through the glass vitrines of Recife's Museum of the Northeastern Man (Museu do Homem do Nordeste, muHNE), a division of the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation (Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Fundaj). Ultimately, I enlisted the support of these uncanny beings to tell a braided story in which objects, practices, and human actors—including intellectuals, one of them foreign—are closely intertwined both as subjects and objects of thought and action.

Organization

This dissertation consists of three parts. Part I explores a slice of Black Recife: the city's downtown market. This was iconic commercial space painstakingly documented by Maranhão who recorded his interactions with named sex workers, police officers, vagrants, and authors of Northeast Brazil's *literatura de cordel* in a unique personal diary. Chapter 2 focuses on everyday life at the "bottom" where petty tyrannies and jealousies were integral to both inter-class and intra-class forms of conviviality (*convivência*).

Part II is devoted to a characteristic entertainment associated with the market: mamulengo puppetry in which unapologetically Black male protagonists settle conflicts with abusive superiors. As the French theorist Michel de Certeau observed of northeastern plebeian culture, mamulengo too is a "dark rock that resists all assimilation." Neither conservative nor subversive tout court, two chapters show how the escapades of Black heroes (typically named Benedito or Baltazar, two figures of great reverence in Afro-Atlantic Catholicism) both derive from and validate prevailing anti-Black prejudices in the minds and on the tongues of audience members. Yet spectators also identified with these Black protagonists as they exacted revenge on authority figures like policemen and priests by verbally outsmarting and even killing those who spouted racist abuse. A major conclusion is that puppet play tracks between reproducing a racist status quo and a spirited and violent resistance to its orthodoxies by heroes who do as they wish rather than what they are told.

Part III begins by returning to a view from "above" by examining the work of Hermilo Borba Filho (1917-1976), the enfant terrible of the big house of Pernambuco. One of the first to publish on mamulengo, Borba would subsequently engage in a form of truth-telling about the world of elite men in the erotic tetralogy he published between 1966 and 1972. Like the Baltazars and Beneditos of mamulengo, the protagonist of this pornographic epic is a social type who neither engages in introspection nor acquires wisdom throughout his life "journey." Like the Black puppet heroes that Borba observed for many decades, his narrator exalts in physical violence and violent speech-acts against the "big" and "small" alike. The chapter links notions of libertinism and predatory privilege back to mamulengo (chapters 3 and 4), where nonwhite puppet protagonists asserted their claim to the prerogatives of white elite men.

This is a study, above all, of male perspectives, which reflects the fact that urban sociability historically privileged interclass (and interracial) exchanges among men. If in the surviving evidence we count few Black voices, those of Black women are extraordinarily rare. This paucity in part reflects the much broader denigration of Black women, often viewed as ordinary, if inferior, sex objects. In a country where the quasimythical status of the mulatta supposedly sets the standards of beauty, this dissertation shows that white women are in fact the objects of fantasy and desire on the part of both white and Black men. Indeed, vulgar beliefs about women of all colors, documented by Freyre in his *The Big House and Slave Quarters*, find expression across transcribed mamulengo shows, midcentury anthropological and sociological literature, and the "confessional" works of elite males.[44]

The final chapter foregrounds a female-centered cultural practice marked by Black autonomy and dignity. It investigates the calunga, a mysterious object of Afro-Recifense culture that has fascinated intellectuals since Mário de Andrade presented on this subject at the First Afro-Brazilian Congress of 1934. This regally dressed tar black doll is a highly visible component of the city's maracatus. Powerful embodiments of Black presence, these royal corteges of queens, ladies-in-waiting, and percussions take to the streets during three days of pre-Lenten festivities. Approaching the polysemic calunga as an interclass and interracial "fetish" (Matory 2018), chapter 5 maps the white intelligentsia's attempts to contend with the opacity of blackness embodied by this figure. It is especially important that these spirited Black dolls categorically reject sexualized readings of the Black female body as well as blackness as abjection.[45] If the Black heroes of mamulengo generally accept the negative connotations of blackness through gymnastics of deprecatory "self-picking" (*auto-escárnio*), maracatus are attestations to historicity and prestige through a grammar of Africanicity.[46]

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[44] Gilberto Freyre, *Casa-grande e senzala: formação da família brasileira sob o regime da economia patriarcal*, 48th ed. (São Paulo: 2003), 72.

The Dangers of Looking Away: Racism, Male Domination, and Violence

It is hardly surprising to encounter racist stereotyping and sexual abuse in a city whose history is dominated by slavery, racism, and the subjugation of women, the Black, and the poor. Although several passages are carefully paraphrased to avoid giving airtime to repugnant attitudes and imagery, it is essential that we confront such material directly because exposes the longevity and depth of anti-Black attitudes in a country still marked by significant denial of racism. North American literary critic Saidiya Hartman has asked whether there is harm in unveiling troubling and disturbing subject matter; are there any "potential dangers of looking" (again)?[47] The question is also posed by Lamonte Aidoo in *Slavery Unseen: Sex, Power, and Violence in Brazilian History*. In this provocative work, he holds that generative and "nongenerative forms of sex and sexual violence [are] fundamental yet concealed components of the myths of

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[45] Darieck Scott, *Extravagant Abjection: Blackness, Power, and Sexuality in the African American Literary Imagination* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

[46] I translate "auto-escárnio" as group self-contempt. I thank my colleague Marcelo Ramos for sharing this term with me during a summer 2020 workshop.

[47] Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008): 4.

Brazil's exceptional slavery and racial democracy." In his view, scholars are obligated to address the horrors experienced by enslaved Brazilians and their descendants.[48]

Performances of misogyny and interpersonal violence thus surface at regular intervals throughout this dissertation. Nevertheless, these are not the only views captured and analyzed here. Indeed, the reader may be surprised in chapter 2 by public market people's comments on male homosexuality and sex work. Indeed, a notion of "different strokes for different folks" seemed to best capture the outlook of some in the 1970s. Daily survival was of central importance for the "little people" (*gentinha*) during this turbulent decade. It should also be noted that the undiluted *machismo* articulated by the dramaturg and pornographic novelist Hermilo Borba Filho (1917-1976) did not always resonate among his male "class" mates. Liêdo Maranhão (1927-2014), by contrast, sympathetically documented the lives of female sex workers and dialogued with the projects of pioneering feminists such as Rose Marie Muraro (1930-2014) and Ivone Gebara (b. 1944), who studied quotidian experiences of male supremacy in the 1970s and eighties, including in Pernambuco's sugarcane-producing region (*zona da mata*).[49]

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[48] Lamonte Aidoo, *Slavery Unseen: Sex, Power, and Violence in Brazilian History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 9-10. Aidoo also holds that the "discomfort that many feel when approaching questions of race and sex is a testament to their continuing significance today."

[49] For a discussion of this pathbreaking project, see Rose Marie Muraro, *Memórias de uma mulher impossível* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Rosa dos Tempos, 1999), 258-9.

It is not enough to expose the racist and sexist underpinnings of Recifense culture. It is necessary above all to center Black voices of contestation and dissent, some of which, at mid-century, were expressed within established racist grammars. The mamulengo chapters explore the braiding of anti-Black and anti-white attitudes in these performances. In linking masculinity and power, from a still wider angle, this dissertation these chapters break new ground by demonstrating how predatory privilege (or aspirations to achieve it) buttress an ideal of masculinity across lines of race. This is even more striking given the social and political ferment that swept Recife from the 1950s through the early eighties. The existing scholarship on the city and state has traditionally focused on projects that generated internationally famous movements and personalities: Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed, the leftist political reformism of Miguel Arraes, and the progressive Catholicism of archbishop Dom Hélder Câmara. Rather than following this well-trodden path, the dissertation brings the illiterate and nonwhite *povo* (common people) into a fraught dialogue with a bohemian subset of their white upper-class superiors.

In the twenty-first century, Brazil has seen a rising identification with Blackness and rejection of racism as Afro-Brazilians and their allies have fought to dethrone the logic of white supremacy. At a time when an insurgent blackness has grown in intensity over the past four decades, it is easy to miss the magnitude of the resulting discursive breaks if one has not contended seriously with the racial etiquettes and racist logics that prevailed at mid-century. If the Black puppets of mamulengo were unable to grasp their blackness outside the language of white domination, new generations of college-educated people of color have named and challenged an enduring anti-blackness that is itself an inheritance of nearly four centuries of slavery.

1. The Benjaminian Project of a Public Functionary

Taking stock of his life, projects, and adventures in 1982-1983, 57-year-old artist, collector, and writer Liêdo Maranhão de Souza (1925-2014, fig. 8) fancied himself a lifelong connoisseur of the street. During a 13-hour interview with a researcher from Recife's Joaquim Nabuco Foundation (Fundação Joaquim Nabuco), Liêdo provocatively compared the act of "going to the people" to sex work. "Like prostitution," he explained, "you have to be picking up men. You have to be in the street."[1] Offering a variation on the idea of surrendering to the revelry of Recife's famed street carnival (*caindo na folia*), Liêdo held that submitting to the excesses of the street (*caindo na rua*) helped one understand the creative resilience of the *povo* (common people, plebeians).[2]

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[1] Liêdo Maranhão de Souza, "Entrevista com Liêdo Maranhão de Souza," interviewed by Fátima Quintas on February 2, 1983, in Olinda, Pernambuco (Recife: Centro de Estudos da História Brasileira da Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, 1983), 139.

[2] Liêdo's comments recall the idea of "falling into the world" (*caindo no mundo*), which is an expression that captures the act of prostituting oneself. See Tomé Cabral, *Dicionário de termos e expressões populares* (Fortaleza, Ceará: Instituto Cultural do Cariri, 1972), 182.

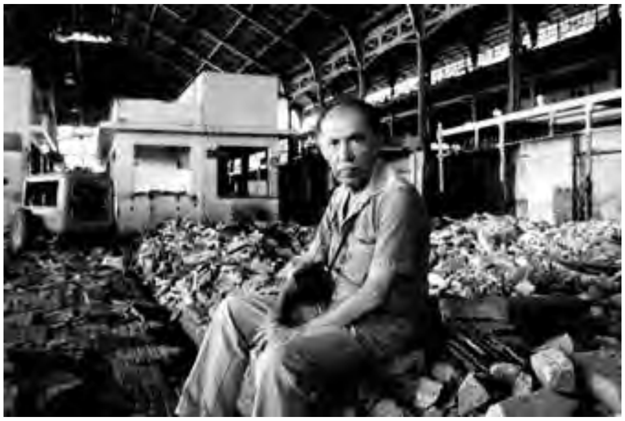

Figure 8: Liêdo Maranhão de Souza inside Recife's Mercado Público de São José after the 1989 fire that destroyed much of the internal structure. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco.

A published writer but a marginal figure in Recife's creative establishment, Maranhão recalled cutting his teeth in the narrow, meandering streets of São José. This socially porous middle-class neighborhood in the 1930s and forties served as a backdrop for Liêdo's boyish tricks (*molecagem*), such as stealing bronze from abandoned buildings and devising ink bombs that soiled the costumes of revelers during Carnaval.[3] It was also in the streets of São José and beyond that he made his first forays into the world of sex in Recife's cabarets, bordellos, dancing clubs, and motels.

The apparition of an imagined Paris hovers above Liêdo Maranhão's 1982-1983 exercise in self-fashioning.[4] Memories of trickery and debauchery (*putaria*) in wartime Recife meld into humorous accounts of sexual taboos and hierarchies in mid-century

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[3] Maranhão on September 15, 1982, 19-20.

[4] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

Paris. In his mid-twenties, he spent a year in what he called the "capital of lewdness but also culture" (*capital da sacanagem, mas também de cultura*).[5] By the early 1970s, when Liêdo was no longer a twenty-something, but rather a middle-aged husband and municipal dentist, he initiated an unprecedented project of *convivência* (interclass and interracial social mingling) in Recife's popular underbelly.[6]

Over a period of 15 years (1971-1986), he painstakingly documented the stories told by unknown denizens of the São José Public Market (Mercado Público de São José), Recife's largest outdoor marketspace and Brazil's oldest and largest prefabricated iron structure. He struck up conversations with barbers, shoe shiners, street vendors, sex workers, magicians and sorcerers as well and operators of illegal gambling booths that were selectively tolerated. Liêdo also befriended authors and distributors of Northeast Brazil's famed chapbook poetry (*literatura de cordel*). Long hailed as legendary storytellers and amanuenses of the povo, these men (and a few women) congregated beneath the eaves of the market in makeshift stalls. Liêdo dutifully recounted subalterns' narratives in a remarkable 10,000 pages of handwritten notes (over 25 volumes), in the form of a diary (fig. 9).[7]

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[5] Maranhão on October 6, 1982, 50.

[6] I would like to acknowledge the rich theoretical discussions I have shared with anthropologist Katya Wesolowski. Her forthcoming work highlights the sense of "co-existence" or "being-with" that accompanies notions of convivência in the context of capoeira. Wesolowski, "Playing Capoeira: Creative Convivência and Embodied Knowledge in an Afro-Brazilian Fighting Art" (presented at the Lab Dea, Università Ca'Foscari Venezia, Venice, October 1, 2019).

[7] See Table in Appendix.

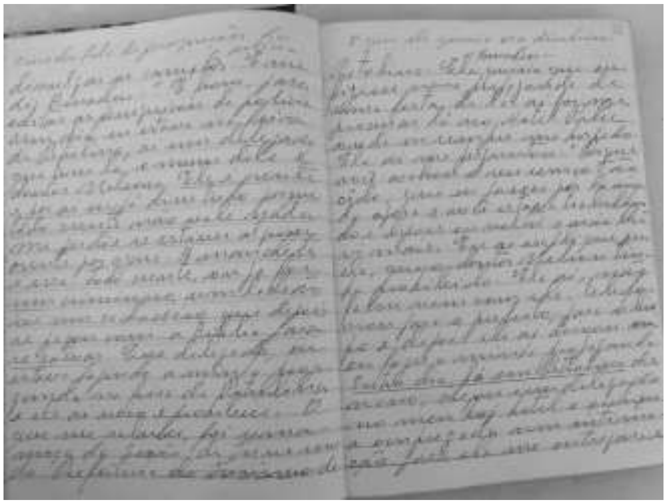

Figure 9: A page from Liêdo's handwritten diaries, which span nearly 10,000 pages. Photograph by the author. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco.

This cornucopia of disparate material, never examined by scholars, offers a uniquely compelling avenue for investigating crucial dimensions of a northeastern city in the 1970s. Yet even as Liêdo set out to capture the ethos of plebeian Recife, the historical depth of French-inspired projects found expression in the built environment. Incalculable hours of conversation with social subordinates took place in the shadows of a French architect's tropical vision of the Marché Grenelle. This chapter explores the self-representation of an intellectual one generation removed from Pernambuco's sugar aristocracy. It examines how adaptations of French culture powerfully shaped his assumed position as an intellectual "outsider" and the gravity and focus of his project. A major argument advanced here is that while Maranhão used a two-year trip to Europe (1950-1952) as a dividing line in his trajectory, he could not exorcise the imagined Paris that had been his lodestar as a young man. That Paris loomed exceptionally large in

Liêdo's self-narrativization, as it did for Walter Benjamin (1892-1940). And the points of convergence and divergence between these two intellectuals is explored in the second half of the chapter. Marginal in their respective cultural fields, the two men's shared sensibilities and love of an imagined Paris offers an opportunity for "mutual illuminations" that both enrich and entice.

1.1 Finding Oneself in the Street

Liêdo Maranhão's intellectual and political profile is an unconventional one. First, he only began publishing in his fifties as his multifaceted and ever-expanding project also found expression across different genres including journalism, photography, film, and sculpture. Liêdo made significant contributions to cultural production in each of these categories but was reluctant to claim expertise in any single area, perhaps to avoid compromising the rare freedom enjoyed by an amateur. Politically, Liêdo characterized himself as a kind of nonconforming, even heterodox, leftist. Ever mistrustful of party politics, his loyalties and energies lay with larger-than-life public figures that he saw as embracing a "popular" agenda, such as Dom Hélder Câmara, the internationally famous "red" archbishop of Recife and Olinda. There is also no evidence indicating that Liêdo Maranhão joined the militant opposition to Brazil's military regime, instituted in 1964, or even attracted the scrutiny of Pernambuco's political police. Unlike many university students, professors, labor leaders, and peasants, whose persecution intensified after 1968 (during the so-called "years of lead"), Liêdo spent his time engrossed in a social world whose mundane challenges were non- or even para-political with, in many cases, a bias towards an understandable level of support for the military regime.[8]

Alessandro Portelli writes that in the domain of oral history, historians concern themselves with recreating the past while "narrators are interested in projecting an image" of themselves.[9] This image is given shape through a succession of anecdotes and details, but it also surfaces in the narrator's delivery or performance. Like other oral histories, Liêdo's extended interviews from 1982 and 1983 offers neither a certifiably 'true' nor a 'false' perspective on events. Rather, it is a fluid and highly entertaining narrative. Left to his own devices by the interviewer, Liêdo played the role of showman in framing his life story. Full of self-deprecating humor and wit, his testimony recounts his awkward first steps in the world of sex, including multiple sexual transmitted infections.[10] He also presented a remarkable variety of nicknames that he earned (some of them vulgar) over his life, such as "cyclic schizophrenic" (*esquizofrênico cíclico*) and "shit stew" (*pirão de merda*).[11]

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[8] In Brazil, the "Years of Lead" (*Anos de Chumbo*) refers to the period of stringent repressive measures that were implemented between 1968 and 1978. Issued by Artur da Costa e Silva in December 1968, Institutional Act Number Five (Ato Institucional Número Cinco, AI-5) resulted in interventions at the state and local levels and the suspension of constitutional liberties.
[9] Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, Albany, 1991), 63.
[10] Maranhão on October 4, 1982, 45.
[11] "Pirão" is a dish made with beef broth and flour. See Cabral, 626.

Liêdo's testimony was recorded and transcribed by the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation across eight sessions held between September 1982 and February 1983. Brazil's political situation brought itself to bear on Liêdo's testimony. In November 1982, the country held its first free national elections in 17 years. The resurgence of old leftist heroes and the emergence of new ones buoyed an atmosphere of great optimism. Miguel Arraes de Alencar (1916-2005), the reformist former mayor of Recife and deposed governor of Pernambuco, was elected federal deputy. Although he was unsuccessful in his 1982 bid for governor of São Paulo, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (b. 1945), an important founder of the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores, PT), would be elected federal deputy in 1986.

In terms of the mechanics of the interview, Liêdo's testimony is an example of what Portelli calls "shuttleworking."[12] His narrative made regular—and sometimes sporadic shifts—between adolescence, young adulthood, and his middle years.

Other nicknames included "Anesthetized Moral" (Anestesiado Moral), "Thin Tail" (*Rabo Fino*), "Aluminum Cheeks" (*Bochecha de Alumínio*), and "Corrupt" (*Corrupto*), among others. He was also called "Liêdovisky" for his leftist leanings.

[12] Portelli, 61. Liêdo also employed a different kind of "shuttleworking" regarding his friendships. On several occasions, he related details about youthful mischief-making with middle- and upper-class friends and acquaintances followed by short references to their current situation, usually holding a powerful position at a bank, university, or corner of the state bureaucracy. These careful, almost formulaic allusions have several possible meanings. They could, for instance, serve as a measure of Liêdo's well-connectedness. Or perhaps they illustrate something prosaic about the transition from adolescence to adulthood. That is, most everyone was a *moleque* (a ragamuffin or unruly child) as a boy or young man, but eventually *molecagem* becomes a thing of the past. It is also possible that Liêdo's passing remarks are intended to remind the listener that successful public men are still moleques at their core.

Maranhão also had a proclivity for place-jumping. His reflections on art, culture, politics, and sexual mores, among other topics, meandered from his birthplace of São José, Recife to Granada, Madrid, Paris, and Tangiers. Liêdo even modified his language to suit the locations he revisited. When recalling details about his adventures in Paris, for example, he employed French expressions instead of translating them into Portuguese. The same is true for using Spanish to talk about his adventures in Madrid, Granada, and Córdoba.[13]

Roberto DaMatta famously maintained that the "basic" opposition between the house and the street is an ordering principle for Brazilian social relations. The world of the house achieves order through hierarchical interpersonal relationships, while the street is unpredictable and individualistic.[14] In Liêdo's narrative, the notion of the street serves a wayfinding purpose that locates our protagonist in place and time. Liêdo also invites us to judge his perceived growth across five decades using his changing relationship with the street. If, as a boy and young man, surrendering to the street entailed mischief-making and swaggering, it meant becoming totally absorbed in study as an older man.

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[13] Recounting small portions of his stories in French and Spanish might have been a way of cultivating a cosmopolitan identity. It is equally probable that these references were deemed appropriate because the interviewer—a full-time, university-educated research—might well have been conversant in both.

[14] Roberto DaMatta, *Carnivals, Rogues, and Heroes: An Interpretation of the Brazilian Dilemma*, trans. John Drury (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 64.

1.2 From Moleque to Tropical Dandy

As we have already seen, Liêdo described his adolescence in terms of *molecagem* (boyish tricks or mischief) and commanding a pack of *moleques*, many of them poor and nonwhite. Together with friends like Mário Gagunho, a boy whose protruding gap between his front teeth made him prone to spitting while talking, Liêdo stole metal buttons from drycleaners, fished for crabs to sell at the market, and engaged in sex with "effeminate" homosexuals (*frangos*).[15] Liêdo liked to describe his parents having been "poor," most likely in contrast to his grandfather who was a wealthy sugar mill owner (*usineiro*) and a respected law professor.[16] Living in São José supposedly made up for his lack of material wealth with the richness of life "experience." There Liêdo met a broad gamut of flamboyant personalities that included itinerant hucksters, beggars, and sex workers like "Mommy Sets the Price" (*Mamãe Dá o Preço*), a girl whose mother managed her clients. That Maranhão's memories of "popular types" (*tipos populares*) mirror to a surprising degree the works of Black poet Solano Trindade, also a son of São José, suggests that the neighborhood was indeed a major site of interclass sociability in the early twentieth century. So enticing was the world of the street in his youth that Liêdo confessed to hating late afternoon baths, a reminder from his childhood that playtime was over for the day.[17]

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[15] Maranhão on September 15, 1982, 14 and 16.

[16] Methódio Romano de Albuquerque Maranhão (1864-1951) served as mayor of the city of Goiana and became president of the Instituto Arqueológico, Histórico e Geográfico de Pernambuco in 1942. Maranhão received his law degree from the Faculdade de Direito and donated his enormous private library to the same institution. Liêdo claimed this collection consisted of 24,000 volumes. He said he knew the approximate number of titles because his grandfather once paid an exterminator to treat the library for moths. At the time, the business charged one cruzeiro for each book. Methódio paid Cr$24,000. Maranhão on September 15, 1982, 2.

Reflecting on his pre-sojourn years (1925-1950), Liêdo invoked the street not merely as a place to observe but also a stage for exhibiting one's public persona. By his own admission, everything Liêdo did as a young man was premeditated and intended to appeal to eligible young women. For example, as a boy he joined the Escoteiros, a Brazilian equivalent of the Boy Scouts, because he got to wear a uniform, participate in parades, and had a limited degree of authority in the eyes of plebeian actors.[18] As a young man, he began dressing like Fred Astaire, an American dancer, singer, actor, and television personality. Although his hair was naturally curly, he achieved a slick look by using a popular men's pomade. Growing out his fingernails because unclipped cuticles were supposedly a sign of virility was another subtle but important way that Liêdo played the part of a manly hustler (*malandro*).[19]

Even in his first years as a practicing dentist, Liêdo regularly wore linen suits, passionfruit-scented cologne, and crocodile shoes.[20] He recalled a handful of other male characters that he associated with coolness and confidence. One such man was Zé

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[17] See, for example, *Cantares ao meu povo* (São Paulo: Editora Fulgor, 1961). Trindade was the son of a shoemaker. For a brief biographical vignette, see Zelbert L. Moore, "Solano Trindade Remembered, 1908-1974," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 16, no. 2 (1979): 233-238.
[18] Maranhão on September 17, 1982, 23.
[19] Maranhão on September 17, 1982, 27-8.
[20] Maranhão on September 17, 1982, 27-8.

Renato, a radio program host that young women found irresistible.[21] Another was a municipal functionary that was famous for being a "conqueror, comical fellow, [and] maniac." This man, identified as one Guilherme, wore all white clothing and carried a medical bag and, despite not being a physician, was able to trick women into believing he was as they walked down the street. Liêdo added that the scampish Guilherme was a reliable participant in Independence Day celebrations where he wore more medals than the most decorated war heroes; his own record of actual service was dubious.[22]

1.3 A Case of Francophilia

A craving for the outward signs of a cultured, urbane way of life drew the young Liêdo to Recife's Francophiles. At mid-century, French culture held a special salience among middle- and upper-class Brazilians. Many were voracious readers, if not collectors, of Baudelaire and Proust, while works of classic French erotica – especially Sade –were on the bookshelves of more than a few educated men's home libraries. After Liêdo completed his studies in dentistry, he opened his first private clinic in the same building where Cultura Francesa (French Culture) offered language training, maintained a library, and facilitated cultural and educational exchanges. Due to a shortage of clients, Maranhão was able to enroll in French classes while busying himself with concerts, conferences, lectures, and informal get-togethers. When he was not listening to French radio or attending cultural events, Liêdo mingled with specialists on Balzac in local bars such as the Savoy, Sertã, and the Grande Hotel which were frequented by Recife's bohemians.[23]

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[21] Maranhão on September 17, 1982, 24.
[22] Maranhão on September 17, 1982, 23.

In the 1940s and 1950s, French culture was not merely an intellectual fad to be "lived" (*vivenciada*) by upwardly mobile young people. Recife was also home to a small French colony. Liêdo recounted his secret rendezvous with Julia (nicknamed Biquette), a French woman who was married to a Moroccan translator and instructor at Cultura Francesa.[24] He also befriended a handsome, thick-spectacled manager of Air France as well as one of the airline's pilots, the latter often joining Liêdo on excursions to Recife's legal zone of brothels and cabarets.[25] Filmmaker Romain Lesage (1924-1996), who was probably working on his film *A beleza do diabo* (1951) at the time, supposedly crossed paths with Liêdo on multiple occasions and taught him about cinema.[26]

As Liêdo searched for himself, he found French culture –incarnated in this community of "exiles," music, and poetry – offered something compelling while admiring the erudition and self-assuredness such cultural capital commanded. Indeed,

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[23] Maranhão on October 4, 1982, 37-8.

[24] Júlia was married to Jean Orecchioni, a Moroccan translator and instructor at Cultura Francesa. Liêdo remembered giving Orecchioni a copy of Gilberto Freyre's work *O Nordeste* for his birthday, which he subsequently translated and gave the title *Terres du Sucre* (Paris, 1956). Liêdo claimed that Orecchioni called on him to help with the translation. Ian Merkel shows that Freyre preferred Orecchioni's translation because it was faithful to his writing style. See Ian Merkel, "Brazilian Race Relations, French Social Scientists, and African Decolonization: A Transatlantic History of the Idea of Miscegenation." Published online on March 26, 2019. Cambridge University Press.

[25] Maranhão on October 4, 1982, 39-40.

[26] Maranhão on October 4, 1982, 41.

French culture meant an imagined Paris offered him a sense of belonging and purpose. As he recalled his young adult years, in 1982 and 1983, the specter of Paris was suspended above his rendezvous in the zona and an unrequited love with a married French woman. The verses of Baudelaire and Verlaine strongly resonated with Liêdo as he sometimes left his rented room and stood on the Boa Vista Bridge, hoping to see the face of his beloved reflected in the windows of apartment buildings.[27]

Having immersed himself in Cultura Francesa, Liêdo felt he had gained enough acceptance by the city's small circle of French (or Francophile) intellectuals, to try to "conquer" France on his own in 1951. He confessed that he had never left Recife until his departure that year which he paid for himself. The weakness of his spoken French had apparently disqualified him from receiving a scholarship from the French Alliance of Brazil (Aliança Francesa do Brasil). Nevertheless, Liêdo decided to self-finance his trip by selling his dental practice, and may also have received money from his grandfather.[28]

Maranhão traveled to Rio de Janeiro for the first time to board a ship to Marseille. To pass the time by, he recited Baudelaire's poems "L'invitation au voyage" (Invitation to the Voyage) and "La Chevelure" (Hair), which de considered a "damned success" (*um sucesso danado*).[29] Supposedly, the ship's captain even upgraded Liêdo to first class after he entertained fellow passengers by dancing *frevo* (Recife's frenetic carnival marches) and playing the drums. He also claimed that his train ticket from Marseille to the capital was paid the trip organizer for providing entertainment.[30]

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[27] Maranhão on October 4, 1982, 41.
[28] Maranhão on October 4, 1982, 42.
[29] Maranhão on October 4, 1982, 42.

Liêdo's sense of cunning and spontaneity was no match for Paris, however. Having set his sights on conquering the "capital of lewdness" (*capital de safadeza*), he ended up being conquered by the cradle of Baudelaire and Balzac. In fact, he described his time in Paris as so destabilizing that it had sexual ramifications. Unlike Recife, there was a rigidity and coldness of Parisian sex work that he found disconcerting. In his own city, there was a distinct legal zone for prostitution and madams kept bureaucratic procedures to a minimum, In Paris, however, the police required clients to present their passports before they could even meet sex workers in a hotel. Probably already on edge, he reports being thrown completely off kilter by one encounter with a prostitute in a nondescript hotel. At the outset, the woman supposedly presented him with two pictures of her son, presumably to emphasize her financial need, and then continued to wear her socks and a pair of pants with a small opening for intercourse rather than undress. The woman also placed hard limits on what her client could do without paying for additional privileges. And then, he was completely "demoralized" (*desmoralizado*) when the prostitute stuck her finger in his rectum, a humiliating interaction that led to him to flee and return to his hotel.[31]

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[30] Maranhão on October 4, 1982, 42-3.
[31] Maranhão on October 6, 1982, 51-2.

During the cold winter months, Liêdo reports that he felt his spontaneity slipping away as he began to wonder whether the "wretched" (*miserável*) French had caused him to become impotent.[32] To rejuvenate his languishing sense of self, Liêdo took on the role of entertainer by playing the tambourine, dancing Recife's signature frevo dance, (fig. 10), and burlesquing Carmen Miranda, an ubiquitous (and much-loved) icon of tropical Brazilian culture in Europe and the United States along with samba.[33] He also made a habit of visiting famous museums in Paris, a practice that he would later repeat in Madrid. Liêdo Maranhão had a resolutely more agreeable experience in Spain. There, he found sex workers both more intriguing and less pedantic than their Parisian counterparts while the agility and bravado of bullfighters captured his imagination.[34]

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[32] It should be noted that calling someone a "miserável" is highly offensive in Brazil. Maranhão on October 6, 1982, 51-2.

[33] Maranhão on October 4, 1982, 44 and October 6, 53.

[34] We do not have sufficient space to trace the subsequent legs of Liêdo's excursion, which included Spain and Spanish Morocco. Maranhão on October 8, 1982, 65-8.

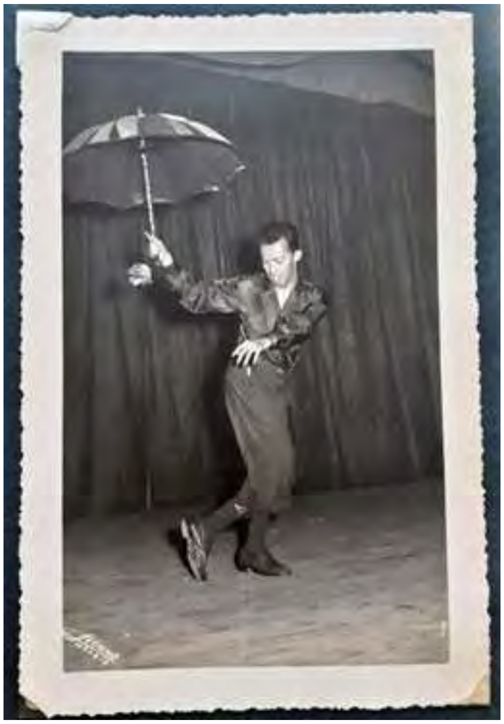

Figure 10: Liêdo dancing frevo in Madrid in the early 1950s. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco.

Liêdo returned to Recife, in his account, as a man who was more quintessentially "Brazilian" precisely because of his trials, tribulations, and "conquests" in Europe.[35] A burgeoning interest in local and regional culture displaced his previously Eurocentric outlook, although visits to French and Spanish museums spurred an ongoing interest in art and material objects. Sometime between 1965 and 1968, over a decade after Liêdo made a youthful pilgrimage to Europe, a fortuitous encounter in a used bookstore activated his instincts as a collector.[36] Liêdo recalled finding a copy of a book about Lampião (Virgulino Ferreira da Silva, 1897-1938), Northeast Brazil's most famous outlaw who in the 1920s and 1930s overtook small towns in the rural interior and became a folk hero. The work, which presumably included photographs of Lampião and other *cangaceiros*, reminded Liêdo of his childhood.[37] He and his brother would run to Recife's train station, where captured cangaceiros arrived to be incarcerated at the neighboring House of Detention (Casa de Detenção). Liêdo reportedly had a close personal relationship with Antônio Silvino (1875-1944), the famed "Gold Rifle" or "Backcountry Mussolini" who was an inmate at the penitentiary. While his father visited his jailer friend, Liêdo and his brother could spend time with Silvino, who talked with the boys about catching and shelling crabs on the riverbank.[38]

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[35] Maranhão on February 2, 1983, 125.

Encountering the book about outlaws at the used bookstore led Liêdo to collect everything he could find about the exploits of northeastern outlaws. Having exhausted the local supply, he began exploring the "folkloric" literature on social banditry (*cangaço*) where "avenging" cangaceiros like Lampião and Silvino were much vaunted in the universe of the chapbook poetry associated with the popular classes.[39] Liêdo's new infatuation also took him to the Mercado Mercado Público de São José, a kind of "Mecca" of cordel, where he made friends with the hucksters and storytellers. In 1971, he began collecting life stories from renowned (and usually elderly) poets, printers, and illustrators, first by using a voice recorder and later pen and paper.[40] His infatuation with cordel led to his habit of perambulating only in and around the public market, not only in Recife but throughout the Northeast. Indeed, he enlisted his son, Roman, along with filmmaker Fernando Spencer (1927-2014) to produce a 19-minute super-8 film about cordel (*O folheto*).[41]

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[36] In March 1982, Liêdo said he came across the book in 1968, but he later estimated this took place in 1964 or 1965.
[37] Liêdo named two books in his interview: *Terra de sol* (1912) and *Almas de lama e aço: Lampião e outros cangaceiros* (1930), both written by Gustavo Barrozo (1888-1959). Maranhão on February 2, 1983, 127.
[38] Maranhão on February 2, 1983, 124-5.
[39] Pascale Baker, *Revolutionaries, Rebels and Robbers: The Golden Age of Banditry in Mexico, Latin America and the Chicano American Southwest, 1850-1950* (University of Wales Press, 2015), 142 and 145. DaMatta argues that the archetypal Brazilian hero is analogous to the Count of Monte Cristo, something of a "renouncer" and

It is likely that Liêdo saw himself reflected in these arresting tales of conquest, revenge, and righteousness. He may even have seen Lampião and Silvino as vernacular models of maleness which had deep roots in the history and mythos of the Brazilian Northeast, unlike the Hollywood gangster, carioca swindler, and dandy that had interested him earlier. Still, from the perspective of relating personal truths across time, the figure of the bandit or outlaw helped Liêdo make sense of who he ceased to be and yearned, or perhaps was "destined," to become.

"revenger." That is, this ideal type is someone who exacts revenge because of renouncing "everyone and everything." See DaMatta, 206. See also Sarah Sarzynski, "Reading the Cold War from the Margins: Literatura de Cordel as a Historical Prism," in *The Americas* 75, no. 1 (2018): 127-153.

[40] He said he first used a tape recorder because he was afraid of losing the stories related to him. However, Liêdo's acquaintances did not like being recorded, warning him, "Doctor, I will only talk if you lose the recorder." Maranhão on October 8, 1982, 69.

[41] Filming for this project was completed in three locations: the Mercado de São José, Alto do Moura (Caruaru, Pernambuco), and Juazeiro do Norte (Ceará) and explores the connections between subaltern intellectuals, politics, and popular (or "folk") religiosity.

Brazilian anthropologist DaMatta writes that the "myth that gives us honor and definition is a myth that requires at least two lives, or a radical separation between what we were and what we shall be."[42] The quintessential Brazilian hero, he contends, ideally experiences a major transformation that distinguishes how they once were and what they are to become, as they undertake a mission that both stems from and transcends the self. DaMatta's schematic typology discusses three kinds of Brazilian *dramatis personae*, including the rogue or hustler (*malandro*) and military hero (*caxias*). In his account, the third is the renouncer figure "must combat and overcome his pride and vanity. He must abandon the material world with its wealth and injustices. He must be totally consistent, and he cannot enjoy any longer the privileges of inconsistency between his words, deeds, living, and being. He must live for his group, leaving aside egoistic interests and creating a vast external space where he can implement the rules he himself invents."[43]

In Liêdo Maranhão – especially the younger version he recalls in 1982 and 1983 – we find something of the malandro, a figure marked by a characteristic out-of-placeness not to mention an individualism, perhaps excessive, that is expressed through a "typical way of walking, his seductive mode of speaking, and in his singular dressing."[44] However, one also discovers traces of the renouncer in the older Maranhão who abandons of the "material world with its wealth and injustices," a figure linked as well prominent messianic religious leaders in the northeast like Antônio Conselheiro and Padre Cícero).[45] Although a self-described atheist who apparently without a passion for politics, Liêdo after Paris—having sold his private dental practice—worked as a public functionary without every taking a civil service examination for anything better. He even relinquished riding around the city in his own automobile and opted, instead, to spend his waking hours in a portion of the city that was for most middle-class actors at most an unavoidable node of business.

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[42] DaMatta, 206.

[43] Liêdo could also be seen as a "renouncer." DaMatta argues that this DaMatta, 21-22.

[44] DaMatta, 209.

In terms of Liêdo's sprawling life narrative, his transatlantic travels signal a key between his earlier flamboyant and self-interest self and the man who now chose the street as a space to explore, act upon, and document. No longer wearing the flashy clothing of his young adulthood, he sauntered about the city in simple shorts, tee shirts, and flip-flops, his head partially covered by a Gilligan-like fisherman's hat. Although the delectable experiences of public life continued to hold some appeal, the street and its inhabitants emerged subjects to be known and understood on the deepest levels.

As he got to know the business and agents of cordel, Liêdo was struck by the role radio played in the lives of the povão. He found that the medium continued to be an important source of entertainment and information even as television ownership grew exponentially in the 1970s. Many noted public figures understood the centrality of radio to the everyday lives of subalterns. Dom Hélder Câmara, archbishop of Olinda and

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[45] DaMatta, 212.

Recife, put on an early-hour radio program that was said to be especially popular with truck drivers and sex workers.[46] Maranhão also found that radio programming (especially crime shows) was popular with plebeians and inspired many cordelistas, which sparked his interest in rudimentary radio sets, known as crystal radio receivers, that even many poor Recifenses owned in the 1930s and 1940s.[47] When Liêdo gave his interview in 1982 and 1983, he spoke of a separate project on radio, which apparently never came to fruition. Had he done so, the final product would probably have drawn on his collection of weekly radio guides and assembly manuals.[48]

As he wandered the arteries of central Recife on foot, Liêdo Maranhão was also a critical witness to controversial modernization of downtown Recife by city officials in the late 1960s and early seventies.[49] Perhaps no figure embodied the destructive side of urban renewal more than Recife mayor Augusto Lucena (1916-1995) who, during his second term (1971-1975), spearheaded a plan to expand Avenue Dantas Barreto. This led to the demolition of much of the neighborhood of São José, including the Bom Jesus dos Martírios Church, a colonial structure whose origins dated to the late eighteenth century. Although opposed by prominent local intellectuals, including playwright

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[46] Transcripts for the program "Um olhar sobre a cidade" are held at the Instituto Dom Hélder Câmara (IDHeC) in Recife.

[47] Liêdo claimed that Agamenon Magalhães, the federal interventor in Pernambuco from 1937 to 1945, believed Recifenses were rich when he first arrived in Recife. From his airplane he noticed that even the humblest homes had antennas protruding from their rooftops. Maranhão on October 8, 1982, 75.

[48] Maranhão on September 17, 1982, 25.

[49] Liêdo explained in 1983 that he had not driven regularly since at least 1973, although he did drive on Sundays. He preferred walking and taking the bus. Maranhão on November 21, 1982, 108.

Ariano Suassuna and Nilo Pereira, the mayor was able to convince Brazil's military president Emílio Garrastazu Médici to remove the church from the national historical register, thus paving the legal path to its demolition.[50]

In the aftermath, Maranhão repurposed the literal refuse of Recife's urban destruction program. From the city's scrap iron dealers (colloquially called "old irons" or *ferros velhos*) he purchased the remnants of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century balustrades, gas lamp posts, train rails, and fasters, which he welded into tall geometric sculptures (figs. 11 and 12). Strangely, Liêdo made no reference to stint as a sculptor in his oral history preferring, instead, to describe himself as a collector and supporter of local artists rather than being an artist himself. In his only autobiographical work, *Memories of a Sacanologist* (*Memórias de um sacanólogo*), published in 2011, his time as an "accidental" artist (*artista por acaso*) covers a mere page and a half while accounts of his libidinous exploits as a young man assume center stage.[51]

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[50] Luís Domingues Nascimento, "Intervenções urbanas na cidade do Recife: uma igreja no meio do caminho de uma avenida," *Revista Brasileira de História & Ciências Sociais* 7, no. 13 (2015): 138-160.

[51] Maranhão, *Memórias de um sacanólogo* (Olinda: Editora Coqueiro, 2011). The term "sacana" refers to something "libidinous, asexual, abnormal, pederast, that practices incestuous or similar acts." Cabral, 690.

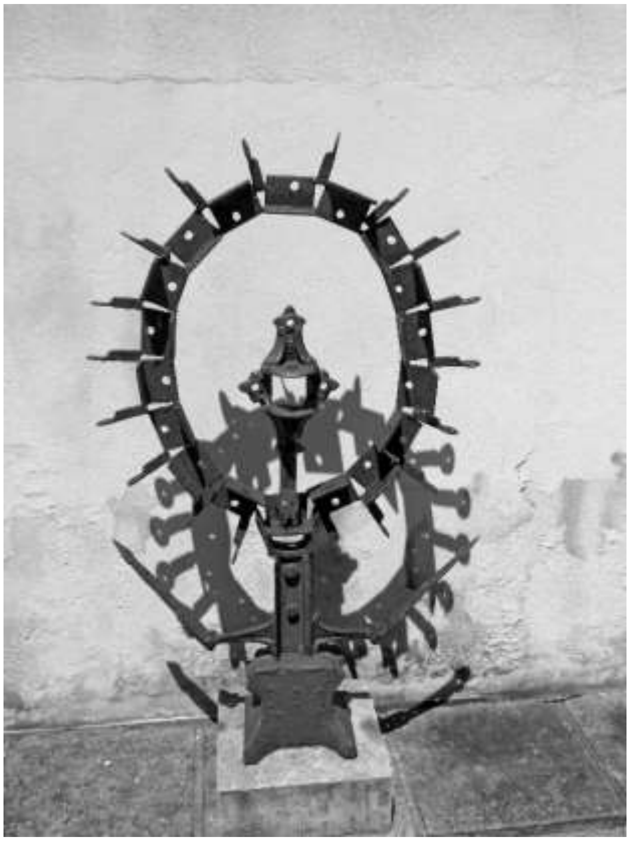

Figure 11: Liêdo's 1978 recycled iron sculpture "Monstrance: Homage to Dom Hélder Câmara" (Ostensório: Homenagem a Dom Hélder Câmara). Photograph by the author. Olinda, Pernambuco.

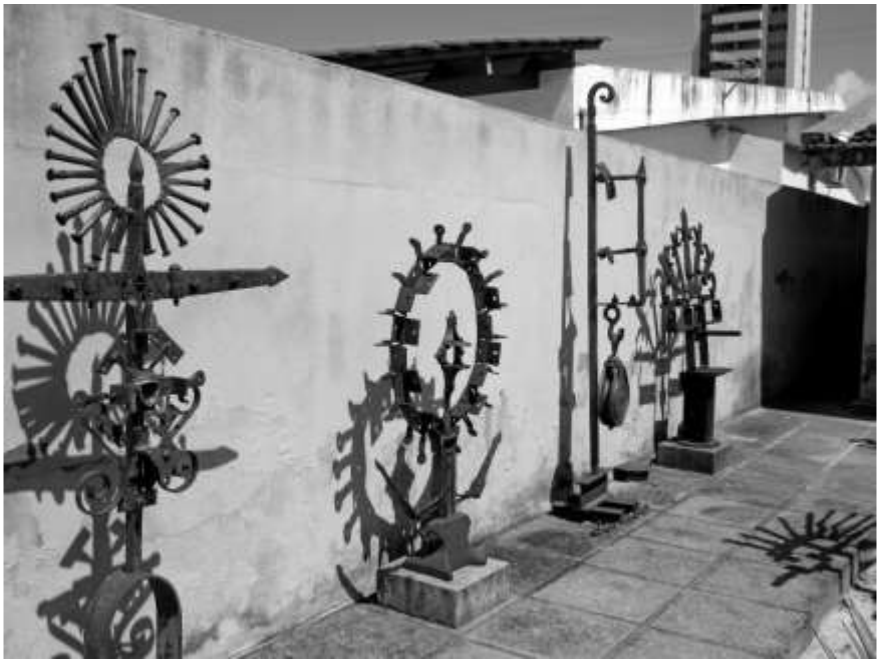

Figure 12: Ensemble of iron sculptures at the home of the late Liêdo Maranhão. May 2018. Photograph by the author. Olinda, Pernambuco.

Yet his iron sculptures, fashioned in 1978 and 1979, won prizes with one favorable commentator interpreting them "as a reaction to the sickness of fashion that inflates the art consumer market among us."[52] His "altars, monstrances, symmetrical structures proposing a type of order or arrangement," wrote artist João Câmara, suggested "eternal systems of relations opposed to death by fragmentation, by dispersion in our Brazilian emptiness."[53] While the detail is never mentioned in his *Memórias*, the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation actually exhibited eight of Liêdo's works in an exhibition entitled “Iron is Never Old” (*Ferro nunca é velho*). Even more strikingly, one of his sculptures was commissioned by the city and unveiled in São José to commemorate Pope John Paul II’s 1980 visit to Recife. Ironically, Liêdo’s name was never included on the inscription and the municipality even briefly “lost” the work in the early 1990s.[54]

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[52] "Liêdo: de Paris ao ferro velho construindo arte." *Jornal Universitário* (May/June 1977).

[53] João Câmara Filho, "Memória de ferro," in *Ferro nunca é velho*. Exhibition catalogue. Museu do Homem do Nordeste, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco. 1979.

1.4 Liêdo and Benjamin: Mutual Illuminations

While Liêdo was avid for stories and experiences, he was also a collector of ephemera like Walter Benjamin with his special predilection for the small, mundane, and overlooked. Besides amassing several thousand specimens of cordel, Liêdo also accumulated sugarcane rum bottles, bibles, erudite and working-class erotica, cookbooks, skilled workers’ manuals, radio and television guides, film posters, and even a manual printing press used to produce booklets of cordel; in addition, his archive includes 2000 newspaper clippings. Finally, but by no means less importantly, Maranhão visually registered the social and commercial world of market actors in photographs. Toting a compact, split-frame camera during his daily expeditions to São José, he snapped approximately 500 black and white images.

In his oral history, Liêdo did not disclose the immensity of his project. Amounting to 10,000 pages, Liêdo’s diaries alone dwarfed the surviving archives of Benjamin whose tragically incomplete project on the Parisian arcades survives in only in the form of 426 sheafs of surviving notes (convolutes) on which Benjamin he sketched out his vision.[55] Yet they did share important similarities with both men driven not by a sense of "order, efficiency, completeness, and objectivity" but the capricious passions of the collector and figurative rag-picker (*chiffonier*).[56]

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[54] Maranhão, *Memórias*, 163.

For both Liêdo and Benjamin, research seems to have been "an end in itself."[57] Most famously, what became *The Passagenwerk* (or *The Arcades Project*) underwent several permutations over the thirteen years between 1927 and 1940. It stalled and shifted course in a series of fits and starts, which paralleled "highs" and "crashes" in the personal life of its chief architect and compiler.[58] Like Benjamin, Liêdo seem never to have had a cohesive and stable vision for his project that developed over a 15-year period. Living in a less harsh and apocalyptic world, Liêdo Maranhão also had in the end generated a great deal of published material based on his search. He wrote small monographs on cordel, a kind of physiology (a "paperbound documentar[y] of urban types") of the São José marketplace (1977), and a compilation of plebeian attitudes and remarks about sex (1980).[59]

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[55] The translators of *The Arcades Project*, published by Harvard University Press, present a useful discussion of Benjamin's documentation practices. See Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge: Belknap/Harvard University Press, 1999), 958.

[56] Ursula Marx, Gudrun Schwarz, and Michael Schwarz, eds., *Walter Benjamin's Archive: Images, Texts, Signs* (London: Verso, 2007) and Irving Wohlfarth, "Et Cetera? The Historian as Chiffonnier," *New German Critique* 39 (1986): 142-168.

[57] Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, *Walter Benjamin: A Critical Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 288.

[58] Eiland and Jennings, 495.

[59] Eiland and Jennings, 614.

A fascination with the darker and unrefined aspects of urban life was shared by both a mischievous son of São José and exiled German intellectual. The most recent and comprehensively researched study of Benjamin shows how the peripatetic Benjamin's "daytime flanerie" entailed visiting circuses (like the Cirque d'Hiver) and seeking out "undiscovered *bals musettes* and bawdy dancehalls."[60] Describing his wandering as "floating like shit in a flood," Liêdo, also shared Benjamin's fascination for circuses with many photographs documenting the Circo Mambembe frequented by the popular classes.[61] Like a "blind man," he sought out the "places of the povo" thinking not about research per se but the "delicious" experiences that awaited him. Although he did not consume alcohol, Liêdo especially enjoyed finding working-class bars. One of his favorites featured signature beverages with vulgar names such as "dick in the ass" (*pau no cú*).[62]

Liêdo and Benjamin were also avid collectors of lewd writing. Benjamin was granted access to the infamous "Enfer" (literally "Hell") of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, a restricted collection of pornography.[63] If Maranhão's collection of learned erotica was modest, his personal library of smutty works for popular consumption was substantially larger. This included works of "naughty" cordel in addition to pornographic mimicomics – colloquially known as “catechisms” – that were illustrated by Carlos Zéfiro between the 1950s and early eighties.[64] Liêdo also acquired a 1950s-era album containing nude photographs of sex workers in central Recife’s pensions. He held that each of these representations of lewdness (*safadeza*) were themselves forms of popular culture, a characterization that Benjamin would have agreed with.[65]

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[60] Eiland and Jennings, 252.

[61] Mambembe is an adjective that describes "someone or something of little value or without utility." Cabral, 518.

[62] Maranhão on November 18, 1982, 89-90.

[63] Eiland and Jennings, 501-2.

1.5 Dealings in the City of Letters

It is also important to differentiate between Liêdo Maranhão’s and Walter Benjamin’s respective dealings with two kinds of cities: the establishment “city of letters” and the underworld. Benjamin’s biographers argue that he engaged in a “persistent courtship” of Paris as a remedy for his alienation among Parisian intellectuals. That is, he spent much time attending high-profile lectures and other events frequented by the “cultured Parisian aristocracy.”[66] Yet Liêdo fervidly rejected the world of establishment culture, including the very institution where he deposited his oral history. Much like he did in newspaper columns and magazine vignettes, he presented himself as an intellectual outsider who was comfortable being ignored by the erudite world of culture. He did not miss the opportunity to censure the “wild egoism” of his well-placed peers, who he contended were given to superficial charm and a general "fussiness."[67]

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[64] There is some debate regarding whether the Rio de Janeiro public functionary Alcides Aguiar Caminha (1921-1992) was the “true” Carlos Zéfiro. See Conçalo Júnior, *O deus da sacanagem: a vida e o tempo de Carlos Zéfiro* (São Paulo: Editora Noir, 2018).
[65] Maranhão on November 21, 1982, 99.
[66] Eiland and Jennings, 261.

One detects a bold hue of rebelliousness in Liêdo's self-portrait. He was seemingly destined to play the role of Saint George to Recife's many headed hydrae of culture. The confused assortment of institutes, initiatives, centers, and houses revealed that popular culture served the well-born for their own selfish ends rather than supporting producers, who faced a desperate situation of precarity day in and day out. Gilberto Freyre was the target of much criticism, as he was the self-declared father and kingmaker of the city's intellectual scene. Liêdo shared in his interview that he had been indirectly rebuffed by Freyre. When he heard that the Master of Apipucos enjoyed photographs, he arranged for a copy of his book about the São José market to be sent to him. Freyre never acknowledged receipt of the small gift nor did he publicly comment on the work.[68] Although Liêdo emphatically denied seeking Freyre's approval, the presumed snub hurt him. He liked to complain that it was "sad grazing outside the herd" (*é triste pastar fora do rebanho*).[69]

A shared situation of alienation weighs on Benjamin's and Liêdo's projects quite differently. Benjamin was a peripatetic German Jewish exile who contemplated a city that was not his own. Lacking natural affinities of language, origins, and varying kinds of group identification, he was not unlike Georg Simmel's archetype of the "stranger," an actor who achieved an unusual "proportion of nearness and remoteness."[70] Liêdo Maranhão, of course, was a native son of the city that he explored as a middle-aged man. He reiterated the depth of knowledge he had accrued when he asserted himself as a "guy who lives for Recife. I know everything. I know where one shits, where there is a smelly alleyway. I know all of this."[71]

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[67] Maranhão on October 8, 1982, 77 and November 18, 1982, 88.

[68] Maranhão on November 21, 1982, 97.

[69] Liêdo's son Roman shared his late father's saying with me in September 2018. In a 1990 article in *Nordeste Econômico*, Liêdo wrote that it was "expensive grazing outside the herd." See "Custa caro pastar fora do rebanho," *Nordeste Econômico* 21 (1990): 32.

In both cases, arcane and even interstitial parts of Paris and Recife served as the staging grounds for their respective projects. Scholars at home in the field of Benjaminian studies – in addition to those working further afield – have shown how Benjamin approached the Parisian arcades as a kind of ecosystem or, as the intellectual like to describe it, a fantastical "world in miniature." A recent philosophical portrait of Benjamin posits that the German attempted to glean a "singular construction of history out of the meaning material of the arcades."[72] Liêdo's relationship with the market and square would seem to be analogous. While his 1982-1983 testimony implies a move away from the iconic spaces – which Liêdo excused given a painful uptick in "misery" (*miséria*) among the povão – his remarkably broad range of activities intersect at a small set of coordinates in the heart of Recife.[73] He no doubt understood that the social and political importance of the marketplace exceeded its geographic size, as the bodies, goods, and services exchanged there linked the rural interior of Pernambuco to the Southeast of Brazil, and even the United States and Europe.[74] Thus, we might imagine that Liêdo saw in São José a cipher for understanding not only the popular classes of Recife but also the Northeast and Brazilian society writ large.

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[70] Georg Simmel, "The Stranger," in *On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald Levine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 143-50.
[71] Maranhão on November 18, 1982, 88.
[72] Eli Friedlander, *Walter Benjamin: A Philosophical Portrait* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 5.

There are pronounced differences in how Benjamin and Liêdo interacted with their respective monadic worlds. Both could be approached as figurative "rag-pickers," one of the most famous of Benjaminian archetypes. These figures are tasked with collecting the refuse of history. But more importantly, they serve as powerfully redemptive figures in that their "remembering [of] leftover histories has the capacity to unlock the revolutionary potential stored in wasted historical events."[75] Their metaphorical rags are, of course, distinct. Walter Benjamin was the expression of a bookish and, in many ways, establishment, erudition. It therefore comes as no surprise that his rags were plucked from the published writings of Baudelaire, Balzac, and Proust, not to mention incalculable specimens of little-known ephemera. Thus, one might argue that Benjamin "saw" through the eyes of famed (or infamous) litterateurs. Apart from literatura de cordel, Liêdo Maranhão's rags did not originate in the halls of learned society. Ranging from scrap iron and glass bottles to postcards, his *chiffons* were quite literally gathered on the street. This is not to say that Benjamin's "daytime flânerie" was inconsequential to his research process; rather, the constituent blocks of his blueprint of the nineteenth century were scouted from *within* the temples of elite culture. In the case of Liêdo, an emphasis on the embodied and *vivenciado* (experienced or lived) was such that many of his "monads" emerged out of stable interpersonal relationships with a wide array of acquaintances and friends, who were also his informants.

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[73] Maranhão on February 2, 1983, 123.

[74] The North American scholar of literatura de cordel Mark J. Curran was a regular visitor as was Candace Slater and the Sorbonne professor Raymond Cantel. See Curran, *A literatura de cordel* (Recife: Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, 1973), Slater, *Stories on a String: The Brazilian Literatura de Cordel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), and Cantel, *Temas da atualidade na literatura de cordel: ensaios* (São Paulo: Universidade de São Paulo, 1972).

[75] Frederik Le Roy, "Ragpickers and Leftover Performances: Walter Benjamin's Philosophy of the Historical Leftover," in *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts* 22, no. 8 (2017).

The manners in which both figures transformed disparate materials into genuine microworlds are remarkably similar. It is well-known that Benjamin described the "method" of *The Arcades Project* as a form of "literary montage." In a much-cited passage, he assured his readers that he has "nothing to say. Only to show." "I will steal no valuables," he wrote, "nor appropriate any clever turns of phrase. But the rags, the refuse: not in order to take stock of them but to use them – which is the only way of doing them justice."[76] Benjamin famously rejected conventional notions of authorship for a "more marginal, anonymous, and subterranean position" from which he could allow his materials to "speak for themselves."[77] He piloted the architecture and unique storytelling of the unfinished Arcades Project in *One-Way Street* (1928), what has been called an “idiosyncratic exposé on history … deciphered in the most concrete of artifacts and rituals.”[78] Consisting of aphorisms, “thought fragments,” and jokes relating to urban space, the work is best understood as an early experiment in methodology. Hannah Arendt called this process “pearl diving.” The author sinks to the bottom of the ocean to collect crystallized fragments, which he then brings to the “world of the living” as something “rich and strange.”[79]

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[76] Wohlfarth, 145-6.
[77] Wohlfarth, 144-5.

Maranhão’s exercises in “literary montage” were perhaps less influenced by European experiments in non-linearity than the well-established genre of the newspaper “chronicle” (*crônica*). This quintessentially Latin American journalistic genre “dwells on intimate portrayals of city life and idiosyncratic urban practices” and has an especially deep and revered history in Brazilian cities. Practically all the country’s literary giants–ranging from Machado de Assis to Mário de Andrade and Clarice Lispector–imbued the genre with great importance.[80] Literary critic Antônio Cândido (1918-2017) hinted that the success of the crônica derives from its perspective. It does not, he wrote, portend to be an account of someone who "write[s] from the mountaintops but rather the simple ground floor."[81]

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[78] Michael Blum, “Always One More Time: On Walter Benjamin’s “One-Way Street” and “The Storyteller,” *Los Angeles Review of Books* (December 13, 2016).

[79] Hannah Arendt, “Introduction: Walter Benjamin: 1892-1940,” in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 50-1.

[80] “The Chronicle.” In *Oxford Bibliographies Online* in Latin American Studies, https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199766581/obo-9780199766581-0092.xml (accessed 10 Jan. 2021). See also Viviane Mahieux, *Urban Chroniclers in Modern Latin America: The Shared Intimacy of Everyday Life* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012).

As a "chronicler" (*cronista*), Liêdo crafted vignettes of popular types and life among working people more generally. This form of literary portraiture (or caricature) derives from a deep and enduring tradition of popularesque writing in Europe and the Americas. In the Old World, recognizable social types were catalogued in immensely popular books, magazines, and songs. Examples are numerous and varied, but perhaps the most notable examples are *Heads of the People* and *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*.[82] In Victorian London, journalist and social reformer Henry Mayhew (1812-1887) documented the appalling living conditions of working people using his subjects' own words.[83]

In the Americas, *costumbrismo* is the most well-known instance of literary and artistic flanerie. Although it is most closely associated with Mexico, the movement extended throughout Latin America and Spain. Paradigmatic works offer vivid depictions of city dwellers by adopting local dialects and patterns of dress, presumably lending a degree of authenticity to these representations.[84] The landscapes and streetscapes of French painter Jean-Baptiste Debret (1768-1848) constitute a major archive of Brazilian costumbrism. Well into the twentieth century, Pernambucan authors and artists incorporated "popular" voices and physiognomies in artworks, chronicles, and novels. Eustorgio Wanderley's (1882-1962) work *Tipos populares do Recife Antigo* (Popular Types of Old Recife, 1953-4) undoubtedly was an important influence on Liêdo. He owned both volumes of the work.[85]

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[81] Antônio Cândido, "A vida ao rés-do-chão," *Para gostar de ler: crônicas* (São Paulo: Ática, 2003), 89-99.
[82] Mey-Yen Moriuchi, "From "Les types populaires" to "Los tipos populares": Nineteenth-Century Mexican *Costumbrismo*," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 12, no. 1 (2013).
[83] See Mayhew's four-volume work *London Labour and the London Poor*. The fourth volume centers on "Those that will not work, comprising: Prostitutes. Thieves. Swindlers. Beggars."
[84] *Los mexicanos pintados por sí mismos* (1855) is one famous example.

Wanderley's collection was an illustrated account of figures that one might encounter in the streets of turn-of-the-century Recife. Archbishop of Olinda and Recife Dom João Batista Portocarrero Costa (1904-1959) hailed the author's talents of "know[ing] the secrets to be found, the beauty of things, which the eyes of laypersons do not notice." The prelate also commended the "photographic" qualities of the "little chronicles" (*croniquêtas*), which preserved parts of the city that were vanishing by the 1950s.[86] *Tipos populares* captured the richness of public life through multiple sensorial domains. Phenotypes (skin color, clothing, and mannerisms) and sounds (songs and turns of phrase) brought to life those who were recognizable fixtures of the streets. Wanderley also saluted figures in his procession–including physicians, jurists, invalids, washerwomen, occultists, street vendors, and poets–for embodying such virtues as honor, self-sacrifice, good heartedness, and civic duty. The author commended a "great doctor with a black epidermis but a white soul" for tirelessly caring for patients even in the remotest corners of the city (fig. 13).[87] It is significant that the book's coterie of public figures included "people of a high intellectual, social, and moral level" alongside those its author deemed "disqualified, abnormal, worthless, in short, barefoot and tattered."[88] "Authentic" popular types were to be found among all social classes, each in their own place within his inclusive but hierarchical vision.

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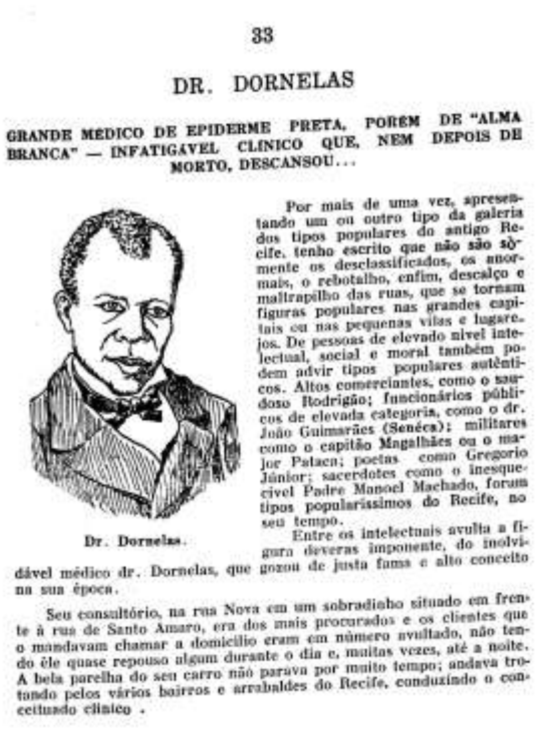
[85] Eustorgio Wanderley, *Tipos populares do Recife Antigo*. 2 vols. Second edition (Recife: Colégio Moderno, 1953).
[86] Wanderley, 7.



33

DR. DORNELAS

GRANDE MEDICO DE EPIDERME PRETA, POREM DE "ALMA BRANCA" — INFATIGÁVEL CLINICO QUE, NEM DEPOIS DE MORTO, DESCANSOU...

Dr. Dornelas.

Por mais de uma vez, apresentando um ou outro tipo da galeria dos tipos populares do antigo Recife, tenho escrito que não são sòmente os desclassificados, os anormais, o rebotalho, enfim, descalço e maltrapilho das ruas, que se tornam figuras populares nas grandes capitais ou nas pequenas vilas e lugarejos. De pessoas de elevado nível intelectual, social e moral também podem advir tipos populares autênticos. Altos comerciantes, como o saudoso Rodrigão; funcionários públicos de elevada categoria, como o dr. João Guimarães (Senéca); militares como o capitão Magalhães ou o major Palaca; poetas como Gregorio Júnior; sacerdotes como o inesquecível Padre Manoel Machado, foram tipos popularíssimos do Recife, no seu tempo.

Entre os intelectuais avulta a figura deveras imponente, do inolvidável médico dr. Dornelas, que gozou de justa fama e alto conceito na sua época.

Seu consultório, na rua Nova em um sobradinho situado em frente à rua de Santo Amaro, era dos mais procurados e os clientes que o mandavam chamar a domicílio eram em número avultado, não tendo êle quase repouso algum durante o dia e, muitas vezes, até a noite. A bela parelha do seu carro não parava por muito tempo; andava trotando pelos vários bairros e arrabaldes do Recife, conduzindo o conceituado clínico.

Figure 13: An illustrated vignette for the "popular type" Dr. Dornelas, a "great physician with black skin." Published in Eustorgio Wanderley, *Tipos populares do Recife Antigo*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Recife: Colégio Moderno, 1953), 155.

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[87] Wanderley, 155-9.

[88] Wanderley, 155.

Liêdo Maranhão began writing newspaper chronicles in the late 1980s, when he was in his late fifties and early sixties. Before this time, he mainly authored op-ed pieces for local periodicals and gave a handful of interviews on his eclectic collecting habits and artistic endeavors. In the mid-1980s, he began writing for *Nordeste Econômico*, a magazine published for functionaries of the Cold War era Superintendency for the Development of the Northeast (Superintendência de Desenvolvimento do Nordeste, SUDENE). *N/E* became a mouthpiece for Liêdo's critiques of politics and society. Although he penned rancorous attacks on government figures, institutions, and leading intellectuals, he also wrote for a regular opinion column that consisted of evocative vignettes of his working-class friends and acquaintances. Liêdo called the column "Retrato lambe-lambe," referring to the old-fashioned technique of portraiture by which the working poor obtained photographs for official documents and keepsakes in public squares (fig. 14).[89]

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[89] For a history of lambe-lambe photography in Brazil as well as a quantitative analysis of portraitists in Feira de Santana, Bahia, see Kalila Catherine Oliveira Gama, "De que povo é a praça? Lambe-lambes, estudios e discursos urbanizadores em Feira de Santanta (1970-1985) (master's thesis, Universidade Estadual de Feira de Santana, 2017). For a journalistic profile of ambulant portraitists in São Paulo, see Boris Kossoy, "O fotógrafo ambulante: a história da fotografia nas praças de São Paulo," *O Estado de São Paulo*, Suplemento Literário (November 24, 1974): 5.

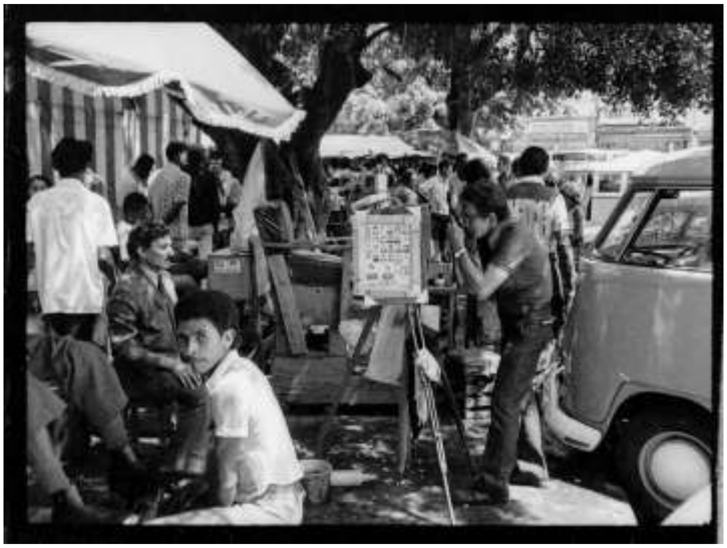
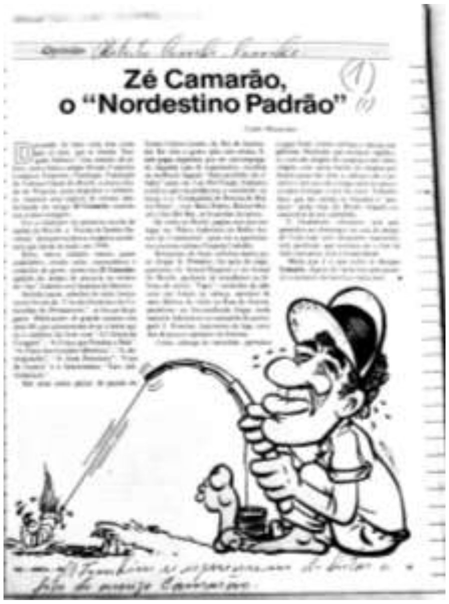


Figure 14: Expedito Lima de Barros, a "lambe-lambe" portraitist who had worked in the square since 1946, taking a photograph of a customer wearing his best outfit. The young man looking at the camera is a shoe shiner. Photographs by Liêdo Maranhão de Souza, 1970s. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco, Nos. 00371 and 00788.

Accompanied by hand-drawn caricatures and Liêdo's own black and white photographs, his "lambe-lambe" portraits were clearly inspired by the work of Eustorgio Wanderley. They paid close attention to subjects' physiognomies, mannerisms, and unique turns of phrase in addition to their virtuous qualities. For example, Maranhão declared one "Zé Camarão" (Joe Shrimp) a "model northeasterner" (*nordestino padrão*). Born in Recife's mangroves, this "black, short, soft-spoken, nearly illiterate, free and festive spirit, and lover of people" lived contentedly and proudly (fig. 15). He enjoyed playing dice, drinking cachaça, and dancing. Camarão undertook a variety of stints as a painter, watchmaker, blind person's aide, gazetteer, factory worker, street vendor, and truck driver. Sporting a simple skullcap beneath a larger hat, he also carried a handkerchief to wipe the sweat off his face as he worked. Liêdo commended Camarão's lifelong qualities of "love, zeal, and honesty."[90] He also dedicated a crônica to a sex worker named Elena, who he displayed as an example of Brazil's "cultural patrimony of indecency" (*nosso patrimônio cultural da safadeza*). Adorned with a medium-sized photo of the full-bodied morena, the piece shared Elena's thoughts on impiety, homosexuality, and the general experience of sex work (fig. 16).[91]



Zé Camarão, o "Nordestino Padrão"

Figure 15: An illustrated vignette for "Joe Shrimp" (Zé Camarão), a "model northeasterner, written by Liêdo Maranhão for *Nordeste Econômico* in April 1985. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco.

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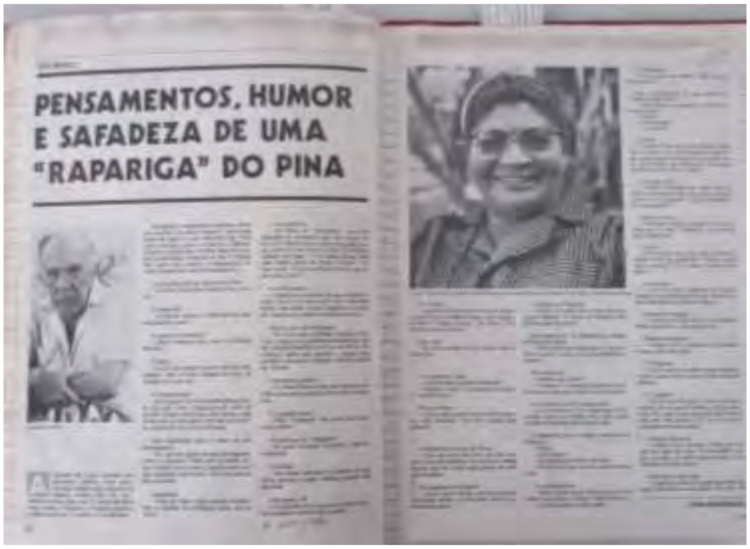
[90] Maranhão, "Zé Camarão, o 'Nordestino Padrão'," *Nordeste Econômico* (April 1985): 47.
[91] Maranhão, "Pensamentos, humor e safadeza de uma "rapariga" do Pina," *Nordeste Econômico* (1985): 32-3.



PENSAMENTOS, HUMOR E SAFADEZA DE UMA "RAPARIGA" DO PINA

Figure 16: Profile of Elena, a Recifense sex worker, published in a 1985 issue of *Nordeste Econômico*. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco.

In the early 1990s, Maranhão ran a new column in *Nordeste Econômico* called "The Beautiful, Cheerful, Naughty, and Creative Talk of the People" (*A fala bonita, alegre, safada e criativa do povão*). Like his lambe-lambe portraits a decade earlier, the "voice of the people" section published conversations with humble Recifenses, many of them entailing salacious remarks about sex. One article featured one of Liêdo's dental clients discussing homosexuality. The woman explained that she "respected" it but threatened to pour a kettle of hot water in her son's ear if he ever engaged in anal sex.[92] He also contributed to the newspaper column "Theater of Life" (*Teatro da vida*). Complemented with other cartoonists' hand drawn caricatures, this section featured poor people's witticisms on a broad array of topics. On the topic of politics, an artist and street vendor nicknamed Cafuringa (the name of a famous soccer player) described politicians as people who use rallies to "promise heaven and the sea," but when the theatrics of election season are over "gives you a banana" instead (referring to the Brazilian equivalent of the middle finger).[93]

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[92] Maranhão, "A fala bonita, alegre, safada e criativa do povão," *Nordeste Econômico* (1993): 31.

If Liêdo's photographic "portraits" are closer to European physiologies or instances of Latin American *costumbrismo*, his "fala bonita" columns are more Benjaminian in their intent and execution. In the former, the author-compiler gleans the character of actors based on their physical appearance, but in the latter the authorial voice is silent as to allow the human actor to "speak" for itself. Liêdo's own kind of "literary montage" also characterizes three of his arguably more interesting works, which strangely have escaped the attention of scholars.[94] Three books – published in 1977, 1982, and 1986 – present Liêdo's raw observations about the life-worlds of denizens of São José. *O Mercado, a Praça e a cultura popular* (The Market, Square, and Popular Culture) is a compelling form of storytelling. Published by city hall to commemorate the São José market's centennial (1975), the book juxtaposes black-and-white photographs of market actors with aphoristic remarks made by (and about) the same figures. In an especially surprising section of the work, Liêdo pairs photos of sex workers with other actors' thoughts about these women.[95] The remainder of the work includes sections for broad kinds of "popular" types such as shoe shiners, street vendors (*camelôs*), and "teachers" (usually magicians and purveyors of folk medicine). Inviting social subordinates to speak in their own words is also common to Liêdo's later books, such as *O homem é sacano, ou o povo, o sexo e a miséria* (Man is Lewd, Or the *Povo*, Sex, and Misery, 1980) and *Marketing dos camelôs* (The Marketing of Street Vendors, 1982).[96]

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[93] Maranhão, "Teatro da Vida: A Fala do Povão," *Folha do Povo* (August 1, 1998). This column is different because it was authored by others, some of whom, like Robson Sampaio, poke fun at Liêdo. While Cafuringa's remarks could be read as the politician giving his supporter something to eat, giving them an obscene gesture is in line with stories of abuse and betrayal by powerful figures.

[94] Though a published author and journalist, two of Liêdo Maranhão's works on classifying literatura de cordel are most cited by scholars interested in the mythical "voice of the povo." These include *Classificação popular da literatura de cordel* (Petrópolis, Rio de Janeiro: Editora Vozes, 1976) and *O folheto popular: sua capa e seus ilustradores* (Recife: Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Editora Massangana, 1981).

The namesake of Liêdo Maranhão's brand of journalistic portraiture captures his strong interest in photography. His 1977 book is based on 112 photographs that he snapped using an Olympus Pen half-frame camera.[97] This collection is a small fraction of the nearly 1,000 still images that Liêdo gathered over the years. It is widely known that photographic reproduction enthralled, even haunted, Walter Benjamin, who was captivated by the "aura" and "magical value" of old photographs.[98] One might even say that that the photograph was a special kind of totemic object for Benjamin, as a small assortment of images (including picture postcards) survive among his personal effects. During his life, he collected images of the arcades, streetscapes, and private interiors.[99]

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[95] Maranhão, *O mercado, sua praça e a cultura popular do Nordeste* (Recife: Prefeitura Municipal do Recife, Secretaria de Educação e Cultura, 1977).
[96] Maranhão, *O povo, o sexo e a miséria, ou o homem é sacana* (Recife: Editora Guararapes, 1980) and *Marketing dos camelôs de remédio, ou o mundo da camelotagem* (Recife: Edições Bagaço, 1996).
[97] With a half-frame camera, one takes twice the number of photos that one would normally take with a roll of film, thereby reducing film costs. The Olympus Pen facilitated a half-frame "boom" in the 1960s and seventies. Olympus America, "Olympus Pen History," accessed January 10, 2021, https://olympusamerica.com/cpg_section/oima_slr_history.asp.
[98] Eiland and Jennings, 363-4. In his much-cited essay of 1936, Benjamin wrestled with the "philosophical questions suggested by the rise and fall of photography." See "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction."

Walter Benjamin's photographs feature an unrelenting focus on the built environment. However, individuals and groups assume a much greater prominence in Liêdo's images. He fitted album-like sheets with dozens of photographs of his longtime acquaintances from frequenting the market. These images were captured as Liêdo accompanied these individuals to their homes, met their spouses and children, and even attended a wedding (figs. 17-18). These same actors gifted personal photos, meaning much of Maranhão's vast personal archive is comprised of intimate keepsakes. If not for the stark differences in clothing and housing, these photographs could pass as Liêdo's relatives. The care with which he annotated and exhibited his photos suggests that Maranhão thought of these individuals not as subjects but part of an extended family.

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[99] Benjamin also cultivated close friendships with renowned photographers such as Germaine Krull (1897-1985), whose 1928 album *Métal* of Parisian industrial scenes catapulted her to public acclaim. Marx, Schwarz, and Schwarz, 267-8.

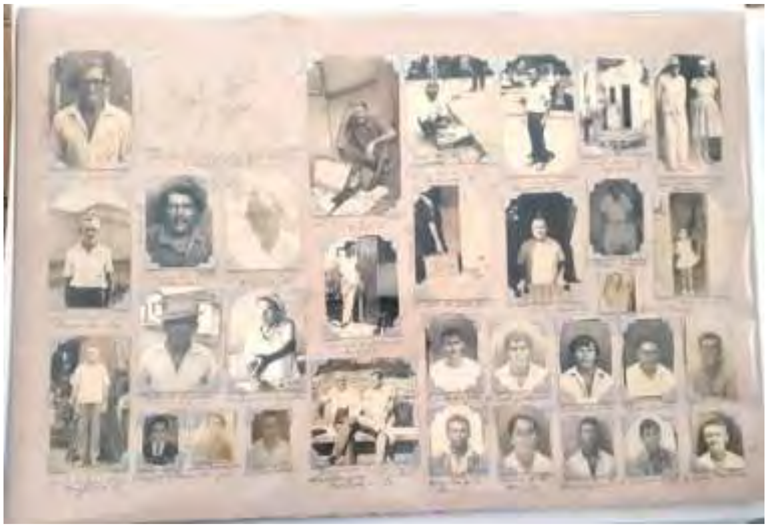

Figure 17: Album sheet featuring photographs of authors of literatura de cordel. Photograph by the author. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco.

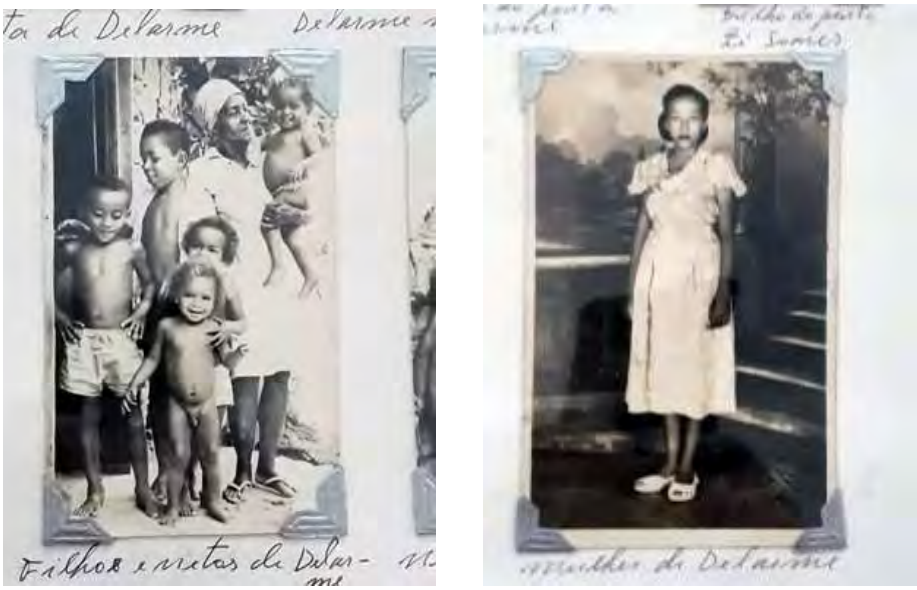
ta de Delarme
Delarme
Filhos e netos de Delar-me
Mulher de Delarme

Figure 18: A photograph of the children and grandchildren and wife of Delarme Monteiro, a popular poet. Undated. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco.

1.2 Conclusion: A Brazilian Flaneur

At the time of his death in 2014, a journalist wrote that this "feverish man," better than anyone else, knew how to "inventory the soul of the Pernambucan people, their pains, their dreams, and above all else, their secrets that are said, perhaps, in confession."[100] In his wanderings around downtown Recife, this amanuensis of the popular engaged in a practice that recalls Benjamin's bookish flâneur. Although there is no suitable English equivalent for the term, Benjamin famously describes him as someone intoxicated by the street, a true "man of the crowd."[101]

Liêdo Maranhão deviates from the Benjaminian flaneur who emerges a disinterested but spellbound connoisseur of public life. Liêdo did not want to be the distant observer of an anonymous crowd, but rather to attain a deep knowledge of the actors that inhabited the streets. At one point during his 1982-1983 interview, he challenged his interviewer to select a page in his diaries and pick a sentence at random because he would be able to identify the subject by name. He "kn[ew] the themes, the preferences, the challenges of every single one."[102]

Quoting a maxim that he attributed to Napoleon Bonaparte, Liêdo declared that he had always lived according to the notion that "He who knows where he is going will not get very far."[103] In the spirit of a lifelong sense of spontaneity and cunning, Liêdo's leisure time (after meeting his personal "quota" of extracting 40 teeth each day) consisted of perambulating from one acquaintance or friend to the next to hear the "news" (*ouvindo as novedades*), which he jotted down in his notebooks.[104]

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[100] "Liêdo Maranhão, o catador de reliquias" (unpublished manuscript), typescript.
[101] Sven Birkerts, "Walter Benjamin, Flâneur: A Flanerie," *The Iowa Review* 13, no. 3 (1983): 166.
[102] Maranhão on October 8, 1982, 69.

Maranhão cannot be understood independently of elite wanderers who came before him. This son of São José is part of a long history of Brazilian litterateurs who observed, wrote about, and longed to be part of public life. The African-descended and homosexual Rio de Janeiro journalist João do Rio (João Paulo Barreto, 1881-1921) was the quintessential Brazilian flaneur. João do Rio's newspaper chronicles (*crônicas*) featured colorful vignettes of popular social "types" and customs, including African-derived religious practices. The inherited art of documenting the "psychology of the street," as he described his project in 1905, required a "vagabond spirit full of unhealthy curiosities" and a "perpetually incomprehensible desire."[105]

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[103] Maranhão on February 2, 1983, 127.

[104] Maranhão on October 6, 1982, 50.

[105] João do Rio, *A alma encantadora das ruas*, ed. Raul Antelo (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2007), 27. He writes, "Para compreender a psicologia da rua não basta goza-lhe as delícias como se goza o calor do sol e o lirismo do luar. É preciso ter espírito vagabundo, cheio de curiosidades malsãs e os nervos com um perpétuo desejo incompreensível, é preciso ser aquele que chamamos flaneur e praticar o mais interssante dos esportes – a arte de flanar. É fatigante o exercício."

2. Recife’s Parisian Central Market: Wit, Grit, and Intimacy

In his 1959 lyrical inventory of Recife, geographer and historian Tadeu Rocha argued that the city’s then 84-year-old São José Public Market “reflected the popular soul” of the city (fig. 19).[1] His suggestive piece captured the variety of human, especially racial, types that congregated around the market. Whites, blacks, mulattos, *caboclos* (mixed-race indigenous persons), and *cabras* (mixture of an indigenous person and mestiço), he showed, mingled in the public square, as did wealthy industrialists and workers, respectable *matronas* (older women) and prostitutes, and the pious and corrupt. Channeling Freyre’s vision of “zones of fraternization” (*zonas de fraternização*), Rocha held that the space of the market was a powerful social equalizer.[2]

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[1] Tadeu Rocha, *Roteiros do Recife* (Recife: Mousinho Artefatos de Papel Limitada, 1959), 47.

[2] Gilberto Freyre, *The Mansions and the Shanties (Sobrados e mocambos)*, trans. Harriet de Onís (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), xxiv. Rocha, 48. The “goat” might also refer to an outlaw (*cangaceiro*), a temperamental woman (*mulher de mau gênio*), or the number six in the “animal game” (*jogo de bicho*); see remarks below. Mauro Mota, *Bichos na fala da gente* (Recife: Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, 1969), 95.

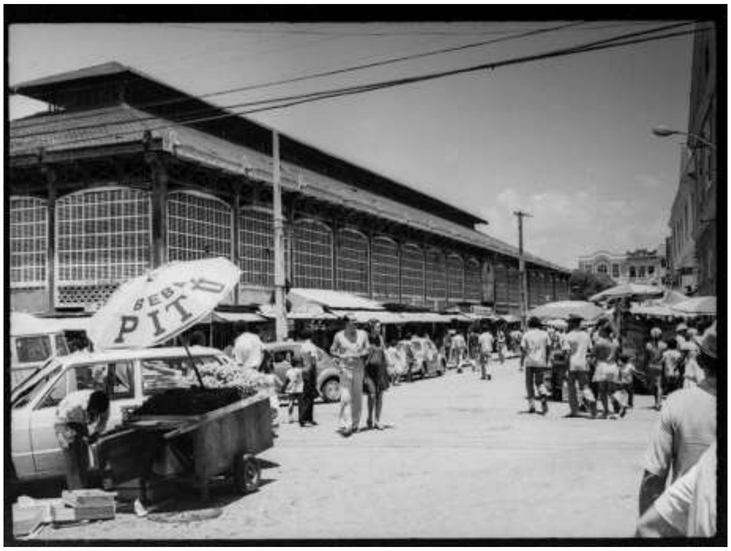

Figure 19: Recife's São José Public Market (Mercado Público de São José).Photograph by Liêdo Maranhão de Souza. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco.

In the 1970s, the São José Public Market was a major center for the feeding and provisioning of the city. The 38,000 square foot structure – Recife's largest public market and what is claimed to be Brazil's first prefabricated iron building – is an artifact of accelerated regional development in the mid to late nineteenth century. Like the central train station (Estação Central) located 2,000 meters to the west, inaugurated in 1885, and the Santa Isabel Theater to the northwest, the São José Market is a tropical facsimile of neoclassical French architecture (figs. 20 and 21). It was designed by architect J. Louis Lieuthier and engineer Louis Léger Vauthier and shares defining characteristics of the Marché Grenelle in Paris (fig. 22). Though based on a French model, its architects understood the structure needed to withstand the tropical sun. Unlike the metal roofs of its Parisian counterparts, the market is covered in clay tiles. Moreover, the exterior walls mainly consist of ventilation slats rather than glass panes. The main entrance, facing west towards the Dom Vital Square, is flanked by two single-story structures that served as administrative offices. An arched, slightly taller central spine joins two identical pavilions, making the market larger than its French inspiration.[3]

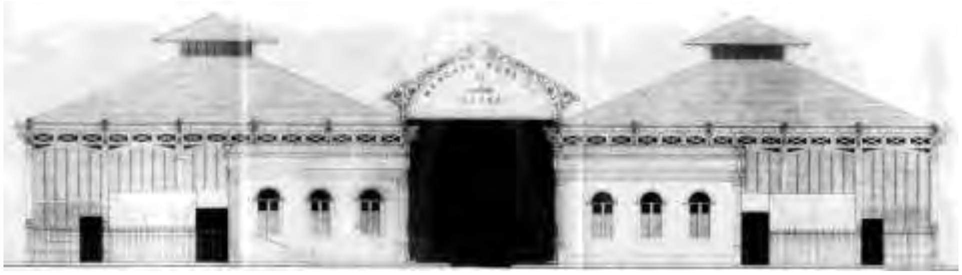

Figure 20: Northwest façade of the São José Public Market. Architectural rendering published in Geraldo Gomes, *O Mercado de São José* (Recife: Prefeitura Municipal do Recife, 1985).

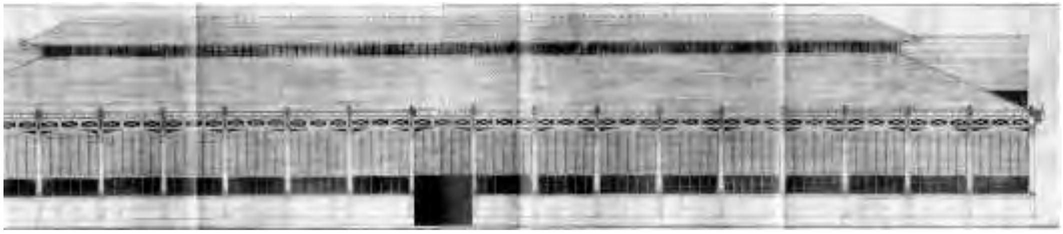

Figure 21: Southwest and northeast façades of the São José Public Market. Architectural rendering published in Geraldo Gomes, *O Mercado de São José* (Recife: Prefeitura Municipal do Recife, 1985).

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[3] Prefeitura stats: http://www2.recife.pe.gov.br/servico/mercado-de-sao-jose (accessed August 31, 2019). The construction of covered markets in Brazil only occurred after the latter part of the nineteenth century. Before this time, public markets were open air fairs. Many, of course, were adaptations of French models such as the Marché Les Halles Central (1855). See Estácio, *Mercados do Brasil: Norte a Sul* pp. 10-12. The Mercado de São José received the title of the "world's best market" in 1911 and became a protected piece of historic patrimony in 1973. See *Mercados do Brasil*, 59.

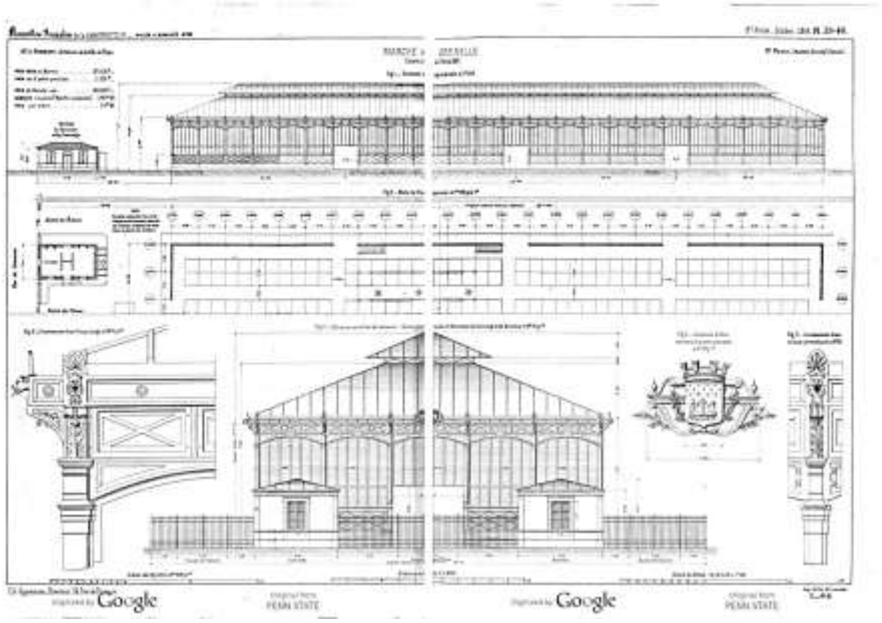

Figure 22: Architectural rendering of the Marché Grenelle, designed by A. Normand. Published in *Nouvelles Annales de la Construction* (October 1869).

In the previous chapter, we saw how Liêdo Maranhão deviated from the ideal type of the flaneur defined by Walter Benjamin. After discussing the imprecision of social science terminology, the first part of this chapter allows us to hear the voices that Liêdo captured in his diaries during daily trips to the market. During the first decade of Maranhão's project (1970-1980), this literal piece of Paris transposed to Recife found itself in the lurch of unprecedented urban growth.[4] From 1960 to 1970, Recife nearly doubled in size. This case of "macrocephalia" was fueled by a constant stream of migrants who arrived from the rural interior and elsewhere in the Northeast. In 1977, there were nearly a million residents in the greater Metropolitan Region of Recife who had migrated from elsewhere in the Northeast, 70% of whom came from the state's impoverished rural interior who were stereotyped by city dwellers as *matutos* (country bumpkins).[5]

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[4] The market structure was preassembled in France and sent to Brazil for construction.

Fearing the disappearance of a social ecosystem he knew so well, Liêdo Maranhão worked with a special urgency to collect the stories of market people. He recorded close to 15 years' worth (1971-1986) of material from garbage men, boxers, illegal lottery operators, magicians, mendicants, photographers, police officers, puppeteers, sex workers, and shoe shiners. Never given to dry and impersonal observations, Liêdo's diary brimmed with the acerbic wit, dreams, gossip, boasting, disagreements, celebrations, and misfortunes of the individuals he came to know so well. This wealth of observations sheds crucial light on their opinions of each other, social superiors, and even the world of authorities and politicians. Together, they allow us to better understand how they experienced the era of military rule from 1964 to 1985 as well as the struggles to democratize the country in the late 1970s and early eighties. Although national political watersheds did not carry the same meanings for the working poor as they did for organized workers or the middle classes, these events were part of the ebb and flow of daily life in the market and square.

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[5] Letter from Francis M. Foland to Richard H. Nolte, November 4, 1967, reel 43, page 5, Latin American Pamphlet Collection, Robert J. Alexander Papers, Arquivo Edgard Leuenroth, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas, Brazil.

While Liêdo's journals occupy a place of prominence, the chapter also draws on popular and elite visions of the marketplace. Encompassing the writings of an Argentine professor and flaneur, the poor author of chapbook poetry (*literatura de cordel*), a Dominican friar, and upper-class Recifenses, it provides a unique portrait of those who hustled for survival in the São José market and the adjacent square. The chapter will suggest the range of disparate relationships negotiated among its denizens. In this commercial node, actors traded in products, cultural goods, and services, including sex, in a world where loyalty, sensuality, and affect as crucial tools of survival for the poor. Thus, we look more closely at the interpersonal ties and exchanges that constitute what has been described as an "ambiguous" economy.[6] Certain configurations of interpersonal relationships are all too easily pigeonholed as sex work or concubinage. For this reason, I decline to adjudicate which practices constitute what, and instead invoke the truism that governed the world of the poor: what truly matters is "getting by."[7]

2.1 Approximating a World in Miniature: Clarifying Chronology and Terminology

Writing about the life-worlds of popular actors forces us to revisit thorny issues of periodization that invariably follow from elite middle- and upper-class experience.

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[6] Rebhun, *The Heart is Unknown Country: Love in the Changing Economy of Northeast Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University Press).

[7] John M. Chernoff, *Hustling is Not Stealing: Stories of an African Bar Girl* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 33.

The first part of the eight-year period considered here roughly corresponds with Brazil's so-called "lead years" (1968-1974), when the military regime committed some of its gravest human rights abuses while overseeing a period of sustained national economic growth. One might even be tempted argue that the violent arrests and beatings of street vendors and sex workers by policemen suggests a parallel "dirty war" being waged on occupants of the São José market and square.

Nevertheless, looking at greater stretches of time reveals that violence directed at an urban underclass is by no means unique to Brazil's 21-year dictatorship. To be sure, beatings, jailing, intimidation, and in some instances, murder, occurred with surprising regularity even when ostensibly progressive politicians were at the helm of state and local government. The residents of the market, it is clear, did not perceive politics and social crises in the same ways as the middle class much less invoke them in equivalent terms. It is revealing that street vendors and authors of cordel typically do not speak of a distant and impersonal "democracy" or "dictatorship" but rather of the "best time for cordel" or the "worst mayor for street vendors."[8] Focusing on the prosaic, this chapter cautions against deploying top-down and class-centric chronologies and terminologies, which often obscure more than they clarify.[9]

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[8] Antônio Farias or Augusto Lucena were two of the "worst mayors for cordel" and the "best time for cordel" is usually associated with Getúlio Vargas or his proxy in Pernambuco, Agamenon Magalhães.

[9] See my comments in Gray F. Kidd, "Review of Street Democracy: Vendors, Violence, and Public Space in Late Twentieth-Century Mexico," *The Latin Americanist* 63, no. 2 (2019): 258-9. My larger point is not that the

Before entering our world in miniature in São José (fig. 2.5), it is important to touch on the limits of the social science terminology used for what is called an "informal" economy marked by underemployment. In societies a substantial autonomous sector where poor people hustling on their own account (*conta própria*), attempts to systematize a confounding array of specialized and unspecialized ways of making money can be challenging. Even attempts to reconcile vernacular labels for peddlers, hawkers, hucksters, and vendors for clarity find that they translate poorly into demographic classificatory schemes. Even seeking English-language equivalencies for the multitude of localized terminologies for autonomous or subemployment is nearly impossible.[10] Thus, this sketch of São José's public market and adjacent square is a test case in approximation.

Most of the area's commercial actors can be classified as street vendors (*ambulantes* or *vendedores ambulantes*). Yet the term is misleading because ambulantes are not necessarily itinerant. Some maintain small, relatively permanent booths and stands. Yet they appear more mobile when compared with retailers (*lojistas* or *comerciantes*), who

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majority was in any way "disaffected," but rather that it falls to the historian to understand how political crises are refracted differently through distinctions of class, occupation, region, and so on.

[10] In 1979, approximately 37% of the workforce in the Northeast was sub- or underemployed. In 1982, the RMR's unemployment rate sat at 8.74%. Guerra, 40-1. Yaponira Machado Barbachan Guerra, *O espaço dos sem espaço: estudo de caso de representações sociais de migrantes de classes subalternas no Recife* (Recife: Editora Massangana, 1993), 40-1. Citing Fundação Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (FIBGE), *Pesquisa mensal de emprego* (November 1981).

usually maintain fixed shops.[11] Brazilian street vendors are informally known as *camelôs*, a French loan word for purveyors of low-quality goods who, like the English language huckster, often sell their wares using aggressive or showy tactics. The ninth edition of police investigator Felisberto da Silva's *Manual prático (social, médico e policial*) defined these figure as "masters in the art of deception" who sold a different product each day.[12] Moreover, there were also more specialized camelôs—including propagandists or advertisers of counterfeit or improvised medications (*propagandistas*)—who are referred to sarcastically as the "professors" (*professores*).

With a few notable exceptions, those who traffic in the world of chapbook poetry are also ambulantes from a technical standpoint. Some men and women are literally peripatetic in that they travel to markets and fairs to sell their booklets in rural Pernambuco and throughout Northeast Brazil. Yet distinctions are to be made depending on one's role in writing, designing, printing, and selling works of cordel, sometimes in multiple areas. For instance, authors are generally known as "poets" (*poetas*) or "makers of booklets" (*folheteiros*), both terms being used interchangeably. Some authors may become editors and printers (*editores*), who may or may not produce their own works. Still others, such as designers and engravers of frontispieces, could take on more limited roles in the production of a booklet.[13]

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[11] "Ambulantes disputam com as lojas na Rua do Livramento," *Diário de Pernambuco* (April 13, 1978).

[12] Felisberto da Silva, *Manual Prático (Social, Médico a Policial)*, 9th edition (São Paulo: Editora Preludio, 1967), s/p. Handwritten transcription in Livro 1, fl. 2.

The lived experience of making a living in the market or among many of those who frequent it underlines the importance of being open to imprecision and porosity. Not only do protagonists speak about work in ways that are not readily mapped into formal occupational classifications, but this is a world in which individuals drifts across and between the abovementioned categories. As we will see, one of these porous distinctions, borne out of necessity, is to be found between selling popular poetry pamphlets (cordel) and those engaged in *camelotagem*. A peddler memorably nicknamed Steel Throat (Garganta de Aço), for example, had once been active in cordel but had switched when found that telepathy was more lucrative.[14] Yet the appeal of cordel remained, none-the-less, as one folheteiro explained, because this form of popular poetry "feel and interpret popular thought, analyze social and scientific happenings, criticize the abuse of power, [and] condemn vices."[15]

2.2 "Money and Politics": Predation in the Market

In the mid to late 1970s, the popular poet José Soares published a humorous cordel laying out the social and commercial geography of São José public market. Declaring himself a "poet-journalist," the eight-page work was unequivocally critical leaving the reader with the impression that those who worked in and around the market were masters in the business of deceit and trickery (*enganamento*).[16] There were peddlers who touted miracle cures for age and baldness, chemically "ripened" bananas, imitation mackerel, double-headed nails, and "cheese" made from potatoes. If one were to step through the market's northeastern entrance, they would encounter shoe shiners, musicians, and evangelical preachers gathered in the contiguous Dom Vital Square (fig. 22). Hemmed in by the large Renaissance Revival Penha Basilica to the south and clusters of multistory townhouses to the north and west, the public square was also a staging ground for sex workers. In front of São José's famed Glória movie theater, Soares wrote, one might find as many as 200 "cactus-like" (*gogóia*) women whose exposed bellies he linked to the mating habits of certain Brazilian birds.[17]

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[13] Candace Slater, *Stories on a String: The Brazilian Literatura De Cordel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

[14] Livro 6, fl. 74.

[15] Livro 1, fls. 13-4.

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[16] José Soares, "O que o Mercado de São José tem," FC-623, Biblioteca Central Blanche Knopf, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife, Brazil.

[17] Soares, "O que o Mercado de São José tem." Livro 18, s/p. Entry for May 23, 1979.

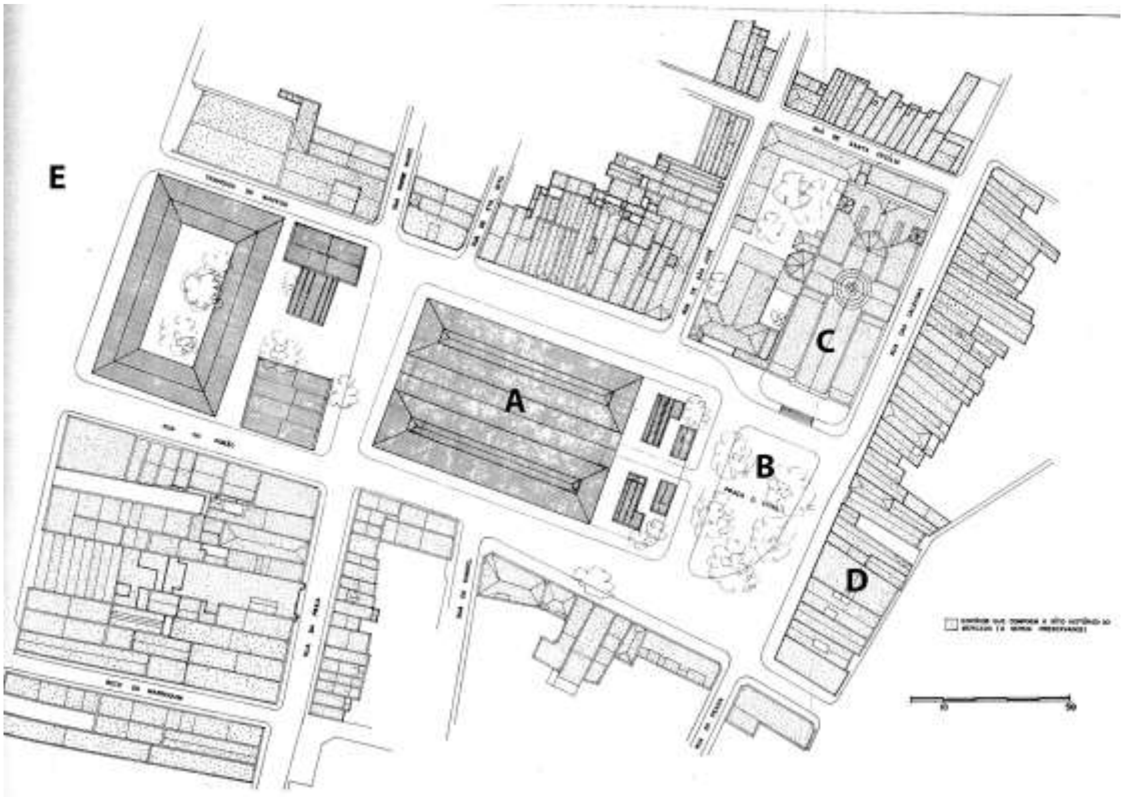

Figure 23: Site plan of the São José Public Market including (A) the market structure, (B) Praça Dom Vital, (C) Penha Basilica, (D) Cinema Gloria), and (E) the direction of the Santa Rita Pier. Map prior to a major restoration of the market slated for 1979. Published in Geraldo Gomes, *O Mercado de São José* (Recife: Secretaria Municipal do Recife, 1985).

Many of the women of the square hailed from distant neighborhoods in Recife or more remote corners of the greater metropolitan region. While some returned to their hometowns on a weekly basis, others cohabitated with clients indefinitely, performing the duties of a temporary girlfriend or housewife.[18] It should be noted that in Brazil, there are no laws prohibiting the exchange of sex for money, or even hindering adults from being professional sex workers although brothels and pimping are explicitly illegal. Moreover, certain municipal authorities stood to profit from sex work in the square by earning a cut from rooms rented by the hour in nearby boardinghouses. In these same cheap rental buildings (*pensões*), such as the China, Arco-Iris (Rainbow), and Gongá, one might also find rooms where operators of market stalls and gambling booths stored their merchandise (fig. 24).[19]

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[18] Livro 15, fls. 79-81.

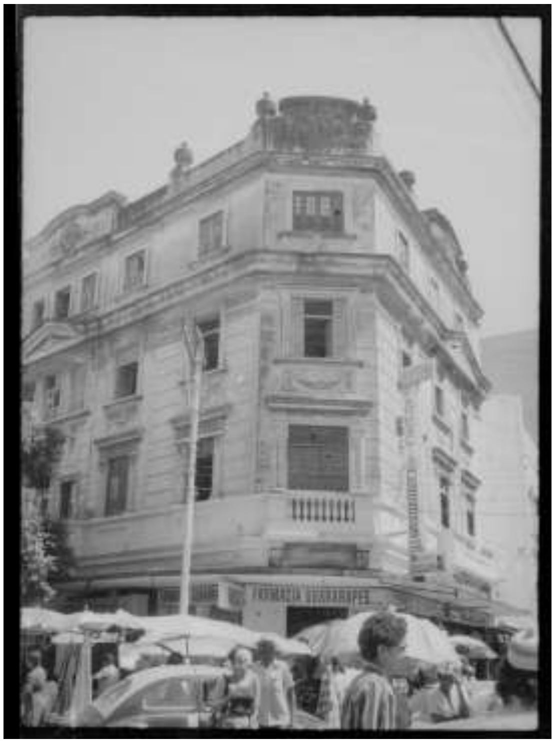

Figure 24: The Farmácia Guararapes. Sex workers took their clients to rooms located on the upper floors. Market vendors also stored their merchandise there. Photograph by Liêdo Maranhão de Souza, 1970s. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco, No. 00869.

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[19] Livro 15, fl. 12. March 15, 1978.

While Soares' account indicated that some of the goods and services on offer were amusing forgeries, other activities in the market were explicitly illegal. For example, he wrote about its many birds and giraffes, a reference to Brazil's illegal lottery-type "animal game" (*jogo de bicho*) that was operated out of makeshift tents in the square.[20] These tents – where one could try their luck over a beer or domestic whiskey – were also a much-anticipated part of the election cycle. Rumor had it that high-profile politicians even financed their operations, both serving as a tool of enrichment and electoral propaganda. As one pamphleteer put it, behind these booths "a lot of money and politics flowed."[21] Soares also referenced the presence of a "money-making machine" and "money seeds" in accounting for what was on sale, hinting that counterfeit currency also propped up this popular economy in miniature.[22]

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[20] For a history of the game and its legal standing, see Amy Chazkel, *Laws of Chance: Clandestine Lottery and the Making of Urban Public Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011) and Roberto DaMatta and Elena Soárez, *Eagles, Donkeys, and Butterflies: An Anthropological Study of Brazil's "Animal Game"* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).

[21] "por traz disso corre muito dinheiro e política." Livro 4, fl. 137. A poet by the name of Leonardo shared that a federal deputy and regional police chief funded two booths in early August 1977. Livro 12, s/p. See entry for May 8, 1977. In late August 1977, the Secretary of Public Security in the northeastern state of Alagoas ordered the arrest of all police officers in the municipality of Colônia de Leopoldina because they were said to be receiving kickbacks from the jogo. See "Polícia é presa por suborno," *Diário de Pernambuco* (August 24, 1977), s/p.

[22] Soares, "O que o Mercado de São José tem." The topic is not picked up by the "poet reporter," but market people claimed that false drivers' licenses were produced in the market. Livro 8, fls. 57-8.

The bustling market square itself was a dissonant soundscape marked by intense competition among various types of vendors and where they fit the hierarchy of cultural prestige. Equipped with highly sought-after but costly sound systems, successful sellers of cordel performed their works for market goers in the hopes that they would purchase their booklets (fig. 25). Yet the jogo tents, not to mention incessant singing and advertising of rival peddlers, easily "distracted" the povo.[23] The showmanship of the camelô, combined with a demand for cheap medications and links with the occult, made camelôs highly sought after by humble consumers. Some market people even circumvented municipal restrictions that authorized sound systems for legitimate "folkloric" practices such as reading poems and singing.

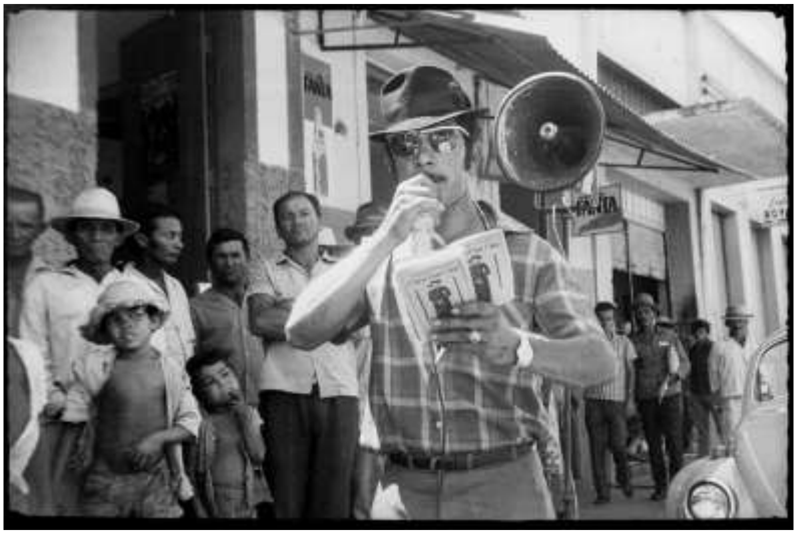

Figure 25: The folheteiro Elísio Guilherme reading a work in Juazeiro, Ceará. Photograph by Liêdo Maranhão de Souza, 1970s. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco, No. 00509.

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[23] Livro 4, fl. 92.

One merchant wondered aloud when Recife's street vendors would "become folklore" (*passar para folklore*), citing the cases of Natal and Salvador, where street vendors were reportedly free to sell their goods because hawking was recognized as a legitimate cultural practice.[24] Nevertheless, shrewd singers and at least one poet-turned-peddler were known to sell the licenses they received from city hall, often for an exorbitant fee, to those who peddled medications and other items through dramatic performances (fig. 26 and 27).[25]

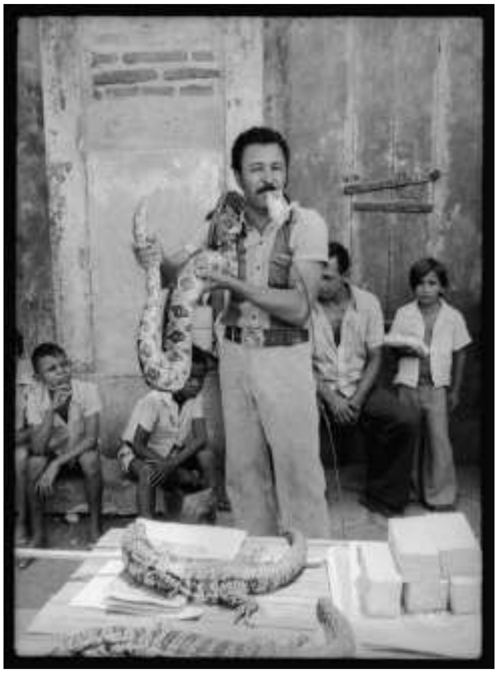

Figure 26: The camelô Arlindo working a crowd with a cobra and salamander. Note the microphone fastened to his vest. Photograph by Liêdo Maranhão de Souza, 1970s. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco, No. 00460.

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[24] Livro 15, June 9, 1978.

[25] Livro 6, fls. 17-8. June 26, 1975.

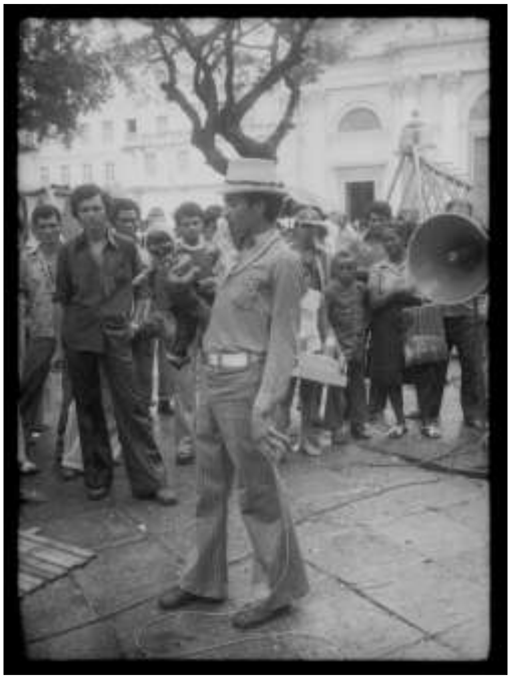

Figure 27: A camelô nicknamed Cearense (someone from the northeastern state of Ceará), a seller of *garrafadas*, infusions of various plants often prepared by healers (*curandeiros*). See Cabral, 437. Photograph by Liêdo Maranhão de Souza, 1970s. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco, No. 00163.

The acquiring, borrowing, and prohibiting of amplification systems generated rancorous interpersonal dynamics.[26] While some market actors secured authorization through the proper channels (if selling these rights to unauthorized persons), countless others outright bribed municipal fiscals or the vicar of the Penha Basilica to use sound equipment or to prevent their rivals from doing so. The routine paying bribes to authorities, an unexceptional practice, went by many different names, not one of which utilized the Portuguese term for "bribe" (*propina*). Instead, market people spoke of individual authorities who "ate a lot of bribes" (*comem muita bola*). This expression refers to being cheated, mocked, or scorned, but also the venom that one gives canines.[27] The giving and taking of bribes were also described in a term from the African-derived spirit possession religion of Candomblé, known in Recife as Xango. Market actors reported having to "pay the ground" (*pagar o chão*), referring to the variable fees religious leaders charge for services depending on one's standing in the congregation.[28]

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[26] See Brodwyn Fischer, introduction to Fischer and Bryan McCann, eds., *Cities from Scratch: Poverty and Informality in Urban Latin America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 1-7. Political scientist Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro calls attention to the "microdespotisms" of daily life as they are expressed through racism, sexism, and elitism. See ibid., "Democracies without Citizenship," *North American Council on Latin America* 30, no. 2 (1996): 17-23.

The actions of some police officers were subjects of investigations. Six officers of the political police, the Department of Public and Social Order (Departamento de Ordem Pública e Social, DOPS), were questioned in connection with the extorting of small vendors. Even though officers posed as fiscals in Recife's markets and fairs, police chief Ricardo Pontual noted that those accused would not be "summarily dismissed."[29] However, many officers of the law, in market people's accounts, were mere time servers that never bothered to arrest anyone (fig. 38). As one man put it, these functionaries preferred to "eat crème balls."[30]

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[27] Tomé Cabral, *Dicionário de têrmos e expressões populares* (Fortaleza, Ceará: Instituto Cultural do Cariri, 1972), 248. In May 1979, Rio de Janeiro's Municipal Association of Street Vendors (Associação Municipal dos Vendedores Ambulantes), which counted nearly 15,000 members, similarly denounced arbitrary measures taken by fiscals and the military police (PM). "Camelôs denunciam fiscais e PMs que arrecadam "bola"," *Tribuna da Imprensa* (May 22, 1979).

[28] See José Renato de Carvalho Baptista, ""No Candomblé nada é de graça …": estudo preliminar sobre a ambiguidade nas trocas no contexto religioso do Candomblé," *Revista de estudos da religião* 1 (2005): 68-94.

[29] "Policiais sob suspeita," *Diário de Pernambuco* (August 1977), s/p.

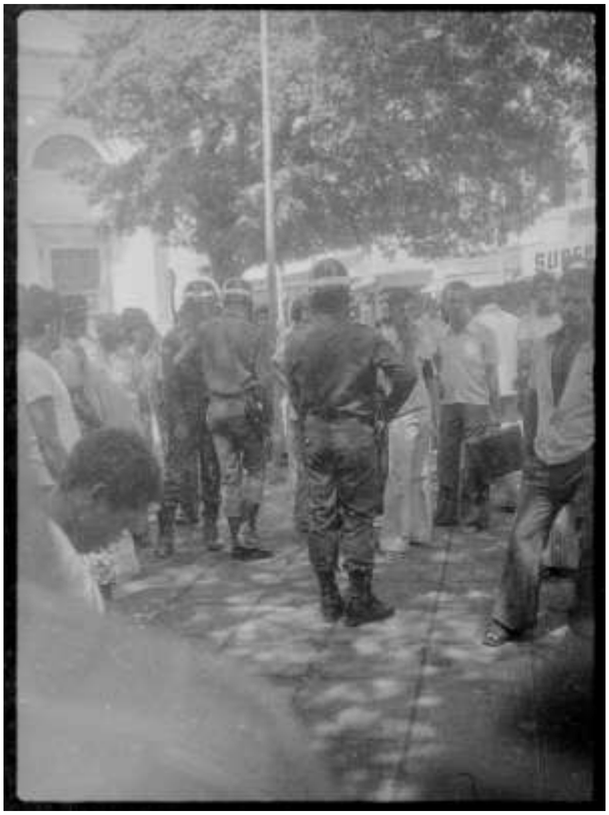

Figure 28: Pernambuco's Military Police (Polícia Militar) in the Praça Dom Vital. Photograph by Liêdo Maranhão de Souza, 1970s. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco, No. 01453.

But from the perspective of artists and vendors, paying small bribes was undoubtedly a minor inconvenience considering encounters with the law could turn violent. Perhaps no one was feared as much as a police officer named Anacleto. This functionary reportedly murdered more than a few "communists" in 1964. Originally from the rural town of Limoeiro, Anacleto's fondness for beating people led to him being promoted to Recife's working-class neighborhood of Casa Amarela.[31] Although one poet held that the commissioner was "really bad, really rigorous," he conceded that no officer of the law was entirely "bad" if one "walk[ed] their line." Amicable relations with the police were advantageous, even necessary.

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[30] Livro 16, fl. 126. August 24, 1978.

The man shared that Anacleto was a childhood friend and soccer companion that frequently "invited" him for beers. However, the "friend" usually paid for drinks and gas. He also revealed that Anacleto had a habit of going "shopping" inside the São José Market, where he drank beer, stole meat cutters, and never bothered to pay for any of the goods that he fancied.[32]

As it turned out, police officers and fiscals were not the only petty despots around the market. Friar Jorge Bertuccelli (1915-1994), the Italian-born vicar of the adjacent Penha Basilica, also demanded bribes from market people. When vendors refused to comply with his demands, he exacted revenge by publicly rallying against the "marginals" of the square, who he alleged interrupted religious services and frightened families away. Frei Jorge even threatened to close the basilica if vendors and sex workers did not vacate the Dom Vital Square.[33]

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[31] Livro 9, fls. 57-8. July 31, 1976.

[32] Livro 16, fls. 103-5. August 12, 1978.

[33] Livro 7, fls. 186-7. In March 1978, the police acted on a tip from the vicar. "Marginais perturbam culto na B. da Penha," *Diário de Pernambuco* (February 28, 1976).

The charges Frei Jorge levied against the square's "marginals" must be situated in a deep and complex history of anti-vendor attitudes. Since the nineteenth century, city hall and the police conducted perennial raids on Recife's ambulantes in which they confiscated goods and made arrests. Historically, the rounding up of not only street vendors but also sex workers and "vagrants" (*vagabundos*) was intended to extirpate social vices and unhealthful practices. In the mid to late 1970s, however, small business owners all but declared war on the city's ambulant peddlers who they claimed stole business. One business owner declared that

> Street vendors are like a bad sickness [that] spreads terrifyingly. If we let them, they will take over all space along the central roads, and we will [have to] close the doors of our stores [because of] their stands and boxes filled with knickknacks (*bugigangas*).[34]

Pressured by a community of small business owners, city hall staged random "blitzes" (*rapas*) when municipal fiscals fined unlicensed vendors and seized their merchandise. The repressive measures were intended to preserve the "good aspects of humanized streets," which some Recifenses complained had become more like disordered "Persian markets."[35]

Foreign visitors shared upper-class Recifenses' sense of repugnance but were also intrigued by the city's peddlers. A North American resident complained that hucksters represented the "debris of humanity" amid a great "welter of beggars, potholes … orange peels … paper scraps, and spittle."[36] In the 1960s, a young British woman with a penchant for overcritical assessments of social and intellectual life was shocked to find that Recife had no large department stores but rather disordered street-specific specializations that befit a "medieval city." While the city may have appeared premodern in its commercial geography, she grumbled that Recifenses did not have the "selling ability of Levantine merchants." Few merchants, except for those in the poorest areas, seemed to care whether they sold their goods.[37]

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[34] "Ambulante: a luta pelo espaço e pela sobrevivência," *Diário de Pernambuco* (July 26, 1979).

[35] "Prefeitura disciplina camelôs," *Diário de Pernambuco* (July 12, 1978) and José Malaquias Negromonte, "Ambulantes nas ruas," *Diário de Pernambuco* (July 28, 1979)..

While some Recifenses of means mourned the loss of their "picturesque city," countless others wrote stinging rebukes of city's halls policy toward street vendors. Published revelations of fiscal and police violence were shocking. Photographers captured violent "scrapes" or "little wagons" (*carroçinhas*), as enforcement blitzes were popularly known. The accounts of streets vendors themselves also drew attention to excesses committed by municipal authorities. Arlindo José Gomes Santana, for instance, recounted being beaten for refusing to pay a "protection fee" (*taxa de proteção*) to an intoxicated fiscal. One month earlier, in February 1981, a female tapioca vendor had been beaten by an intoxicated police officer after she ordered him to pay for his meal.[38]

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[36] Foland to Nolte, November 4, 1967, 2.

[37] Fanny Mitchell letter to Richard H. Nolte, September 10, 1967.

[38] Arlindo noted that some 5,000 *cruzeiros* in merchandise was confiscated during the run-in. "Ambulante diz que fiscais exigem "taxa de proteção"," *Diário de Pernambuco* (March 14, 1981). "Agente embriagado espanca doméstica," *Diário de Pernambuco* (February 4, 1981).

Others tried to pay officials to return confiscated merchandise. In August 1971, a 20-year-old vendor of samba magazines paid an officer of the Military Police (Polícia Militar, PM) a sum of two cruzeiros to return his merchandise. The officer arrested and jailed the young man for bribing a public official.[39] The São Paulo-based news magazine *Veja* presented the 1980 case of an illegal vendor who fatally shot two bystanders while trying to flee the "rapa." Citing the vendor's testimony, the journalist highlighted the desperation behind bribing fiscals.[40] In his political memoirs, Paulo Cavalcanti (1915-1995) recalled a 1969 incident in which a municipal fiscal cruelly hurled an uncredentialed vendor's large bag of plastic dolls over the side of the Boa Vista Bridge. In a desperate attempt to save his wares, the "only patrimony they had for their survival and that of their family," the individual leapt into the river below, drowning as several hundred passersby looked on.[41]

Following another escalation in violence in 1980, several actors took public positions. Recife's legal opposition issued official repudiations of peddlers' forced removal from the city center by Mayor Gustavo Krause (1979-1982). The Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB) criticized those who found the streets ugly due to the "invasions" of ambulantes, arguing that one should protest society's truly revolting aspects: "misery, hunger, and marginalization."[42]

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[39] Ofício no. 15/71-PM/2. August 23, 1971. Polícia Militar de Pernambuco. Estado Maior Geral – 2a Seção. Pasta fl. 4. Termo de Declarações de João Andrade de Araújo. Pasta fl. 2. Pasta de Sindicancias. Secretaria da Segurança Pública de Pernambuco. BTPEAPEJE.XXDPE.PRT.FUN0.1476.

[40] *Veja* (January 9, 1980). "O rapa," *Diário de Pernambuco* (March 19, 1979).

[41] Paulo Cavalcanti, *O caso eu conto como o caso foi: fatos do meu tempo: memórias políticas*, vol. 2, *Fatos do meu tempo* (Recife: Companhia Editora de Pernambuco, 2008), 335.

Despite having enemies in city hall and beyond, camelôs had a not-so-secret admirer in the Manguinho Palace. Archbishop of Olinda and Recife, Dom Hélder Câmara (1909-1999), lauded their resourcefulness, tenacity, and charisma. In one episode of his weekly radio program, "A Look at the City" (*Um olhar sobre a cidade*), he commended their "intelligence, vivacity, spirit, creative imagination, courage, [and] persistence." But the archbishop cautioned that while a camelô was second to none in proving that a "stone is a stick and a stick is a stone," lay leaders should not imitate them in what must be genuine appeals to the povo.[43]

Discourses of marginality also legitimized longstanding rivalries among different professions. In the Dom Vital Square, more than one poet argued that ambulant peddlers were the true "marginals" of São José. Within the cordel community, Frei Jorge's attacks appeared to have validated longstanding prejudices that equated street vendors with boozers, charlatans, and even masters of the dark arts. Poet Zé de Souza, for instance, protested that the square was teeming with "sorcerers" (*catimbozeiros*), a derogatory but imprecise term that usually refers to a broad array of occult practices, including spiritism and the African-derived religions of Candomblé, known in Recife as Xangô, and Umbanda. Self-professed "teachers" in the arts of astrology and healing, many camelôs sold charms and talismans and performed card readings for paying customers. One singer, perhaps an Evangelical, chastised a crowd of onlookers that had gathered around one such camelô. He complained that "today the povo only wants to know about sorcery (*catimbó*). Their feet hurt and they look for a *xangozeiro* (sorcerer). They have a headache and look for a priest (*pai de santo*), but the only one capable of curing is the one above!"[44]

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[42] "PMDB apoia camelô," *Diário de Pernambuco*. See also "Denunciada perseguição a camelôs," *DP* (August 9, 1980).

[43] Typescript of radio program "Um olhar sobre a cidade," January 29, 1975, episode 259, Centro de Documentação Dom Hélder Câmara, Instituto Dom Hélder Câmara, Recife, Brazil. In his program, Dom Hélder often invoked archetypal popular "types" in his discussions of biblical topics and in political and social criticism. For example, in one episode he might invoke the figure of a taxi or bus driver, and in another, a circus performer.

Not all market people, however, echoed elite attitudes about Recife's legions of peddlers. To be sure, some were even quite sympathetic. Poet Bernardino da Silva's pamphlet "The Camelô Problem" (O problema do camelô) acknowledged that there were listless "drug addicts and potheads," but it also argued that many street vendors were honest victims of the city's complex "social problem."[45] Most recognized that petty vending (*camelotagem*) increased exponentially in a situation of high unemployment or "underemployment" (*subemprego*), such as that of the 1970s.

Notwithstanding periodic rivalries between peddlers and producers of cordel, these professions were neither mutually exclusive nor all-encompassing. Several actors disclosed that they had transitioned into full-time street vending after first trafficking in literatura de cordel. Supplying foods, medicines, and devotional trinkets was far more lucrative than the selling of booklets. Thus, we encounter a situation of what Daniella Gandolfo has called "radical fluidity" within the so-called informal sector.[46]

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[44] Livro 6, fls. 72-3.

[45] Bernardino da Silva, "O problema do camelô," FC-717, Biblioteca Central Blanche Knopf, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife, Brazil.

2.3 Elections, Culture, and the Politics of Patronage

On the eve of Brazil's 1978 election, a shoemaker named Otaviano expressed his unhappiness with political hopefuls and the electoral system. "This year," he declared, I'm not voting for anyone if they [candidates] don't fix my street. I'm not voting, and neither is my wife. I don't need anyone. I don't want a job; I have all my documents." Liêdo, in the margins of his diary, explained that poor people needed a "godfather or a bribe" to receive any kind of legal document.[47]

The shoemaker's remarks were a proud rejection of the paternalistic politicking. It is a common joke in Brazil that candidates and elected officials only emerge during election season, when they woo voters with food, music, and drink and promises of employment, official documents, and even money.[48] The São José market and Dom Vital Square were major stops in candidates' seasonal peregrinations (figs. 29 and 30).

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[46] Daniella Gandolfo, "Formless: A Day at Lima's Office of Formalization," *Cultural Anthropology* 28, no. 2 (2013): 293. Cited in Daniel M. Goldstein, *Owners of the Sidewalk: Security and Survival in the Informal City* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 21.
[47] Livro 16, fl. 175.
[48] For an influential study of politics and campaigns through a lens of performance and ritual, see Irlys Barreira, *Chuvas de papéis: ritos e símbolos de campanhas eleitorais no Brasil* (São Paulo: Relume Dumará, 1998).

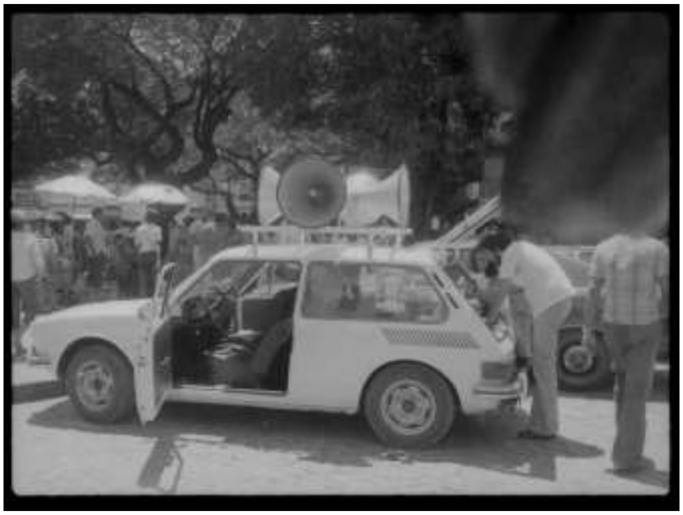

Figure 29: An automobile broadcasting a message as part of MDB candidate Jarbas Vasconcelos' 1974 or 1982 campaign. Photograph by Liêdo Maranhão de Souza, 1970s. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco, No. 00707.

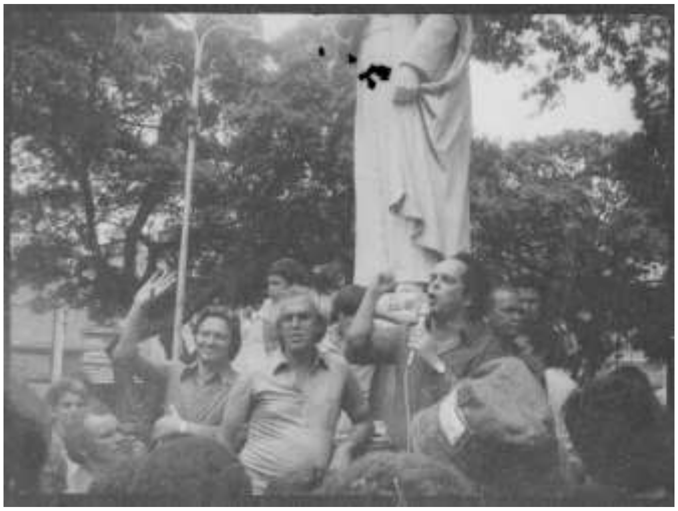

Figure 30: Jarbas Vasconcelos campaigning alongside Marcos Freire, who tragically died in a plane crash in 1987. Photograph by Liêdo Maranhão de Souza, 1970s. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco, No. 02143.

Market people were astute observers of which politicians had (and had not) made an appearance. Representatives of Cid Sampaio, the exiled governor Miguel Arraes' ex-brother-in-law and ARENA candidate for senator, gave vendors official portraits, which some seem to have displayed more out of fear than genuine enthusiasm. Photographer Gordinho explained that "everyone in this square is damned afraid of this man" but reiterated that it was up to the people to decide the outcome of the election.[49] Some candidates made personal visits to remind clients of their voting obligations and perhaps to make new pledges. João Roma reportedly visited one such client at his home to inquire about his voting intentions. Although the elector reminded his patron that the vote was secret—perhaps a request for a favor to change his mind—he later remembered that he "owed a lot" to the politician.[50]

Authors of cordel were noteworthy clients of political contenders. Campaigns enlisted poets to write booklets or assign their names to prewritten texts that dramatized candidates' lives and deeds. Amusingly, poets were not always familiar those for whom they would be writing. In 1973, Recife's "poet-reporter" José Soares had been working on a pamphlet for Nilson Gibson, an ARENA candidate for federal deputy. Soares' booklet declared that the candidate was "small in stature but big in his actions." When asked whether Gibson would be upset for calling him "small," Soares explained that he did not actually "know whether he [was] white or black, big or small. I added this to be able to say that he was big in his actions, to establish a contrast."[51] In 1978, Soares produced 20,000 booklets for MDB candidate for federal deputy Cristina Tavares (1934-1992). Tavares was impressed by the poet's work, although she vetoed being characterized as a "beauty."[52] In addition to payments, poets sometimes received special favors in return for their services. José Costa Leite, for example, had been given a business card that exempted him from paying fees to the on-duty fiscal, although this informal "license" was not accepted by all.[53]

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[49] Livro 16, fls. 192-3.

[50] Livro 16, fls. 197-8. João Roma (1912-1991) was a three-time federal deputy for the state of Pernambuco. His final term ran from 1967 to 1971, meaning he was mobilizing his clients for another politician in 1978. Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil, "João Inácio Ribeiro Roma," Dicionário Histórico-Biográfico Brasileiro, accessed January 10, 2021, http://www.fgv.br/cpdoc/acervo/dicionarios/verbete-biografico/joao-inacio-ribeiro-roma.

In 1978, the São José Public Market seemed to be a stronghold of ARENA, the ruling party of Brazil's 21-year military regime. Camelô Luis de Souza, son of poet José de Souza, explained a common predicament ahead of the 1978 election. He wished to "work for" the campaign of Jarbas Vasconcelos, opposition (MDB) candidate for federal senator, yet knew that "if the MDB loses, I'm really going to suffer here [in the market]." Adalberto Farias Cabral, the ex-municipal secretary of provisioning who conceivably had many clients among the market people, was in the running for state deputy. Cabral reportedly cornered the peddler to remind him of his duty to ensure an ARENA victory.

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[51] Livro 13, fls. 130-1. Livro 4, fls. 95-6. "eu não sei nem se ele é branco ou preto, se é grande ou é pequeno. Eu botei isso para poder dizer que ele era grande nas ações, para fazer o contraste."

[52] Livro 16, fls. 43 and 45. See José Soares, "Uma mulher guerreira: Cristina Tavares Correia," FC-541, Biblioteca Central Blanche Knopf, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife, Brazil.

[53] Livro 2, fls. 195-6.

Souza arrived at a pragmatic solution to his "damned predicament": he would work for ARENA but vote for the opposition.[54] Unlike Souza, a peddler nicknamed Bacurau doubted the secrecy of the ballot, adding that voting "against the government" was dangerous. A poet agreed that "th[o]se MDB people [were] taking a one hell of a risk."[55]

Still others were fearful of getting involved in politics, especially those who had earlier run-ins with the authorities. In 1962, José (Zé) Alves Sobrinho had been arrested for authoring a booklet entitled "The Hope of the Peasant" (A esperança do camponês), referring to the peasant leagues (*ligas camponesas*) that proliferated in rural Pernambuco and Paraiba in the early 1960s. Alves spent close to 24 days in jail, completely incommunicado. The experience prevented him from addressing social and political issues in his writings, explaining that a "scalded cat is even afraid of cold water.[56]

Alliances between ruling government parties such as Mexico's PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) and "informal" laborers such as street vendors are often invoked as classic examples of clientelism.[57] Although Recife's street vendors neither matched their Mexican counterparts in numbers or organization, they too found an important ally in the official conservative party. Party leadership expected the city's peddlers to campaign on behalf of "their" candidates. In 1978, the president of the Street Vendors Union (Sindicato de Vendedores Ambulantes) invited governor-elect Marco Maciel (b. 1940) to address the body during his final "rush to ensure the victory of Arena."[58] Luiz de Souza, whose poet father was a supporter of the MDB, said he was asked by the union's president to meet with Maciel during his first ever visit to the market in November 1978, which one actor decried as an "embarrassment."[59] Souza found the governor-elect very "popular" because he promised to do whatever he could for the ambulantes in return for their support at the polls.[60]

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[54] Livro 17, fl. 21. See also "Novos deputados vão dar trabalho," *Diário de Pernambuco* (December 7, 1978), s/p.

[55] Bacurau explained that the government party consisted of three wings: a "radical one" (the fragments of the older Partido Social Democrático), an "indecisive" one, and a "rebellious" one headed by Cid Sampaio. Livro 16, fls. 95l; 192-3.

[56] Alves made his point differently when he said that "whoever has been bitten by a cobra is even afraid of a string." Livro 17, fls. 182-3.

[57] John C. Cross contends that we should not assume that workers were wholly subordinated by a "co-opting power." Cross, 121-2.

Nearly a year later, Maciel apparently did not intercede on vendors' behalf when a municipal construction project disrupted their livelihoods. In September 1979, vendors stationed around the market were effectively expelled during renovations conducted by city hall. One camelô nicknamed Bigode (mustache) complained that temporary arrangements put vendors at a serious advantage, as the Pátio do Terço, the zone opened to street vending during the project, was too far away. Bigode approached the president of his union but was instructed to "find a godfather" (*padrinho*) because the leader's grievances were ignored by the mayor's office. Union members found such a "godfather" in Fábio Corrêa, president (1974-1975) and vice-president (1979-1981) of the state audit office (Tribunal de Contas).[61] Corrêa arranged for a delegation of vendors to speak with another functionary in his office. Bigode said this employee was "full of authority" (*cheio de autoridade*) and had no interest in helping the camelôs. After a second visit to Corrêa and a telephone call to the secretary of provisioning, they were finally attended to. Although he did not share how vendors' problem was resolved, Bigode was so pleased with his new patron that he wanted to send this "real man … a damned good man" a piece of "fat fish" and whiskey.[62]

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[58] "Marco Maciel faz visita a mercado e pede a vitória," *Diário de Pernambuco* (November 12, 1978), s/p. See also Livro 17, fls. 28-9.

[59] Livro 16, fls. 192-3. Livro 17, fls. 28-29a. See also "Marco Maciel faz visita a Mercado e pede a vitória," *Diário de Pernambuco* (November 12, 1978).

[60] Livro 17, fls. 31-2.

2.4 Credulous but Exacting: Country Folk as Consumers

Denizens of the market square held that urban-destined "rustics" or country folk (*matutos*) were important, if demanding, consumers. Authors of cordel claimed that matutos would never purchase booklets that used wooden rather than zinc-based cover art. These economical shortcuts purportedly appealed to tourists and intellectuals (*doutores*) alone, who often tried to negotiate significantly lower prices for these cultural products.[63] Matutos purportedly had equally specific preferences in the kinds of folhetos they would purchase. A well-known author explained that residents of the rural interior preferred stories of violence and heroic struggle whereas Recifenses expected tales of "love and suffering" (*amor e sofrimento*). Those who performed spirited "previews" of these works had to work even harder to explain the meanings behind the latter kind of stories.[64] Some merchants found matutos' perceived fussiness exasperating. A vendor of leather belts explained that he no longer sold his wares in the interior because rural consumers thought they could find better deals at the São José Market. The same vendor added that he would "destroy his *papeiro*"—implying that country people's casserole dishes were prized possessions—if he caught one in the square.[65]

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[61] Tribunal de Contas Estado de Pernambuco, "Fábio Corrêa," accessed January 11, 2021, https://www.tce.pe.gov.br/internet/index.php/conselho-invisivel/84-aposentado/1229-fabio-correa-fabio-correa-de-oliveira-andrade.
[62] Livro 9, fls. 59-61.
[63] Livro 4, fl. 70.

If cordel artists found them demanding, peddlers of medications and miracle cures assumed that country folk were credulous and superstitious.[66] Like authors and performers of poetry, these self-described "professors" strove to entertain their clientele with a variety of unusual items including snakes, puppets, and magical decks of cards. They worked small crowds, mostly consisting of men and boys and hired undercover assistants to build trust with the "matutos." Often adolescents, these "swindlers" (*tapias*) or "flags" (*bandeiras*) contributed "impartial" testimonials by highlighting the efficacy of the product or its seller.[67]

Vendors also appealed to rural people's presumed superstition when they emphasized the exotic origins of their goods. For instance, purveyors of the famed "electric" fish lard (*banha do peixe elétrico*)—a common pomade used to treat pains and rheumatism—claimed that they received their unique formulas from a mysterious "Indian" in the state of Amazonas. Still others insisted that their products drew on the secret knowledge of "gypsies" (*ciganos*).

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[64] Livro 12, s/p. See entry for August 5, 1977.

[65] Livro 17, fls. 32-3. A papeiro is a "small casserole dish where one prepares potatoes or porridge." Cabral, 593.

[66] One producer of annual calendars explained that matutos in the city of Caruaru "are the most cunning in the world." Livro 4, fls. 78-9.

[67] Livro 4, fls. 171-2.

Liêdo's photographic reconnaissance captured peddlers-performers working their crowds with tall, baton-like contraptions. These devices featured two cylindrical chambers with a black baby doll nestled between them (fig. 31). Sérgio Bloch explained this practice in his 2002 documentary film *Olho de rua* (On the Street). A middle-aged camelô in Rio de Janeiro held that his device, largely identical to the ones photographed by Maranhão in the seventies, was a "gypsy" fortune telling device invented in early twentieth-century India. The operator instructed paying audience members to write their name on a small slip of paper. The showman then commanded two dolls enclosed in the tube—one black and the other white—to "retrieve" the thoughts of the customer.[68]

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[68] *Olho da rua*, directed by Sérgio Bloch (Abbas Filmes Ltda., 2000), online streaming (Filmakers Library, 2006).

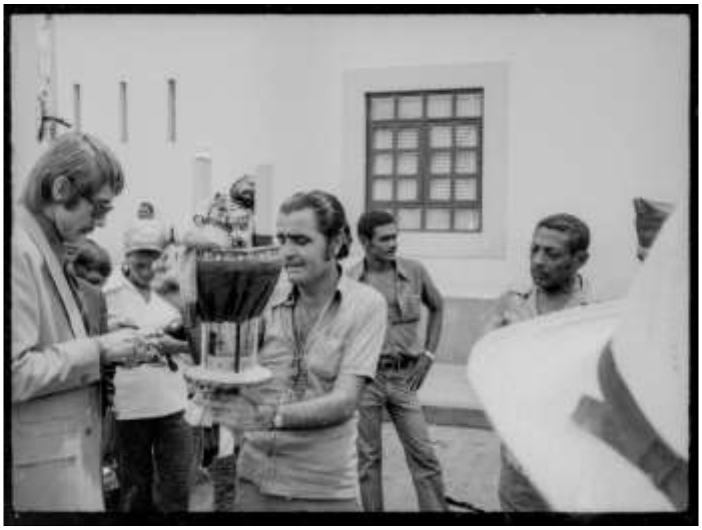

Figure 31: Professor Zakan working with a fortunetelling device. Photograph by Liêdo Maranhão de Souza, 1970s. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco, No. 01944

In Recife of the late 1970s, camelôs who dealt in magic sometimes emphasized the "African" qualities of their products. A peddler from the neighboring state of Bahia attributed this change to shifts in mainstream consumer culture in which popular music, television, and film offered idealized versions of African and Afro-Brazilian cultural practices, particularly in the port city of Salvador. This seller of protective amulets, nicknamed "Gold from Congo" (Congo de Ouro), pointed out that Brazil was being "Umbanda-ized," citing the commercial success the songs "The Washing of Bonfim" (A lavagem do Bonfim), written and performed by the major pop stars Gal Costa and

Gilberto Gil. He explained that camelôs would not earn anything if they did not add "catimbó" (a generic term for magic or witchcraft) to the mix.[69]

Folheteiros and rival peddlers complained that those who dabbled in the occult earned a living through deceit (*enganamento*). Aiming to debunk rumors that he was rich, a wheelchair-bound camelô nicknamed Bacurau (type of nocturnal bird, fig. 31) alleged that business rival Garganta de Aço (Steel Throat) enriched himself through "catimbó," pointing out that he was able to afford a house with an indoor restroom and running water.[70] The brother of poet José de Souza confessed that although he "kn[ew] lots about spiritualism," he could never accept "dirty money." In something of a backtrack, he confessed that he was simply too old to establish himself as a "professor." José went farther in his criticism of the captivating showmen. While he agreed that they swindled clients out of hard-earned money, he asserted that they also preyed on credulous young "matutas," who were led to believe that inappropriate contact, including sex, was a normal part of their routines.[71]

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[69] Livro 16, fls. 147-8.
[70] Livro 13, fls. 7-8.
[71] Livro 8, fls. 15-6.

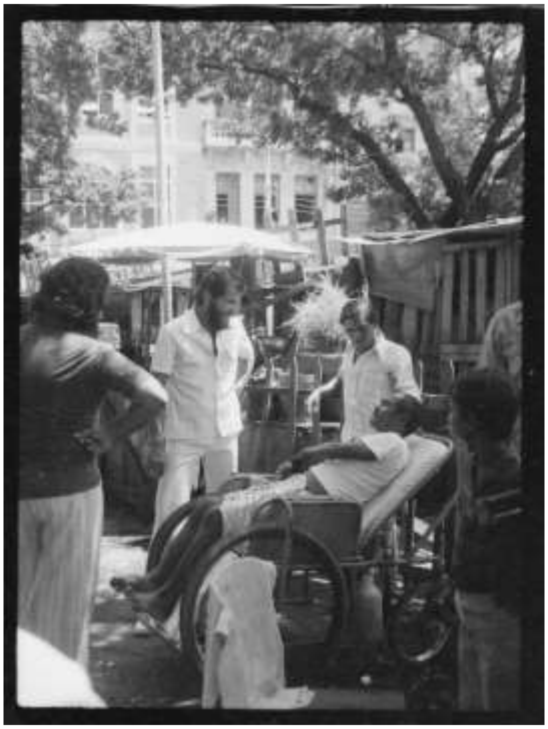

Figure 32: The paralyzed peddler (*camelô*) Severino Bacurau chatting with other "popular types" of the Praça Dom Vital. Photograph by Liêdo Maranhão de Souza, 1970s. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco, No. 00102.

The above criticisms of peddlers of occult goods and services remind us that competition and hierarchy is an intrinsic part of the lives of "informal" workers. As we have already seen, actors active in literatura de cordel were especially threatened by these practices, as sales of folhetos dwindled while the demand for camelôs' services continued as strong as ever. Certainly, the country's worsening inflation between 1974 and 1976 disproportionately affected this sector as it affected the cost of writing and printing booklets. Despite limited municipal support, under the aegis of Ariano Suassuna, the municipal secretary of culture, printers and vendors were forced to adjust the price of published works because paper, staples, and glue jumped in price from day to day and week to week.[72]

A situation of severe economic hardship affected nearly all working-class protagonists that labored and made purchases around the market. Although camelôs might have fared better than other actors (the urban poor always needed medications and supplements), vast swathes of the population simply did not benefit in real terms from the so-called Brazilian "miracle," as the period of unprecedented economic growth was popularly known. Instead, the economic restructuring spearheaded by the military regime exacerbated the chasm between the top 15-20% and the remaining 80%.[73]

Ingrid Bleynat writes that the government's inability to curtail inflation is often most evident (and directly felt) in public markets.[74] Poets based in São José registered the everyday hardships that weighed on the povão. In terms of food, "poet-reporter" José Soares jibed that for the poor,

Feijão agora é doutor	Beans are now "doctor"
Carne de boi e Rainha	and ox meat Queen
Bacalhau agora é Rei	Cod is now King

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[72] The months of November and December 1973 were especially difficult for authors and sellers of booklets. See conversations in Livro 3, fls. 20-2, 45, 84, 167-8, and 173.

[73] Werner Baer, The Brazilian Economy: Growth and Development. 5th edition (Westport, CN: Praeger, 2001).

[74] Ingrid Bleynat, "The Business of Governing: Corruption and Informal Politics in Mexico City's Markets, 1946-1958," Journal of Latin American Studies 50: 365. She shows that the political police gauged the public "mood" in important markets. We have no evidence of this practice in Recife. Much less developed popular movements, etc.

Vai subir dona farinha	Madam flour is going to go up
Um ovo de granja custa	A farm egg costs
O preço de uma galinha.	As much as a hen.[75]

So prohibitively expensive was meat that one poet reportedly overheard a man joke, "at home, the only meat I handle is when I go to piss."[76]

2.5 Trading Glimpses and Intimacy: Stigma and Survival

In the late 1970s, the Delegacy of Customs (Delegacia de Costumes) announced a campaign against Recife's "little hells" (*inferninhos*). It targeted the city's nightclubs, cabarets, motels, and "other suspected houses" in addition to sex workers. The sector chief was especially concerned with the "homosexual problem," alleging that male cross-dressers (*travestis*) were "competing strongly" with female prostitutes and joined them in organizing "bacchanals" in used neighboring brothels.[77] In the mid-1980s, middle-class Recifenses continued to hold that their city had surrendered to promiscuity and filth. One op-ed complained that the "Brazilian Venice" had been overrun by a "proliferation of promiscuous shacks" that spread disease. As the elite saw it, these ailments were as social as they were biological.[78]

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[75] José Soares, "Fim de semana em casa de pobres," FC-190, Biblioteca Central Blanche Knopf, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife, Brazil.
[76] Livro 2, fl. 196.
[77] Livro 14, fl. 12a.
[78] Livo 8, fl. 13.

Liêdo Maranhão and his male friends and subjects offer glimpses of the "public" women who used the Dom Vital Square as a staging ground for encounters (fig. 31). One peddler estimated that some 200 of these "whores" (*raparigas*) were to be found near the market on any given day. The women who haunted the square were a far cry from the middle-class call girls or escorts (*garotas de programa*) who frequented the upper-class beachfront neighborhood of Boa Viagem. Most were young, poor, and nonwhite, and pursued liaisons with those of similar social standing. Men of the market and square divulged that "matutas" were preferred because they were less versed in the ways of the city and presumably more desperate.[79] Describing the social geography of the market, the same peddler pointed out that what he designated a "B-class" of women camped out closer to the market structure. The "C-class" loitered on the sidewalk in front of the Cinema Glória.[80]

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[79] Livro 15, fl. 12.

[80] Livro 18, s/p.

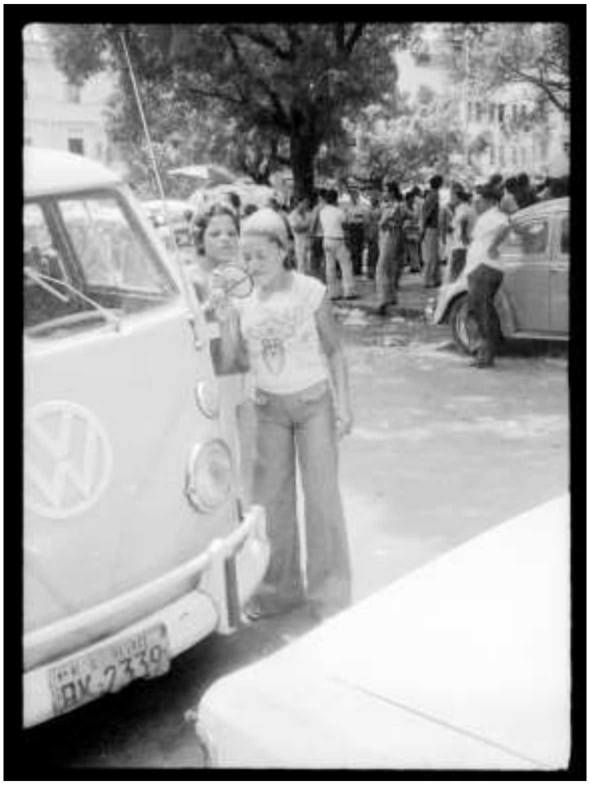

Figure 33: A "woman of the square" (*mulher da praça*) checks her makeup in the mirror of a Volkswagen Bus. Photograph by Liêdo Maranhão de Souza, 1970s. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco, No. 00328.

Absent from his geography lesson was an "A-class," which existed only for the rich. Many women of the square hailed from more remote corners of the metropolitan region, especially Jaboatão, São Lourenço da Mata, and Vitória de Santo Antão. Still others traveled longer distances from neighboring states like Paraiba. Whether venturing from greater Recife or farther afield, women likely reached São José by bus or train, leaving them at the Santa Rita bus depot or Central Station located a stone's throw away from the market and square.

Liêdo's diaries indicate that these women bore a variety of *noms de guerre*. There was "Mother of the Zona" (Mãe da Zona), "Crazy Maria" (Maria Doida), "Drunk Maria" (Maria Bêba), "Fat One" (Bolão), and "Big Black Woman" (Negona), among others.[81] It is well-known that pseudonyms mitigate the corrosive effects of stigma among those engaged in taboo trades such as sex work. Carlos Silveira Versiani dos Anjos Júnior writes that "war names" denote a symbolic acceptance of a stigmatized identity without allowing stigma to "contaminat[e] the whole person."[82] Virtually all the actors named in Liêdo Maranhão's writings bear nicknames, many of them humorously ironic or suggestive. It is almost certain that one's nickname (or nicknames) finds humor in the dire straits experienced by humble Recifenses. And yet nicknames might also serve a more imminently practical purpose in that they are camouflage for those who traffic in a milieu rife with assaults, petty thefts, and periodic murders.

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[81] Market people – including some sex workers themselves – typically did not utter the Portuguese term for prostitute (*prostituta*). Instead, they spoke of "whores" (*raparigas* and *putas*), "women of the life" (*mulheres da vida*), "women of the zone" (*mulheres da zona*), and "public women" (*mulheres públicas*). It should be noted that in Portugal, the term "rapariga" is not offensive, as it refers to a young girl or woman. In her important study of color, relationships, and sexual mores in the rural city of Caruaru, Pernambuco, Linda-Anne Rebhun includes a list of terms used to describe women perceived to be of a lower moral order. See Rebhun, "Sexuality, Color, and Stigma among Northeast Brazilian Women," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (2004): 186-7.

[82] See C. S. Versani dos Anjos Júnior, "A serpente domada: um estudo sobre a prostituição do baixo meretrício" (master's thesis, Universidade de Brasília, 1980), 74-5 and Maria Dulce Gaspar, *Garotas de programa: prostituição e identidade social* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 1985), 77; 79. Placing limitations on the acts one would be willing to perform with a client is another way in which sex workers protect the sense of the "I." This strategy is also evident among women in the square. Mãe da Zona, whose birth name was Carmen Lúcia, countered a camelô's avowal that "all whores enjoy [sexual] bohemianism" by emphasizing the caution she exercised when meeting with clients. "Here, there are women that only like anal and oral sex," she explained. "But I don't do this. You see, I'm not going to put my mouth on something that goes in a vagina." Livro 15, fls. 79-81. 15 April 1978.

Men who worked and loitered outside the market judged the "women of the square" (*mulheres da praça*) according to several moral codes, as did other women who were themselves part of this elastic category. On the one hand, market people took pity on "sufferers" and "endurers" (*sofredoras*), honest victims whose individual circumstances put them in the streets.[83] Others were taken as simple "addicts" (*viciadas*), such as Maria Bêba and Negona, who overindulged in alcohol, and a variety of "damned potheads" (*maconheiras danadas*). Despite their substance abuse, some men acknowledged that there were indeed "fine potheads" (*maconheiras finas*). Nevertheless, their everyday banter divulged that a menagerie of more "dangerous" women also existed.[84]

Cautionary storytelling, especially among men, highlighted an association between "public" women, violence, and deception. The story of how peddler Bacurau became paralyzed was the subject of frequent storytelling. As he recounted the 1968 ordeal, he intervened in an argument between his son and "another woman" who stabbed him.[85] Steel Throat, another camelô, had also been stabbed, leaving one of his hands paralyzed. Poet João José claimed that the attack was performed by a customer who discovered that she had been sold a falsified worm medication.[86] Whatever the exact relation between these two camelôs and the women in question, they became a "whore" through successive storytelling owing to the humiliating violence experienced by the peddlers.

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[83] See actors' quotations in Maranhão, Souza, *O mercado, sua praça e a cultura popular do Nordeste: homenagem ao centenário do Mercado de São José, 1875-1975* (Recife, Prefeitura Municipal do Recife, Secretaria de Educação e Cultura), 1977.

[84] Maranhão, 1977.

[85] Livro 5, fls. 66-7. In September 1977, the square was abuzz with news that Marisa, the "whore that stabbed Bacurau," had been murdered. A camelô named Nelson told Liêdo that a group of men showed up at the market to ask where they could find her. The poet Leonardo reported that Marisa's brother had been killed after being shot three times and another brother was rumored to have been murdered in Olinda. Livro 13, fls. 28-9 and 33.

Stories and gossip also warned of the different sorts of dangers of "scandalous" (*escandalosa*) and "deceitful" (*desonesta*) women. The somewhat amusing case of a singer nicknamed Treme-Terra (a kind of firecracker) suggests that the spreading of rumors could be as dangerous as threats of physical violence. A jaded female sex partner spread rumors that the singer had performed oral sex on her, a sex-act that had remained taboo for some 30 years, potentially longer. Angered and humiliated, Treme-Terra absented himself from the square and seriously contemplated killing the woman.[87]

At first glance, the activities of "women of the square" appear to conform to well-studied aspects of "street" prostitution in Brazil.[88] Yet I would argue that the multiplicity of arrangements are such that deploying "sex work" gives false clarity as to the multifaceted commercial, affective, and sexual relationships that emerged there. Certainly, ephemeral exchanges of money for sex (*fazendo o programa*, or "doing the program") appealed to many and supported many women's long-term livelihood. Reportedly the oldest sex worker in the square, Maria Bêba explained that she spent some "30 years of whoring: 20 in the square and 10 in other places," including Ceará and Maranhão.[89]

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[86] Livro 16, fls. 24-5.

[87] Livro 18, s/p. Fortunately, Treme-Terra did not resort to murder as recourse. In his 1982-1983 oral history, Liêdo Maranhão that the biggest taboos of his day were "being a communist and sucking pussy." See Maranhão, "Entrevista com Liêdo Maranhão de Souza," interviewed by Fátima Quintas on February 2, 1983, in Olinda, Pernambuco (Recife: Centro de Estudos da História Brasileira da Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, 1983), 48-9.

[88] See Versani, Gaspar, and Néstor Perlongher, "O negócio do michê: prostituição viril em São Paulo" (PhD diss, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 1986).

For many men and women, transient encounters in the square and street could plausibly lead to other arrangements that would fill a combination of affective, economic, and sexual objectives. Indeed, men and women alike spoke favorably of informal and short-term cohabitation. A poet described picking up women in the square and taking them to his small plot of land, where they would cook, clean, and "do other things" for him. "The way I use women," he explained, "is economical for me."[90] Another woman named Maria (Doida) noted that a 60-year-old man invited her to live with him in the neighboring municipality of Vitória de Santo Antão, where she would take care of the house and work at the fair.[91] This practice is known as *amigação* in ordinary parlance and *amasiamento* in academic studies. The former term is almost invariably associated with concubinage or a broader situation of "love that is suspect or indecorous," reflecting the legal understanding of this set of practices.[92] However, it should be noted that *amasiamento* (or *amigação*), like various gradations of what we recognize as sex work, are "neither entirely identical nor entirely distinct," depending instead on the "attitude of the speaker toward the union." Thus, one could plausibly encounter a situation in which a woman imagines herself as being *amigada* while her neighbors secretly refer to her as a concubine or whore.[93]

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[89] Livro 14, fls. 36-8.

[90] Livro 7, fls. 5-8.

[91] Her only hesitation was that the gentleman was "not white," implying that it was problematic for a woman of a presumably lighter complexion to live with a dark-skinned man. Maria ultimately decided to move in with her new companheiro. Livro 9, fls. 121-2.

[92] Cabral, 53.

Among Brazil's poor, for whom legal and church marriage is not an economic necessity, cohabitating "as-if" husband and wife (*vivendo maritalmente*) remains a common and unexceptional practice.[94] In the 1970s, nearly all the men who worked in the Dom Vital square related a complex assortment of marital and marriage-like arrangements with women described as wives (*mulheres*), companions (*companheiras*), and "others" (*outras*). Pamphleteer Edson Pinto complained that the biggest mistake of his life was "arranging this other woman [*a outra*] and filling her with children." He had 14 children with his "true wife" (*mulher verdadeira*), eight of whom died, and five with the "other." Each week, Edson sent eight kilos of sugar to the family of his "legitimate" wife (*legítima mulher*) and seven to the "other."[95] Even while men formed second and even third families, legal wives and "others" were expected to remain faithful. Zé Soares recalled telling who he called his "wife" (*mulher*), the father of his son, that infidelity should be expected given his need to travel for work. He remembered telling her that the world "ha[d] its eyes on" her during his travels.

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[93] See Rebhun, *The Heart is Unknown Country: Love in the Changing Economy of Northeast Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 156.

[94] Lebhun writes that "nonmarried cohabitation is more characteristic of the poor than of the middle class, less honorable than marriage, intertwined in both past and present with concubinage, and seen as less civilized and less hygienic than marriage by both Church and state." Rebhun, 161.

[95] Livro 3, fls. 5-6 and Livro 4, fl. 49. Pinto later mentioned trying to leave his *companheira* but she attempted suicide. Livro 3, fls. 15-6. The "legitimate wife" lived in the neighborhood of Casa Amarela, and the "other" lived in Jardim São Paulo.

Liêdo Maranhão's acquaintances were also more than willing to share their thoughts on males who sought the company of other men. A singer openly discussed having sexual relations with an adolescent. According to the artist's account, the boy would arrive at the square to hear him sing, usually paying 10 or 20 cruzeiros. One day, the junior partner invited the self-described "old monkey" (*macaco velho*) to Pina Beach where they touched each other in an abandoned shack. The singer injected humor into his story, commenting that a large crab bit the boy in the rear end. The beachside injury, combined with regularly being penetrated by a patrolman and porter, supposedly damaged his rectum.[96] A subject that Liêdo merely identified as "B." provided the example of a 13-year-old "brown" (*moreno*) or "mixed-race" (*tipo caboclo*) boy to describe the institution of what he called "franchise homosexuals" (*homossexual franchone*). He held that the unnamed boy was taken to various nightclubs (*boates*) where pimps painted his eyebrows and lips and dressed him in a transparent nightgown, leaving him in the club to be "franchised" out to patrons.[97]

This account stands out in that it does not condemn the sexual practice as particularly deviant. Indeed, the speaker does not explicitly identify the boy's clothing or appearance as feminine. His remarks appeal to a shared understanding of homosexuality as defined by effeminate, exclusively "passive" men including those who in today's term engage in transvestism or are transsexual. Other males who frequented the square mixed contempt with a positive assessment of the trickery exhibited by these individuals. Another singer ("P.") shared a story about how he was duped by a man dressed as a woman. The individual in question, an attorney from Rio de Janeiro, revealed that he had male genitalia. The singer explained that if the "discovery" had occurred during intercourse, he would kill him.[98] A man identified as "B." confessed that he once met a "queer" (*veado*) who others believed was a female. In fact, peddlers had sex with the individual without making the discovery. The subject used menstruation as an excuse for not having vaginal intercourse.[99]

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[96] Liêdo Maranhão de Souza, *O povo, o sexo e a miséria, ou o homem é sacana* (Recife: Editora Guararapes, 1980), 37.

[97] Maranhão, 40.

Male-male exchanges of goods and favors for intimacy, including sex, also occurred among women. A sex worker that Liêdo identified as "C." revealed that she was supported by a 64-year-old unmarried woman. The *matrona* showed up to give her money when she needed it most, often in secret because "C." assumed that her patron was fearful of getting caught. The older woman also gave her perfume and a purse. Like Túlio Carella's partners, the young woman was expected to give something in return. One day, she was taken to the older woman's apartment, where she was ordered to undress. "C." confided that she did not like this level of intimacy, as she was only attracted to men. Nevertheless, she suggested that upholding her end of the bargain was only a minor and temporary nuisance. Although the men who sought out her company paid her less than she desired, she was hopeful that she would eventually find a man.[100]

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[98] Maranhão, 39.
[99] Maranhão, 39.

Abundant in central Recife, female sex workers are mostly ignored in the diary of Túlio Carella, the Argentine dramaturg we encountered in the introduction to this dissertation. This is intriguing given that the neighborhoods of Recife, São José, and Santo Antônio were centers of so-called "low" prostitution.[101] These women appear in only two small references. In his first month in the new city, he met a "pleasant and sweet girl" named Carmo as he sought reprieve from a heavy downpour. She told him "cold weather is wonderful for making love" while caressing his body. He wrote that Carmo was beautiful, albeit despondent, and wore very little makeup. The woman eventually abandoned Carella to find another partner.[102] Later, in early July 1960, he casually wrote that a young and beautiful "little whore" (*putinha*) "caught" him without conviction and eventually wandered off to explore more fruitful encounters.[103]

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[100] Maranhão, 51-2.

[101] The "high zone" (*zona alta*) was found in Boa Viagem. The Dominican friar Jean Pierre Barruel de Lagenest (1918-2015) spearheaded a research project for the Joaquim Nabuco Institute in 1966 and 1967. Commenting on his findings, Mauro Mota indicated that one in six women were sex workers in Recife, which supposedly surpassed Lagenest's findings in France (10 times larger) and elsewhere in Brazil, including São Paulo (six times), Rio de Janeiro (three times), and Belo Horizonte (two times). In Recife, two-thirds of sex workers were under the age of 18. Typescript "Prostituição no Recife," undated, MMo PIp 93 doc 1135 a32 g1, Centro de Estudos da História Brasileira, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife, Brazil.

[102] Túlio Carella, *Orgia*, vol. 1, trad. Hermilo Borba Filho (Rio de Janeiro: José Álvaro, 1968), 90.

[103] Carella, 281.

2.6 A Sexual Adventurer in a Tropical City

Recife's Parisian central market was a favorite stop in the perambulations of Túlio Carella, who purchased small trinkets and produce in the Praça Dom Vital and a permanent fair located closer to the dock (fig. 23). During his year-long adventures in flanerie, (1960-1961) he learned that lower-class Recifenses exchanged a broad array of goods and services in an invisible "marketplace" that included, but extended beyond, the iron and glass structure in São José. In the streets of central Recife, men and women traded glimpses, men massaged their penises through their pants, and quick meetings took place under the watchful eye of voyeuristic passersby. Inside the market's public restroom, men exhibited their penises in what Carella judged a prelude to sexual encounters.

As a well-dressed and unusually tall foreigner, Carella became a highly sought-after patron among poor men, most of them nonwhite. A cortege of mendicants, sex workers, students, dock workers, and others relentlessly pursued him as he went about his business. Each hoped to score an interaction with someone they hoped would give money, trinkets, or favors in return for intimacy (or friendship). Carella chronicled these quotidian encounters in a private diary, which was translated from Spanish the Pernambucan dramaturg Hermilo Borba Filho (chapter 5) and published as *Orgia* (*Orgy*) in 1968.[104] Although a handful of women tried to connect with the Argentine, those who chased him were young or adolescent males, Carella, while rejecting many advances, submitted to many more. For his first three months in Recife — the months of March through July 1960 — Recife, Carella's explicit diary registers 101 sexual encounters with males, or at least one every day.[105]

Before jumping headlong into Carella's encounters, a few caveats are necessary. Not all the interactions recounted ended in sex or involved physical contact. While *Orgia* offers an abundance of detail on same sex-acts and how the limits of masculinity are negotiated privately, it has much to say about public displays of maleness. Carella imbues several of these behaviors—especially the rubbing of one's genitals in the streets—with meanings that could perhaps be more indicative of his private fantasies than emic significance. For instance, the Argentine read public groping and massaging erections as signals that men sought out sex with other men when this behavior was paired with extended eye contact. In some instances, Carella likely misread human curiosity (he was a 6′5″ foreigner, after all) for desire. Unbeknownst to this foreigner, the size of a man's penis was a mark of pride, even notoriety, among male friends. One of Liêdo Maranhão's acquaintances admired the size of a friend's member, which he sometimes saw when they engaged in *surubas* (orgies or group sex) with women.[106]

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[104] The published diary is a genre-bending work. The first fourth of the 330-page book examines the beginning of Carella's adventures. An omniscient narrator, denoted through italicized text, probes the (often unconscious) motivations that led the Argentine to Pernambuco in 1960 and 1961. The remaining three-fourths of the work reads as a conventional ego document. Several passages are again presented in the third person. Although the published text does not always list precise dates for each passage, carefully working backward and forward with the information that is included corresponds with the months of April, May, and June 1960. We know Carella arrived in April 1960, although he was expected the previous month. It is little wonder why Borba planned a second volume of the Argentine's diaries; the first and only installment covers a mere 90 days in his yearlong visit.

[105] See **Table** in the Appendix.

It also bears noting that Carella's explicit diary is hardly a celebration of homosexuality or queerness.[107] It registers both the author's and his acquaintances' prejudicial attitudes about "feminine" or "passive" sexual partners (*invertidos*) in addition to those believed to be "pederasts" (*pederastas*), those who have sexual relations with underage boys. At the same time, the Argentine's fantasies are carried by racist stereotypes, which often occur in combination with denunciations of racism. For instance, the Black weightlifter introduced above is dubbed "King-Kong" both for his Herculean physique and the ferocity with which he "possesses" the foreigner, as if he were the helpless white female depicted in the 1933 film.[108] Elsewhere, he extols the sensual proclivities of dark-skinned men, writing that *morenos* (a more "polite" term for Black men) were "proud to give whites their best: their penis."[109] At other moments, the foreigner condemns the "lack of respect of blacks, of some blacks" whom he likens to "leeches" (*sanguessugas*).[110]

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[106] He held that the girth of his penis was equal to his friend's but slightly shorter. Maranhão, 30-1.

[107] In this regard, I disagree with a recent characterization by Severino J. Albuquerque. See "Túlio Carella's Recife Days: Politics, Sexuality, and Performance in Orgia," *Latin American Theatre Review* 51, no. 2 (2018): 7-21.

[108] Carella, 114-22.

[109] Although Carella's host politely informed him that the term "negro" was offensive to nonwhite Recifenses, he employed the designation throughout his diary. Carella, 94 and 155.

[110] Carella, 134.

Several of Carella's partners spoke candidly about young men offering sex in exchange for money. A mulatto (*mulato escuro*) office worker complained that "all the youth of Recife lay down (*se deita*) with men for money and for a fee of 200 cruzeiros."[111] Additionally, a blonde "rustic" (*matuto*) named Xavier confessed that an older pederast told him he could make thousands of cruzeiros from mature men. He also admitted to following Carella so he could force a meet-up.[112] The Argentine, with his smart street attire and exaggerated whiteness, was a highly sought-after prize. Carella's insertion into this milieu exacerbated competition and heightened suspicion among young men. Those he had previously rejected jealously observed his new liaisons from the shadows. He caught a Black student named Júlio spying on him on 10 separate occasions.

We know from Túlio Carella's diary that acquaintances emphasized their desirability by revealing that other foreigners, and even "millionaires," bought them expensive gifts (including a motorcycle) and even took them to Rio de Janeiro or São Paulo.[113] Carella himself regarded these anecdotes as humorous, if pathetic, exaggerations or outright lies. But by establishing the extremes of exchange, these instances of fabulation certainly made smaller requests more reasonable. Variations on these stories almost certainly passed among young men, where they perhaps emboldened as much as they discouraged those who did not immediately make a positive impression on Carella. Those who won the professor's interest probably exaggerated the quantity of money or other favors they received. Or if they were invited back to his home, they perhaps flaunted the quality of alcohol and trinkets in his apartment—all measures of his presumed wealth. Carella's male partners might also have boasted that they used their cunning and street smarts to "conquer" the unsuspecting foreigner.

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[111] Carella, 136.
[112] Carella, 314-5.
[113] Carella, 87-8, 130.

The professor fully recognized that his encounters were invariably shaped by asymmetrical power dynamics. He wrote that sexual meetings were "easy" in Recife and this was "not an advantage," for there were many young men who he would not dare to take to his apartment, for doing so would oblige him to compensate his partners. He complained that these individuals, who produced a "semi desire" in the Argentine, "satisf[ied] themselves only with caresses, second intentions (*bolinagem*), [and] quick, superficial contact."[114] Carella admitted that he had encountered this "type" elsewhere in the world, perhaps during his travels to France and Italy. Yet he found that they were especially abundant in Recife, where immense "social differences" were the rule rather than the exception.[115] The Argentine enumerated several of these actors in his diary. They included workers, mulattoes, porters, blacks (negros), the poorly dressed (*mal-vestidos*), and shoeless (*descalços*). He conceded that interactions with these parties could never "be realized between four walls," which would perhaps heighten the social asymmetry of the exchange, but rather in a "dark place, a distant doorway, [that was] not always comfortable nor lonely."[116]

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[114] Carella, 246-7.
[115] Carella, 257.

Carella risked having no encounters if he did not at least partially accept the terms of exchange that characterized interactions across lines of color and class. Thus, Túlio Carella devised a workaround to his dilemma. Since requests for money or favors dispelled his fantasies of authentic and spontaneous tropical male sexuality, he began informing potential partners that he had no money at the outset. This "test of disinterest," he wrote, separated the wheat from the chaff, so to speak, by leaving him with more satisfactory prospects.[117] Of course, Carella could choose to make an unprompted *gift*, presumably bestowing him with an agency that placed him outside the constraints of reciprocal exchange, on the one hand, while upholding an illusion of authenticity, on the other.[118]

A Black man named Anacleto, whom Carella met on June 15, passed the Argentine's test and was taken back to his apartment. After Anacleto performed fellatio

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[116] Carella, 246-7.

[117] He wrote, "Encontro um meio de livrar-me de perseguidores pegajosos: falo-lhes amavelmente e digo-lhes que não tenho dinheiro. A maioria prefere procurar outra aventura. É um bom meio para conhecer o autêntico desejo. E quando o tipo me interessa posso pagar para obtê-lo." Carella, 239.

[118] Recent studies of sex tourism examine how foreigners and locals rationalize giving money or favors in return for intimacy. Susan Frohlick, Gregory Mitchell, Megan Rivers-Moore, and others have shown how participants characterize exchanges as voluntary gifts to sidestep socially problematic conflations of money and intimacy. See Frohlick, *Sexuality, Women, and Tourism: Cross-Border Desires through Contemporary Travel* (London: Routledge, 2013), Mitchell, *Tourist Attractions: Performing Race and Masculinity in Brazil's Sexual Economy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), and Rivers-Moore, *Gringo Gulch: Sex, Tourism, and Social Mobility in Costa Rica* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

(an act that Carella had never experienced with such "perfection, consistency, and duration"), he somberly asked the professor for a pair of his shoes. The request must have struck an emotional chord, as Carella offered Anacleto some money to purchase shoes since the Argentine's pair would not fit him.[119] Carella also determined that a dark Black (*preto retinto*) acquaintance named Joseph but known as Borracha (Rubber) because he practiced Greco-Roman wrestling and judo, could visit his apartment. Joseph confessed that he thought about the Argentine quite a bit. Although we wondered whether the remarks were genuine, he wrote that it did not matter since it was "pleasant to be treated this way." Further, the acquaintance said he merely wanted to make Carella happy. Borracha's response satisfied his host, who allowed the young man to penetrate him. After achieving climax, Borracha apologized for not having performed as "intensely" because he had not eaten. Túlio interpreted his partner's remarks as a "subtle request for money." Nevertheless, he gave Joseph a bill from his wallet.[120]

In both instances, Carella's partners leveraged their subalternity to achieve their desired outcomes without explicitly mentioning money. Xavier, the blonde (*louro*) rustic we encountered above, used his alterity to openly challenge, even defy, the professor. During their first meeting, the potiguar exhibited "something rude and savage." His body was "splendid and natural . . . [having] an erotic load." Xavier revealed himself to be “almost illiterate” when he asked Carella whether Buenos Aires was larger than Recife. He also regaled his new acquaintance with accounts of his difficult life in the brush (*mato*) in Rio Grande do Norte.[121] Túlio determined that the young man’s unsophisticated demeanor made him trustworthy, and it offered a refreshing contrast to the city dwelling King-Kong, who was “caught by snobbism and sordid ambitions.”[122]

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[119] Carella, 224.

[120] Carella, 247-8.

Túlio took Xavier to his apartment immediately after chatting over coffee and sugarcane juice (*caldo de cana*). The 23-year-old strategically named differences between himself and his cosmopolitan host. He explained that matutos were “nobodies” and that in addition to being ugly, he was excessively hairy. Carella found Xavier’s hands “tortured, strange, [indicative of] a tormented existence,” which undoubtedly presented a contrast to his own.[123] The Argentine gave him a “tip” (*gorjeta*) for an unspecified amount. Four days after their initial meeting (June 24, 1960), Xavier visited Túlio’s apartment again. This time, the matuto was in a sour mood. He drank a glass of chachaça in a single gulp and complemented the professor’s “luxurious” lodgings. Xavier asked for a few squirts of cologne. The professor warned his guest to be careful with the bottle because the cologne ruined the finish on his desk. Xavier subsequently spilled the liquid all over Carella’s desk. After he gave Xavier an even larger “tip” than their first meeting, he asked to take the bottle of alcohol with him. When the Argentine refused, Xavier filled his cup until it overflowed and dumped the remainder down the sink. Carella did not know whether to interpret the behavior as vulgar behavior (*cafajestagem*) befitting a simpleton or a small, but deliberate, act of rebellion against someone who was "rich."[124]

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[121] Carella, 260-1.
[122] Túlio wrote that the initial meeting was “one of the few times in which I m[e]t a *whole* man, meaning he does not lie. Of course, he is quiet, hidden, but this is licit.” Carella, 261.
[123] Carella, 262.

Arlindo, a young Black (negro) man who wore tattered clothing, likewise turned the tables on Túlio Carella. The professor invited him back to his apartment after encountering Arlindo on the Street. The acquaintance explained that he could not visit unless Carella had some restaurant foot to offer him; only then would he have enough time for a rendezvous. Túlio asked how much money Arlindo needed, and he estimated 60 cruzeiros. Carella agreed that it was a large sum but explained that he had "exactly" this amount in his apartment. The two returned to rua Sete de Setembro, but the professor demanded that Arlindo walk beside—rather ahead or behind—him, as most other partners did. The guest asked for his money when Carella began to massage his penis, explaining that he could not "feel desire" on an empty stomach. Ignoring Arlindo's demands, Carella began undressing and fondling his guest. He then asked Arlindo for a kiss on the lips, an act that most of his previous partners had scorned. Arlindo was certainly aware that his partner could accept or decline his request for favors, so he arrived at a solution: he kissed the Argentine on the forehead. The professor gave Arlindo his 60 cruzeiros and an additional 10 for a bus ride.[125]

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[124] Carella, 272.

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[125] Carella, 252-3.

3. An Amusement of the Market and Field: Artists and Spirited Beings in Mamulengo Puppetry

> If the wooden actor holds up a stark mirror to actors of flesh and blood, it also offers a resonant image of our broader relation to the words we speak, their forms of life and death, our relation to material objects, as well as to our own bodies.
>
> —Kenneth Gross, *An Essay on an Uncanny Life*

In early June 1978, a peddler named Steel Throat (Garganta de Aço) addressed an enormous circle of onlookers gathered around the São José Public Market in downtown Recife. Rather than touting fantastical curatives or consulting with mystic entities, he primed the crowd for a visiting resident of Vitória da Conquista, Bahia. Having just arrived in Recife by bus, Severino dos Santos explained that his collaborator was three times shorter than the one he ordinarily worked with. His Benedito was waiting for him at the bus station along with his clothing. Severino then opened a dialogue with his tinier understudy, which Liêdo Maranhão transcribed in his diary. Sex workers, mendicants, and street vendors who gathered in the public square chuckled at the small black puppet's outrageous assertion that he would get married every hour if he could. Benedito then explained that he would feed his new bride sausage on their wedding night and call his new father-in-law a son of a mare (*filho duma égua*).[1]After the short banter, the puppet warned that he would pull out his penis (*torneira*, literally a faucet) if he could not return to his hotel room. Severino also touted his ability to mimic the sounds of animals. When pressed by a spectator to "do a deer" (*veado*), a derogatory term for a homosexual, he declined, stating "I will make the sound of any animal, but not a deer."[2]

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[1] According to Mauro Mota, this refers to an "ordinary, vile subject" (*sujeito ordinário, vil*). See Mota, *Os bichos na fala da gente* (Recife: Instituto Joaquim Nabuco de Pesquisas Sociais, 1969), 131. Calling someone a "mare" might also refer to a prostitute or sexually promiscuous woman. Thus, "son of a mare" might be,

The wisecracking black puppet who entertained marketgoers in 1978 channelled an ethos of irreverent puppet play well-known in the square (figs. 34-36) and throughout the Brazilian Northeast. Dubbed "mamulengo" in the state of Pernambuco, this form of *brincadeira* (fun, or a game or joke) was historically practiced by and for poor men.[3] In this ludic universe in miniature, manipulators of puppets induce laughter through amusing depictions of widely recognized social types, including soldiers and policemen, landowners, widows, politicians, and teachers. As with Punch and Judy puppetry, virtually all shows are predicated upon interpersonal conflict, consisting of beating, shooting, stabbing, and whipping. Yet the puppets themselves, though fashioned from wood and cloth, are quintessentially human in their range of actions and

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depending on the context, synonymous with "son of a bitch." See Bobby J. Chamberlain and Ronald M. Harmon, eds., *A Dictionary of Informal Brazilian Portuguese with English Index* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1983), 193.

[2] Liêdo Maranhão, Livro 14, fls. 153-4. For an exchange between the peddler of medicines and ventriloquist Inaldinho, see Maranhão, "O ventríloquo Inaldinho," *Nordeste Econômico* (October 1986): 69.

[3] Here I refer to "mamulengo" in the broadest possible sense. That is, I understand it as a general variety of popular puppetry common to several states throughout the Brazilian Northeast. Avoiding state-specific expressions such as João Redondo or Babau in Paraiba is thus intentional.

emotions. They argue, have intercourse, lust for women, cry, fight, dance, drink, smoke, defecate, vomit, sleep, get embarrassed, and even dream.

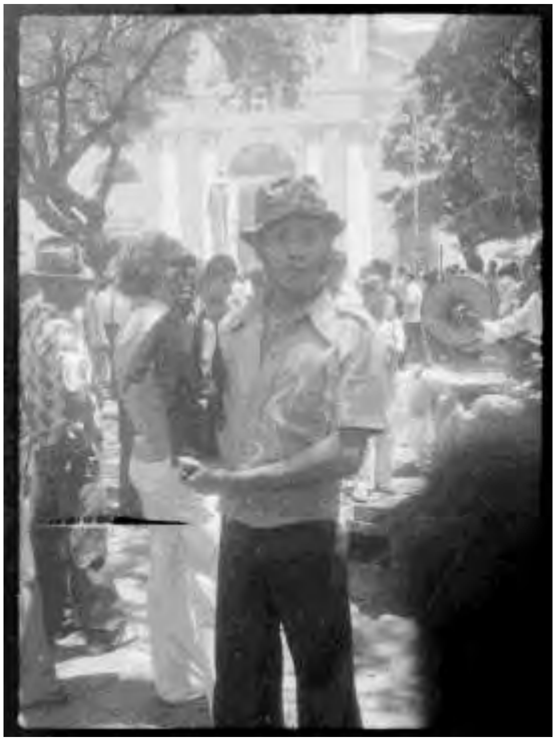

Figure 34: An unidentified ventriloquist in the Praça Dom Vital. Photograph by Liêdo Maranhão de Souza, 1970s. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco, No. 01111.

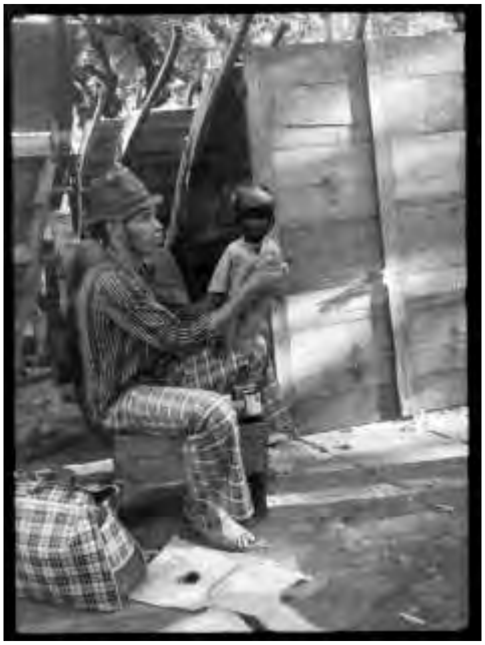

Figure 35: The same ventriloquist painting his puppet black. Note the small can of black paint on the wooden crate and splotch of paint on the newspaper. Photograph by Liêdo Maranhão de Souza, 1970s. Casa de Memória Popular, Olinda, Pernambuco, No. 01138.

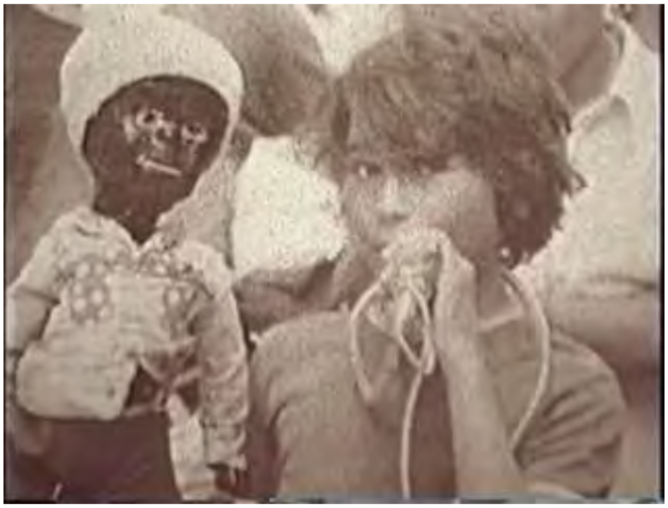

Figure 36: A young ventriloquist performing in the Praça Dom Vital. The boy's puppet appears to have been painted black. Still created from the documentary *As tradições de uma praça* (dir. Jayme Monjardim Matarazzo, 1979), Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife, Pernambuco, No. 00515.

Like a broad gamut of popular "games" (*folguedos*), the mythopoetic origins of mamulengo are said by practitioners to be found in the times of slavery. While each variant claims the honor for their state, the typical account involves an enslaved person on an unnamed plantation producing small sculptures of people and animals. Perhaps engaged in solo play, the protagonist recreated masters and overseers dispensing justice through insults, beatings, and whippings. Another enslaved person denounced the sculptor to the master, who prevented the overseer from punishing him. Rather than being punished for mockery, all documented variations of the story end with the master giving his blessing to the brincadeira, which he tolerated as a "small diversion" (*pequena diversão*) to be practiced once a week.[4] The fact that the plantation owner permits the game reminds us that mamulengo has a sanctioned space within structures of power defined by nearly four centuries of slavery.

Compared to other "popular" cultural forms, mamulengo puppetry remains little known even in Brazil. Unlike cordel, which boasts a broad array of academic works, including those published in English, mamulengo has inspired only a handful of studies along with some theses and dissertations. The intellectual preeminence of the former can be explained in part by scholars' infatuation with printed texts. While stories are elaborated, textually encoded, and later performed, puppetry customarily bypasses transcription. Puppet shows are extemporaneous, even vaporous.

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[4] Two versions of the same story are included in Hermilo Borba Filho's 1966 study. See *Fisionomia e espírito do mamulengo (o teatro popular do Nordeste)* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1966), 90-4.

Before one can begin to understand the substance of mamulengo (the subject of chapter 4), one must look more closely at how its constituent parts form the whole. The chapter approaches puppet play as a multimodal phenomenon.[5] As in a variety of performative genres, meaning is elaborated through several autonomous channels, including clothing, movement, music, and the voice. Analysis draws on these integral aspects of mamulengo but ultimately encourages us to look beyond them. We concern ourselves with the less commonly understood, even ignored, aspects of mamulengo, beginning with the artists themselves. Imaginatively interweaving qualitative and quantitative material collected between the 1940s and late seventies, I offer a composite sketch of the men who developed a lifelong, if torturous, passion for puppet play. Building on puppets' accounts and drawing on the tools of semiotic analysis, we then examine the meanings of puppets as both material and mythical. The final section reframes mamulengo as a social process. It explores the conventions and rules that encircle puppeteers and spectators, the latter being an integral, if less commonly understood, part of puppet play.

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[5] This chapter draws inspiration from anthropologist J. Lowell Lewis' 1992 study of capoeira, an Afro-Brazilian martial art that combines athleticism, music, and song. Lewis analyzes the multimodal phenomenon by distilling capoeira into its corporeal, musical, and verbal practices See *Ring of Liberation: Deceptive Discourse in Brazilian Capoeira* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

To enhance our understanding of mamulengo in Pernambuco, I draw freely but judiciously on comparable forms of puppet play in the northeastern states of Paraiba and Rio Grande do Norte. In doing so, I raise new questions of traditions that scholars have long assumed run parallel to one another rather than meeting along the way, the scholarly equivalent of missing the forest for the trees, as it were.[6]

3.1 The Artist of Laughter Who Does Not Himself Laugh

Historically, studies of mamulengo have hastily leapt into transcribed texts or free dived in the semiotics puppetry. While scholars who documented the practice between 1940 and 1979 gave pause to human artists and experts, the quality of material gathered about puppeteers varies greatly by compiler. Most studies include basic information such as the performer's name, age, locality, and number of years performing. Yet the 1979 work of Fernando Augusto Gonçalves Santos, a sculptor, puppeteer, and theater director, stands out for its detailed, ethnographic treatment of mamulengueiros in rural Pernambuco.[7] Besides being one of few documenters to incorporate puppeteers' own words – and to use them as the basis for his analysis – Santos included numerous photographs of these performers. And while visual evidence is reasonably abundant, other scholars used their cameras to capture puppets and live plays. Implied, then, is a larger assumption that practitioners of popular culture are less important than the transcendent forms themselves.

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[6] This broadens our evidentiary base in terms of transcribed puppet plays: six in the state of Paraiba, three in Rio Grande do Norte, and nine in Pernambuco for the period 1960-1979.Citing Mário de Andrade, Marco Antonio Camarotti Rosa problematizes the vast array of names given to similar, if not identical, cultural forms in different regions. Mamulengo is an important example of how "even in the same region it is usual to find different nomenclature for the same play." See Camarotti, "The Nature, Roots and Relevance of the Folk Theatre of the North-East of Brazil" (Ph.D. diss., University of Warwick, 1995), 96-8, citing Andrade, *Danças dramáticas do Brasil*. Vol. 1 (São Paulo: Martins, 1959), 44. Brochado notes that a puppet tradition known as João Minhoca developed in the southeastern states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Minas Gerais, and Espírito Santo yet died out in the twentieth century. See Izabela Costa Brochado, "Mamulengo Puppet Theatre in the Socio-Cultural Context of Twentieth-Century Brazil" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity College Dublin, 2005), 1.

A slew of recent ethnographies reminds us that bypassing the insights of puppeteers impoverishes our understanding of the practice in two major ways.[8] First, one fails to see the connection between popular puppetry and the lived realities of its creators and spectators. Of course, one should not assume that puppet play holds an unvarnished mirror to plebeians' quotidian struggles. Nor is it a coherent, codified response to the historical abuses of Brazil's ruling classes. Even so, failing to consider practitioners' reflections on puppetry prevents us from understanding what it means that cultures of play, subjugation, and cruelty are historically intertwined. I also add that neglecting puppeteer's nuanced viewpoints forces scholars to explain and evaluate mamulengo using middle-class conceptions of art and drama. Although laudatory remarks about the "popular" find their way into numerous studies, it should be asked *who* defines the popular and in relation to *what*.[9]

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[7] Santos directed a research project undertaken by members of his troupe "Mamulengo Só-Riso." See *Mamulengo: um povo em forma de bonecos* (Rio de Janeiro: Edição FUNARTE, 1979).

[8] Unlike Santos, who directed a systematic canvassing of puppeteers in four regions of Pernambuco, research conducted after 2000 tends to focus on one puppeteer and their immediate networks or a small handful of performers in the same locality. See, for example, Zildalte Ramos de Macêdo, "'Show de Mamulengos' de Heraldo Lins: construções e transformações de um espectáculo na cultura popular" (master's thesis, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, 2014), Adriana Schneider Alcure, ""A zona da mata é rica de cana e brincadeira": uma etnografia do mamulengo" (Ph.D. diss., Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 2007), and Brochado (2005).

We begin our analysis with a composite sketch of 17 puppeteers, derived from published accounts between the years of 1960 and 1986.[10] Regrettably, this limited record testifies to the invisibilization as artists (highlighted above), but also reflects their mistrust of middling outsiders whose persistent questioning might seem to share something in common with police officers. Fernando Augusto Gonçalves Santos also understood that performers were mistrusting of elite intellectuals because they seemed poised to "expropriate … their creative elements."[11]

Mamulengueiros' fear of cultural theft was not unfounded. Under the auspices of the Student Theater of Pernambuco (Teatro do Estudante de Pernambuco, TEP) and Popular Theater of the Northeast (Teatro Popular do Nordeste, TPN), swarms of university students and creative intellectuals descended on poor suburbs and the countryside in the 1940s and 1960s, respectively, to draw inspiration for new works. Owing to a burgeoning interest in national and regional themes, award-winning playwrights such as Ariano Suassuna (1927-2014), Hermilo Borba Filho (1917-1976), and José de Moraes Pinho wrote and performed plays in the style of mamulengo (fig. 37).[12]

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[9] The question is posed differently in a 1978 critique of popular art (*arte popular*) as a tool of domination in Pernambuco. Its authors ask, "Is it correct to say popular art exclusively represents the people's interests? Could it be that it doesn't also represent the interests of the dominant class?" See Ivan Maurício, Marcos Cirano, and Ricardo de Almeida, *Arte popular e dominação (o caso de Pernambuco: 1961-1977)* (Recife: Editora Alternativa, 1978), 14.

[10] Of these puppeteers, nine were found in Pernambuco, six in Paraiba, and two in Rio Grande do Norte. Foundational studies include: Hermilo Borba Filho, *Fisionomia e espírito do mamulengo (o teatro popular do Nordeste)* (São Paulo: Compania Editora Nacional, Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1966), Altimar de Alencar Pimentel, *O mundo mágico do João Redondo* (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço Nacional de Teatro, Ministério de Educação e Cultura, 1971), José Bezerra Gomes, *Teatro de João Redondo* (Natal, RN, 1975); Fernando Augusto Gonçalves Santos (1979), and Deífilo Gurgel, *O reinado de Baltazar: teatro de João Redondo* (Natal: Fundação Capitania das Artes, 2008). Research for Borba's study was conducted in the 1940s and 1950s. While Bezerra, a politician from Rio Grande do Norte, observed a show put on my Sebastião Severino Dantas in the 1940s, his study was not published until 1975.

[11] Santos, 14.

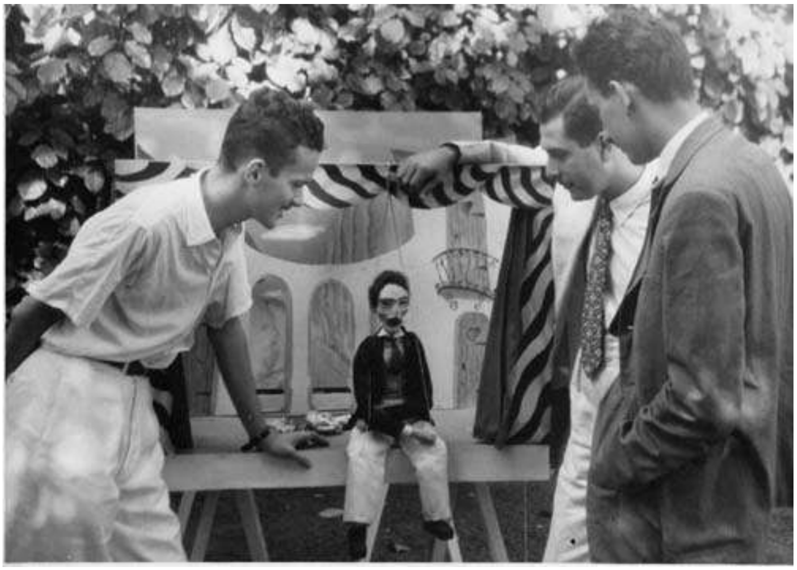

Figure 37: Hermilo Borba Filho contemplating a marionette alongside Ariano Suassuna and Aloísio Magalhães. Photographer unknown, c. late 1940s. Arquivo Hermilo Borba Filho. Published on the personal website of Sônia Maria van Dijck Lima, accessed January 22, 2021, http://www.soniavandijck.com/hermilo_ariano_upx.htm.

At the same time, researchers at the esteemed Joaquim Nabuco Institute for Social Research (Instituto Joaquim Nabuco de Pesquisas Sociais, IJNPS), eager to expand the holdings of the Museum of Anthropology (Museu de Antropologia) and later the

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[12] In his influential pathbreaking study, Borba includes two mamulengo plays written by José de Moraes Pinho ("Haja pau"), which was premiered in Recife in 1948, and Ariano Suassuna ("Torturas de um coração"). Borba, 193-253.

Museum of the Northeastern Man (Museu do Homem do Nordeste), acquired mamulengo puppets in addition to clay figurines, ex-votos, and instruments. Likely poorly paid for the pieces they sold to institutional collectors and certainly not compensated for the time they spent explaining their practice, it is little wonder that puppeteers at times distrusted – and perhaps even resented – the city dwelling doutores who wanted to cajole the "popular spirit" (*espírito popular*) from its flesh and blood ewers.[13]

Manipulators of puppets in the northeast are variously termed "puppeteers" (*mamulengeiros*, *calungueiros*, or *titeriteiros*), "players" (*brincantes*), and "masters" (*mestres*). All hailing from poor families in the countryside and suburbs, manipulators of puppets acquired what they termed a lifelong passion or vice (*vício*) as boys and young men. The routines of older, more established masters positively enraptured these young people. Spellbound and gapemouthed, they held onto every word and marveled at the thrashings inflicted upon the diminutive beings. Disbelief was suspended in this enchanted ring of play. For Solon Alves de Mendonça, known as Mestre Solon (fig. 38), what occurred on stage mimicked reality:

> I was enthusiastic and astonished when I saw the dolls beating each other. I thought it was all real. Because I saw them fighting, one giving a thrashing to the

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[13] Liêdo Maranhão's friends who were cordelistas complained that tourists, intellectuals, and journalists expected them to perform their works for free.

> other. Jeez! I was horrified by that. How they killed each other, for me everything was alive.[14]

After play came to an end, this young spectator tried to reproduce what he had observed. The family's kitchen table and old linens served as makeshift stages, and stalks of corn, puppets. More than one young person snuck out late at night to catch performances, which normally concluded in the early hours of the morning.[15]

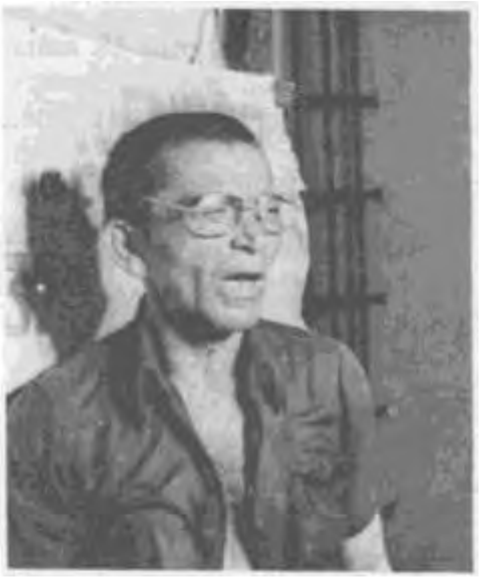

Figure 38: Mestre Solon in front of his stand (*barraca*). Photograph by Tulio Feliciano. Published in Augusto Gonçalves Santos, *Mamulengo: um povo em forma de bonecos* (Rio de Janeiro: Edição FUNARTE, 1979), 116.

Some puppeteers learned their craft by close observation alone, but others shadowed renowned mamulengueiros. Eventually a day came in which the entranced spectator became an apprentice and pupil. It is unlikely that master puppeteers "accepted" just any student; they perhaps wanted to first test the young person's wit and resolve. Januário de Oliveira (1910-1977), professionally known as Mestre Ginu, described his multistep initiation as a disciple of Doutor Babau, one of Recife's most acclaimed puppeteers at the turn of the last century. One day, while crossing the old wrought iron bridge connecting the neighborhoods of Santo Antonio and Boa Vista, Ginu found an old, portly black man sculpting a piece of wood. A young Ginu implored Babau to teach him how to make a mamulengo puppet of his own. However, Babau rebuffed the curious boy. Discouraged but quick-witted, Ginu noticed that the mamulengueiro enjoyed smoking while he worked. He purchased a pack of cigarettes from the São José Public Market, which pleased Babau. The puppeteer then sent Ginu home with a block of wood as a test. When the boy returned with a fully carved (and presumably satisfactory) doll, Doutor Babau agreed to teach him how to manipulate it.[16]

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[14] Solon recalled that he felt "entusiasmado e impressionado quando eu vi os bonecos batendo um no outro. Pensei que tudo aquilo era vivo. Porque via eles brigando, dando cacetaza um no outro. Virge! Eu fiquei horrorizado com aquilo. Como é que se matava, porque para mim tudo aquilo era vivo." Santos, 114.

[15] Santos, 68.

Apprentices in all but name, boys and young men shadowed their teachers. They performed menial tasks such as carrying suitcases and erecting stages all the while absorbing bits of wisdom imparted to them by their mentors. Ginu, for instance, learned that while the mamulengueiro might be an artist *of* the laugh, he does not laugh himself.[17] Gradually, students' responsibilities grew and they assumed auxiliary roles as an assistant (*folgazão, assistente*, or *contra-mestre*) during performances, where they handed puppets to the master performer and manipulated select objects. Apprentices were likely paid for their services, although the money they earned undoubtedly formed a tiny part of what mamulengueiros received through prearranged contracts. Given the severely limited profitability of puppet play itself (as we will later see), extra-financial motives in part explain apprentices' and puppeteers' determinedness to "satisfy" their vício (*cumprir com o vício*). We must remember that puppetry enabled inquisitive young people and seasoned veterans alike to pursue their talents and earn renown, no matter how limited it may have been.[18] And yet Ginu's decisive contribution entailed using a microphone to "spread" (*irradiar*) his performance. The thumbnail portrait Borba offers of Mestre Ginu recalls the radio and television personality Chacrinha, a nationally renowned artist of laughter, who famously secured a microphone around his neck during his program. Ginu, too, wore a microphone and even referred to spectators as his "dear listeners" (*caros ouvintes*), an obvious nod to radio shows.[19]

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[16] Santos, 105-6. See also Helena Ribeiro, " Mamulengo: uma forma antiga de comemorar no Natal," *Diário de Pernambuco* (December 19, 1976).

[17] Santos, 106.

When the master puppeteer allowed their mentee to perform solo, the occasion must have been as nerve-wracking as it was exhilarating. A successful show, of course, required ample preparation. Most of them holders of daytime jobs (sometimes even several), neophytes undoubtedly spent countless nights thinking up and refining their routines. They carved, repaired, and dressed their dolls and contemplated new storylines to try with audiences. On the evening of a performance, taking liberal gulps of sugarcane-based spirits quelled one's nerves and offered a spirited push through several hours of play – sometimes as many as five or six. At the same time, Borba found that swigs of potent alcoholic beverages transformed the shyest player into an extroverted and energetic force of nature. It was almost as if a spirit had taken ahold of them.[20]

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[18] Santos, 70. Unlike the English word "vice," which refers to a variety of compulsive, usually illicit activities, in colloquial Portuguese vício also signifies the act of dedicating oneself to solitary pursuits. See Cabral, 772. It is also worth noting that mamulengueiros found other outlets for non-work activities in a broad array of folk plays (*brincadeiras* and *folguedos*) for which they reprised key roles during seasonal celebrations. These included bumba meu boi, Cavalo Marinho, caranda, the pastoril, and so on. Brochado's dissertation examines the intertextuality of many such traditions.

[19] Borba, 112-3 and Santos, 111.

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[20] Borba, 177. José Severino dos Santos (Mestre Zé de Vina) prohibited his assistants from consuming alcohol during performances, possibly because intoxicated assistants were unable to hand him the correct puppets or perhaps because they were more inclined to pick fights with spectators. See Santos, 70.

Table 1: Puppet Artists, localities, occupations, and additional *brincadeiras* they took part in. Note: Biographical information gleaned from Borba 1966, Gomes 1975, Gurgel 2008, Pimentel 1971, and Santos 1979.

Artist	B/D	Locality	Occupation History	Makes Puppets	Addl. Brincadeiras
José Severino dos Santos (Mestre Zé de Vina)	1940-	Glória do Goiatá, PE	Security guard, mason's helper, municipal functionary (tractor driver)	No	Unknown
Luiz José dos Santos (Mestre Luiz da Serra)	N/A	Vitória de Santo Antão, PE	Sculptor, circus artist (juggler), diarista (cotton and tobacco), barber and barbershpp owner	Yes	Unknown
Antônio Severino dos Santos (Antônio Biló)	1932-	São João dos Pombos, PE	Diarista (cotton and manioc)	Unknown	Coco, bumba meu boi, makes bass drums (*bombos*)
Januário de Oliveira (Mestre Ginu)	1910-1977	Recife, PE	Serviço Social da Indústria (SESI) security guard, mason, fisherman	Yes	Unknown
Solon Alves de Mendonça	N/A	Carpina, PE	Unknown	Yes	Unknown
Otílio Cassiano de Félix (Mestre Otílio)	N/A	Caruaru, PE	Mason	Yes	Unknown
Manuel Guilherme da Silva (Manuel Amendoim)	N/A	Goiana, PE	Unknown	No	Unknown
Manuel Francisco da Silva	N/A	Cabedelo, PB	Livestock handler, vegetable grower, prospector, miner, circus clown, artist	Yes	Mambembe circus

José Petronilo Dutra	N/A	Lagoa Nova, PE	Diarista	Unknown	Unknown
Sebastião Severino Dantas (Bastos)	N/A	RN	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Manuel Francisco da Silva	1928-	Cabedelo, PB	Public market and fair vendor (*feirante*)	Yes	Boi de reis and mambembe circus
José Barreto do Nascimento (José Mangabeira)	1901-	João Pessoa, PB	Barber, shoe patcher (*remendão de sapatos*), seafarer	Yes	Boi de reis, barca, pastoral
Manuel José Lucas	1922-	Cabedelo, PB	Carpenter	Yes	Unknown
Paulo Vitorino Monteiro	1935-	Cabedelo, PB	Fisherman	Unknown	Barca
Octacílio Pereira	1920-	Cabedelo, PB	Fisherman	Yes	Boi de reis, caranda, magic shows
José Barbosa dos Santos	N/A	João Pessoa, PB	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Geraldo Cláudio P. Mendes	1927-	Cabedelo, PB	Rede Ferroviária do Nordeste	Yes	Unknown
José Soares de Assis (Zé Relampo)	1928-2002	Natal, RN	Grocery store owner, cart driver/marker (*corroceiro*)	Unknown	Unknown
Francisco Ângelo da Costa (Chico Daniel)	1941-2007	Natal, RN	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

At a certain point, an apprentice outgrew – or occasionally succeeded – their master. In his mid to late teens, Mestre Ginu filled in for Doutor Babau on numerous occasions, as his teacher was stricken by rheumatism and hampered by advanced age. One October night, Ginu recalled, he stopped by Babau's home to give his master his share of the earnings. It was too late; Babau had already died. Grief-stricken, Ginu mourned the loss of his teacher but recognized an opportunity amid the sadness. A seventeen-year-old Ginu borrowed 5,000 *réis* from his mother to purchase a female doll from Babau's widow. By 1920, Ginu was the master of his own mamulengo.[1]

The business of puppeteering hardly seems of interest to most scholars and observers. Santos' 1979 study is a notable exception, as the author includes a small chapter on the "business system" of Pernambucan mamulengo.[2] Reading across our cast of mamulengueiros, it is apparent that performers preferred prearranged contracts with small business owners and politicians. One puppeteer complained that "mamulengo is poor because we only play in poor houses or in small *bodegas*."[3] Open-air spaces adjacent to bars, restaurants, and small stores were typical venues. Business owners or managers arranged to pay a flat rate to performers who were also entitled to supplement their earnings through audience contributions (see remarks below). The owner, manager, or coordinator of the contract would also be permitted to solicit contributions.

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[1] Santos, 106.

[2] Santos, ch. 6.

[3] Santos, 101.

Planned contracts were preferable for two reasons. First, puppeteers could more easily apportion earnings to their assistants and helpers and musicians as either a set percentage or predetermined amount.[4] Second, performers were guaranteed payment even if extra earnings through contributions were minimal or nil. Yet the generous consumption of beer and spirits made probably made some spectators less parsimonious. Furthermore, at establishments that boasted illegal games of chance such as the illegal "animal game" (see chapter 2), winners could be persuaded to give some of their earnings to the entertainment.[5]

In the previous chapter, we found that municipal authorities looked upon popular artists and merchants as sources of legally ambiguous payments. In predominantly rural areas, fiscals and police officers demanded obligatory license fees from performers.[6] In fact, the fiscal (sometimes called the *frescal* by "simple" characters) played a recurring role in shows. A play presented by Manuel Amendoim (fig. 39) in the early 1960s revealed that officials closed plays down if performers could not produce a valid license. The plot included a police sergeant shutting down the brincadeira because its organizer and ringleader, the young Benedito, failed to pay his fee. A spectator came to the puppet's defense, shouting that Benedito did indeed pay his share. Incredulous, the police officer retorted, "Have you ever seen a black with a license!" (*já viu negro com licença*).[7]

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[4] Santos, 58-60.

[5] Borba, 145. Performing in bars and restaurants was potentially more lucrative because these venues contained a more captive audience.

[6] It is unclear whether this was common practice in larger urban centers such as Recife and João Pessoa, as puppeteers discuss these licenses in relation to small towns and hamlets.

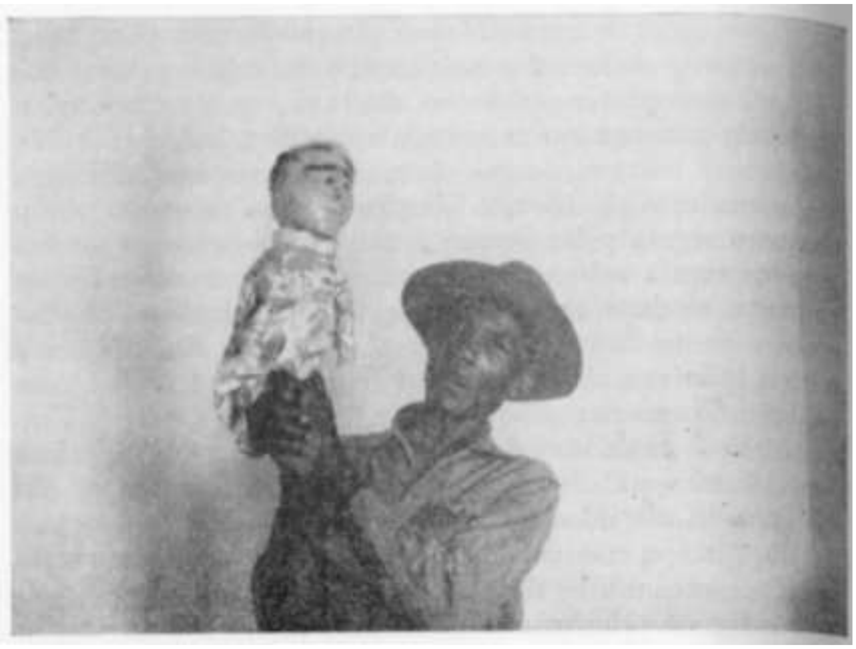

Figure 39: Puppet artist Manuel Amendoim (Manuel Guilherme da Silva) demonstrating a rod puppet. Photograph by Janice Lobo. Published in Hermilo Borba Filho, *Fisionomia e espírito do mamulengo (o teatro popular do Nordeste)* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1966), 146.

Political campaigns were another major source of contracts. As with pamphleteers and poets, political candidates enlisted puppeteers to provide entertainment at carnivals and rallies. One performer allegedly put on a show supporting a candidate designated by the feared landowner and machine politician "Colonel" Chico Heráclio (1885-1974) in 1964. As we saw with authors of literatura de cordel in the previous chapter, puppeteers were not beholden to a single politician or party, and they simultaneously worked for incumbents and the opposition.[8]

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[7] Borba, 162.

Ginu's move to purchase one of his master's priceless "relics" suggests that a mamulengueiro came into his own once he secured his own doll. The requisite object itself was quite expensive. José Severino dos Santos, professionally known as Mestre Zé de Vina, spent three years working alongside another master so he could save enough money to purchase a puppet.[9] Of the puppeteers who produced their own dolls, some were quite famous as sculptors. Mestre Luiz da Serra (fig. 40), a native of Vitória de Santo Antão, a city located 46 kilometers to the west of Recife, supplied manipulators with incalculable numbers of puppets.

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[8] Antônio Severino dos Santos (Antônio Biló) explained, "If a candidate calls me to work for him, I'm going to. I'm going to work because I'm earning his money. If the other side calls me, I'll work for them, too, because of the money." Santos, 93.

[9] Santos, 69.

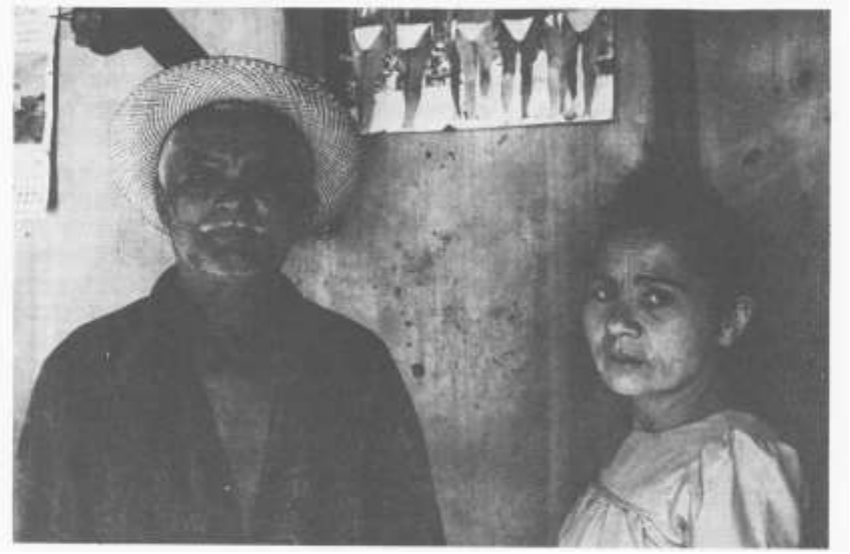

Figure 40: Luiz da Serra and his wife Maria, an assistant (*folgazã*) and singer of mamulengo. Published in Santos, 86.

Although Luiz da Serra estimated that he produced somewhere around 1,000 puppets during his lifetime, he would have been more famous as a sculptor of saints (*santeiro*).[10] Still other puppets were obtained in more duplicitous ways. Manuel Amendoim, whose nickname evoked his peanut-like physique, told Borba he acquired a black Benedito doll after stealing or supplanting (*abafando*) the man for whom he worked as an assistant.[11] Indeed, having a Benedito doll meant that its owner could engage in impromptu ventriloquism and have a recognizable headlining figure for organized shows. Perhaps intending to try their hand at puppeteering (or merely wanting to sell it), someone stole a puppet during one of Mestre Ginu's shows in Recife. The thief returned the doll to its owner because they thought it caused them to get sick.[12]

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[10] Santos, 82.

[11] Borba, 146.

Ginu intimated that the stolen puppet was returned because it conducted special powers. Yet the puppeteer's mystical explanations – hardly unique given that performers closely guarded secrets of their art – also speak to distinctly human concerns. For example, he held that when he died, none of his puppets were to be displayed in museums (a wish that was later amended or ignored, as his puppets displayed at the Museum of the Mamulengo in Recife). They were to be burned instead, for fear that they would fall into the wrong hands.[13]

While Mestre Ginu's account stands out for its occult overtones – a theme which we return to shortly – his statements about family life help us understand the public persona of a mamulengueiro in a quite different light. This one-eyed "pernicious, talkative . . . teller of rough tales," as Hermilo Borba described him, emerges both a brazen philanderer (*mulherengo*) and teller of tales.[14] While puppeteers who brokered the topic of domestic life reported having anywhere between 10 and 15 children, Ginu bragged that he had somewhere between 45 and 72 children, but only raised 10 of them. He did not leave much to the imagination when Ginu informed Santos that his many children resulted from relationships with some 47 women. One of them, a beautiful

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[12] Santos, 113. Ginu originally had many puppets, but the flood of 1975 destroyed all but 25 of them. Santos, 110.
[13] Santos, 113.
[14] Borba, 111.

"brown" woman (*morena*), Ginu exclaimed, turned out to be his own daughter.[15] However, Ginu was not an anomaly. Luiz José dos Santos – a famed sculptor of puppets more commonly known as Luiz da Silva – said he fathered 46 children although he admitted that this number might have been greater or smaller.[16]

Given that mamulengueiros' primary occupations as carpenters, masons, truck drivers, and field hands sent them throughout the Brazilian Northeast, it should come as no surprise that they left children in even the remotest towns and hamlets. And while the sexual connections that puppeteers forged during their travels are not unique in themselves, the ways in which puppetry intersected with family life are striking. In terms of performances, it was not unusual for an evening of play to be a family affair. Puppeteers' children sometimes played tambourines, guitars, and accordions in "little orchestras" (*orquestrinhas*) that popular northeastern musical genres such as forró, baiao, and coco, although samba was also enormously popular. Female assistants – often wives or partners (perhaps *amigadas*) – occasionally manipulated dolls and lent their voices to puppet shows.[17] In addition to working female puppets, the wife of Mestre Luiz da Serra

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[15] Santos, 107. Mestre Ginu was interviewed by Borba in the early 1960s and again by Santos in the late seventies. In Santos' account, the puppeteer initially said that he had 72 children. In the same interview (or sequence of interviews), this number shrunk to 45. Borba wrote that Ginu fathered 72 children with 47 mothers. Borba, 111.

[16] Of these 46 children, only 28 were alive and known to Luiz da Serra. Santos, 85.

[17] Each of our puppet artists was partnered although it is unclear whether their relationships were legal or common law marriages.

(fig. 40) sang musical numbers, making her unique in both Santos' 1979 study of Pernambucan mamulengo and our larger sampling of performers.[18]

Although the wife of Luiz da Serra contributed to performances, her role – like other women's – figuratively and sometimes literally took place behind the curtain. They cared for children when their partners were away and perhaps assisted with the sewing and repairing of costumes.[19] Women probably also assisted with the business side of mamulengo. In their recent survey of saint makers (*santeiros*) in Northeast Brazil, anthropologists Henry Glassie and Pravina Shukla found that wives managed the commissions of their artisan husbands.[20]

While some fathers prepared their sons for roles as mamulengueiros, there is no evidence indicating that they groomed daughters. In fact, girls and young women were likely blocked from learning the secrets of puppetry on the grounds that it was a male activity.[21] However, some puppeteer fathers – and perhaps their mothers or other relatives – actively dissuaded sons who exhibited a predilection for puppet play. Mestre Ginu, for instance, tried to convince his two sons that mamulengo offered mere pocket change in comparison to higher paying jobs. Yet Ginu's comment should raise our suspicion because not one of our mamulengueiros believed that they could subsist through puppetry alone. The more likely explanation is that Mestre Ginu wanted to avoid competition from his own blood.[22]

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[18] Santos, 85-6. Women have only recently begun to assume public roles as puppeteers rather than undistinguished assistants. Dadi (Maria de Lourdes da Silva), of Grande do Norte, who previously sculpted ex-votos (religious offerings to fulfill a vow) but picked up puppetry at the age of 48, has been the focus of numerous academic studies. Dadi, now in her seventies, has remarked that elders of her youth reminded young girls that puppetry was a man's game. See Maria das Graças Cavalcanti Pereira, *Dadi e o teatro de bonecos: memória, brinquedos e brincadeira* (Natal, RN: Fundação José Augusto, 2011). In the new millennium, however, Brochado and Benetti have shown how Pernambucan women have used mamulengo to challenge "traditional" elements of racism and misogyny not only within the masculine ethos of puppet play but also society writ large. See, for example, Barbara Duarte Benatti, "Mamulengo – tem mulher na brincadeira e como fica o preconceito?" *Fronteiras* 3, no. 11 (2018): 115-133.

[19] Men took great care to carve, dress, and repair their dolls but we also find women serving as seamstresses. Of the seven puppeteers interviewed and recorded by Brochado in her 2005 dissertation, two are women.

[20] Henry Glassie and Pravina Shukla, *Sacred Art: Catholic Saints and Candomblé Spirits in Modern Brazil* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017).

[21] Cavalcanti, 71.

An overt degree of jealousy is in fact consistent with Borba's characterization of Mestre Ginu as something of a hyperbolic and self-aggrandizing figure. Invoking musician Luiz Gonzaga's reputation as "King of the Baião," a rural music and dance genre, Ginu anointed himself "King of the Northeastern Mamulengo" and even its "artistic director." Notwithstanding his eponym, the sovereign of puppet play put on modest shows. Borba observed that Ginu used a sheet affixed to wire or string as an improvised curtain in lieu of a decorated stage.[23] And yet the technical simplicity of his performances suggests that sophistication did not necessarily correlate with renown. While scores of puppets and vibrant performing booths could be valuable assets, we must also look at the more prosaic dynamic that encircled the puppet, performer, and his public as a measure of success.

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[22] Santos, 109.

[23] Santos, 107 and Borba, 113.

Mestre Ginu was purportedly the oldest practicing mamulengueiro at the time of his death in 1977. Nevertheless, over 50 years of play and his status as a local celebrity did not prevent him from becoming another "exploited artist" (*artista explorado*) among the povo. Only years before his death, Ginu complained that intellectuals and politicians supported popular artists when it was convenient for them, but ultimately abandoned them when their primary objective was achieved.[24] Despite the burgeoning intellectual and artistic interest in popular puppetry, most – if not all – mamulengueiros never received public monies or private donations to support their craft.[25] Instead, they pursued diminishing opportunities for contracts with the abovementioned parties. The fantastic growth of national radio and television in the 1960s and seventies made puppetry less attractive as a form of entertainment, even in predominantly rural regions.[26] Additionally, one cannot ignore the birth of an elite variant of mamulengo, one that appealed primarily to middle-class sensibilities and increasingly understood puppet play as a juvenile didactic activity. Without the support of cultural and research institutes, puppeteers tottered on the brink of precarity. Many lived in extreme poverty and, like Mestre Ginu, unceremoniously died a pauper.[27]

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[24] Santos, 112.

[25] During his fieldwork, Borba asked puppeteers whether they had ever received such funds. All responses were in the negative.

[26] Drawing on the extensive records of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, IGBE), Christopher Dunn reveals that the total number of Brazilian television stations experienced a 250 percent increase (from 15 to 52) during the 1960s. Private television ownership grew markedly between 1958 (78,000) and 1970 (4.5 million). See ibid., *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 45.

3.2 Understanding the "Poor Cousins" of the Puppet World: The Materiality and Color of Bonecos

In 1965, Recifense poet Maria do Carmo Barreto Campello (1924-2008) invoked longstanding prejudices against the ubiquitous hand puppet of mamulengo when she dubbed it a "poor cousin" to the marionette.[28] A centuries-old conception of European puppetry holds that primitive hand puppets – products of the street – are inferior to string and wire operated marionettes, both in terms of their technical artistry and the conditions surrounding performances. While marionettes, not to mention rod and mechanical puppets, make appearances in mamulengo play, the historical hierarchy of prestige remains.[29] Yet *all* kinds of puppets communicate through what Steve Tillis calls "sign-systems," which include design, movement, and speech.[30]

Given that the kinetics of mamulengo are explored in greater depth elsewhere, we will focus primarily on considerations of design and speech (chapter 4). Tillis' framework for analyzing and describing puppet sign-systems (Table 2) will serve as a general guide rather than an authoritative and exhaustive inventory of puppet meanings. In doing so, I borrow freely from his working schematic while also introducing puppeteers' insights, communicated in their own words, as to better understand specificities of their art in practice.

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[27] "Ginu: um mamulengueiro de valor que morreu sem glória," *Diário de Pernambuco* (December 25, 1977): A-10. Borba cite. As a newspaper chronicler (*cronista*), Borba used his column to raise awareness concerning the precarity of popular artists.

[28] Maria do Carmo Barreto Campello de Mello, "Mamulengo – janela rústica aberta para o sonho," *Jornal do Commercio* (November 25, 1965), Segundo Caderno: 6.

[29] John McCormick and Bennie Pratasik, *Popular Puppet Theater in Europe, 1800-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 8.

[30] Tillis, 118.

Table 2: Puppet sign-systems. Source: Steve Tillis, Toward an Aesthetics of the Puppet: Puppetry as a Theatrical Art (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 118.

	Design	Movement	Speech
Imitative	Lifelike	With the Puppet	Character
Stylized	Selection/Exaggeration	Despite the Puppet	Caricature
Conceptual	Unlifelike/Operator Present	Against the Puppet	Voice Modified/Speaker Present
Variables	Features Size Materials Operator Presence	Control Mechanics Control Points Articulation Points Lighting/Scenery	Paralinguistics Dialect/Language Voice Modification Speaker Presence

Whether a puppet-artist owns one or 60 puppets reflects their vocational success, yet each tool of their trade begins with a piece of wood.[31] Although they sometimes incorporate plastic body parts, the cores of mamulengo puppets are typically made from resilient species such as mulungu (*Erythrina mulungu*) and imburana (*Amburana cearensis*). Common in the arid interior, mamulengo scholars contend that carvers of puppets favor these kinds of wood because they more easily lend themselves to performing requisite instances of interpersonal violence. Indeed, other species and nonwooden mediums more generally cannot withstand figures' repeated striking and whacking. Yet the choice of specific kinds of wood might also convey a set of spiritual meanings. Common devotional objects in the Northeast, such as ex-votos, and sculptures of saints are also carved from mulungu and imburana.[32]

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[31] It is difficult to determine how many puppets a puppeteer owned at a given moment, as researchers did not always incorporate numbers in their published findings. Smalltime performers probably owned a more limited number of objects while more successful puppeteers such as Ginu owned upwards of 70 dolls. Santos, 110.

When contemplating puppets themselves, one is immediately struck by the lurid array of figures. Though they may differ in terms of color, size, and sex, they share a discernible grotesqueness in terms of their physical appearance. Dolls' heads dwarf their petite trunks, and their arms are appreciably shorter than one would expect given their exaggerated slenderness. Because their bodies are so small, we are most drawn to the puppets' heads and faces. They exhibit protruding noses, missing (and sometimes golden) teeth, elongated eyes, serious brows, and unnaturally broad mouths. One puppet jokingly explained that he was disfigured because he had been subjected to the "parrots perch" (*pau de arara*), referring to rides in flatbed trucks equipped with wooden planks in the rural interior.[33]

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[32] Brochado, 232. See Lindsey King, *Spiritual Currency in Northeast Brazil* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2014), 90-1. In Brazil, the word "mulungu" refers to a type of drum. Nei Lopes, compiler of the *Dicionário Banto do Brasil*, hypothesizes that the drum is named for the kind of wood it is made from. The entry also indicates that in East African languages, "mulungu" refers to a "Supreme Being," perhaps imbuing the drum with a "sacred quality." See ibid., (Rio de Janeiro: Centro Cultural José Bonifácio, 1995), 181.

[33] Luís Barbosa dos Santos, "O castigo de Baltazar," 1968, Cabedelo, Paraiba. Episode transcribed in Pimentel, 177. The idea of a "parrots perch" might also refer to a form of torture. See Jane-Marie Collins, "Parroting the Past: Historical Continuity and Change through Cultures of Cruelty in Brazil," *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 24, no. 3 (2018): pages.

Variously described as “rustic” or “primitive” by scholars, mamulengo puppets encapsulate a kind of expressionism that distinguishes them from sculptures of saints. Yet these objects’ crude appearance should not be mistaken for a lack of talent or even an exigency of the artistic process. Santos contends that mamulengo puppets “flee” from a sense of naturalism, elaborating what Borba considers the “essential, the idea.”[34] Mestre Ginu implied that human “ugliness” is the essential message conveyed by puppets. Yet this ugliness, both visual and performative, is inherently humorous. Ginu explained to Santos, “there’s no use being a cute doll. If they see a cute one, people don’t even care, but if the doll looks really ugly, then [we] get laughter out of the most serious spectator.”[35]

Mamulengo could be seen as a living theater of ugliness. Characters cheat and are cheated, fight and are fought, yet also manage to celebrate victories both small and large. Each puppet corresponds with a recognizable social type. Landowners, industrialists, priests, politicians, physicians, lawyers, musicians, debutantes, field hands, womanizers, and mentally ill persons are only a few of the most prevalent characters. Izabela Costa Brochado shows that puppets’ social situations are expressed through a stable universe of "figurative codes" that include their color, size, clothing, gestures, and sounds.[36] Recalcitrant black figures, typically named Benedito or Baltazar, sometimes wear the clothing of a cowhand (*vaqueiro*), which establishes their subordinate status in the social panorama of the rural interior. But social distance is also articulated in visual terms. Field hands are physically smaller than their social superiors. Landowners and the police, usually figures carved from single blocks of wood, are larger and more imposing in their stature. Yet they are routed by their small but quick-thinking subordinates, illustrating what Pimentel likened to the mêlée between David and Goliath.[37]

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[34] Pimentel, 2. Borba writes that “From the perspective of sculpture, mamulengo dolls of the Northeast can be seen as primitive both for the wood carving and what they represent, conveying only the essential, the idea, rarely indicating a model, being more a transfiguration and synthesis of form.” Borba, 254. Without citing Borba’s study, which had been published 12 years earlier, Santos contends that puppets are “primitive and figurative, fleeing from the simple sense of naturalist reproduction, of a mere copy of reality . . . They are more the results of a sculptural transfiguration than a figuration of types . . .” Santos, 159.

[35] Santos, 110.

Table 3: Frequency of social types represented in textual transcriptions.

Category	Frequency	Named Characters
Leading Black Protagonists ***Pernicious, valiant, and comical figures***	15	Professor Tiridá[38], Benedito, Baltazar, Gregório
The Police ***Officers, sergeants, captains, soldiers, and division chiefs***	11	Zé Fincão, Cabo 70, Cabo Pedro, Capitão Prego Torto, Capitão Frujo, Cabo Félix de Meirelles
The Bosses[39] ***Landowning "colonels" and "captains"capangas***	10	Colonel de Javunda, Capitão João Redondo, João Bondade (o flagelo dos negros)

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[36] Brochado, 225 and 244.

[37] Pimentel, 6. See images in chapter 4.

[38] Professor Tiridá might also belong with the "Lettered Persons," but his perniciousness and blackness sets him apart from the other characters in the category.

[39] Also includes a Recifense "Industrialist," an urban equivalent of the landowning strongman.

Young Women *Sisters and daughters*	6	Chiquinha, Maricota, Minervina (daughter of João Redondo), Terezinha
Mothers	3	Dona Pelonha, Rosinha, Quitéria[40]
Priests	6	Padre Miguel, Padre Simão
Young Men *Womanizers and pursuers of girlfriends and wives, spoiled sons*	5	Benedito, Baltazar[41], Zé das Moças, Zé Rasgado, Zangô, Mané-Vou-Lá-Hoje
Lettered Persons (*Doutores*) *Attorneys, medical doctors, bohemians, teachers*	5	Doutor Sabóia (attorney), Boêmio da Cidade, Professor Mestre Guedes, Doutor Mané Relejo
Animals	4	Cobra, Onça, Cachorro
Delegates of the Boss	3	Simão, Barroso, Baltazar
The Supernatural *Devil, ghost, liver-eater*	3	Diabo, papa-figo
Mentally Ill or Disabled	2	Doido, Mané Braz
Troubled Husbands	2	Baltazar, Policapro

Puppets' painted facial expressions offer windows into characters' social and moral qualities. Their faces communicate stern, penetrating, smirking, scared, surprised, malicious, and neural gazes. Supernatural beings such as devils, ghosts, and liver-eaters (*papa-figos*[42]) exhibit fangs and unsettling eye colors (fig. 41) and police officers and soldiers skulk behind a permanent snarl or vacant expression of obedience (fig. 42).

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[40] Quitérias are always mothers and wives.

[41] Benedito and Baltazar are frequently in search of a young woman to date or marry, but their interactions with white women provoke conflict, as we will see in the next chapter.

[42] On liver-eaters in addition to mythical entities and popular lore, see Freyre, 292-6.

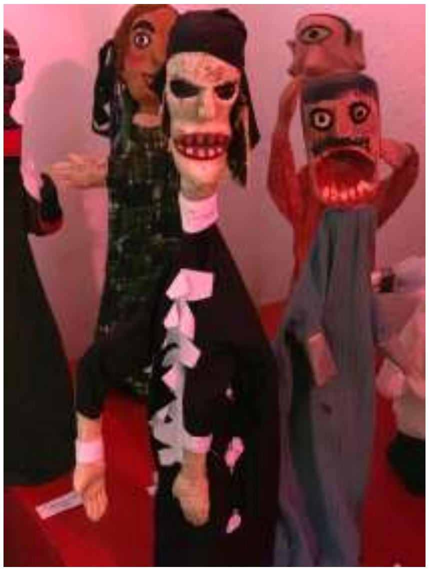

Figure 41: Papa-Figo, the "liver eater." From the collection of Mestre Solon. Photograph by the author, December 2019. Museu do Mamulengo, Olinda, Pernambuco.

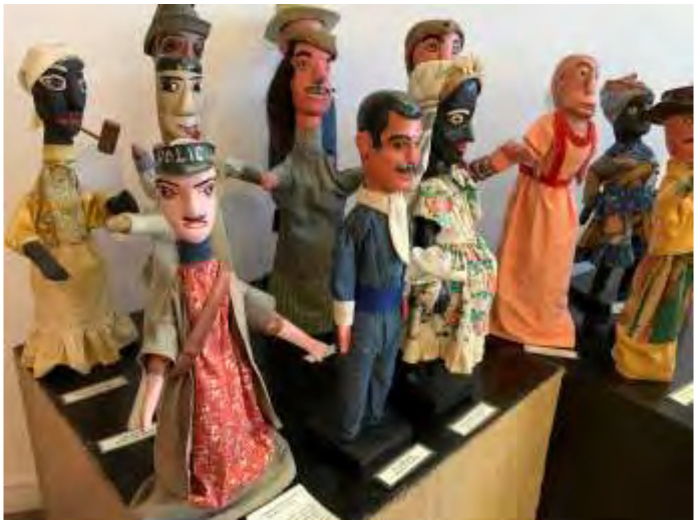

Figure 42: An assortment of puppets. Photograph by the author, December 2019. Museu do Mamulengo, Olinda, Pernambuco.

Together with the face, however, clothing and various props also denote characters' social status and occupation. Black women (especially *baianas*) wear colorful headscarves while farmhands and landowners sport straw hats. Helmets sometimes cover the heads of police officers and soldiers, and brides are unmistakable for their white veils. Still other kinds of props help spectators locate figures in the broader social panorama. "Old blacks" (*pretos velhos*), the spirits of enslaved Africans in the universe of Umbanda, usually smoke from a pipe while rural hands, police officers, and landowners carry cudgels and guns (fig. 43).[43] That characters are often dwarfed by their weapons can be read as awarding prominence to the rule of violence while contrasts of size offer an independent source of humor.

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[43] Pretos velhos are among the most important spiritual workers in Umbanda. The spirits of deceased enslaved persons visit during ceremonies, where they perform acts of charity. Diana DeG Brown likens these "old blacks" to the North American figure of Uncle Tom: "humble, patient, long-suffering, and good," while Lindsay Lauren Hale contends that pretos velhos might also "offer searing indictments of racism and penetrating, critical explorations" of historical articulations of power. See Brown, *Umbanda: Religion and Politics in Urban Brazil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 54 and Hale, "Preto velho: Resistance, Redemption, and Engendered Representations of Slavery in a Brazilian Possession-Trance Religion," *American Ethnologist* 24, no. 2 (1997): 392.

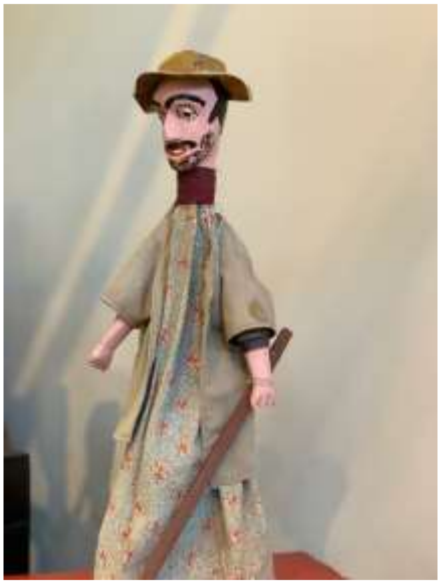

Figure 43: A white police officer wielding a cudgel. Collection of Mestre Solon. Photograph by the author, December 2019. Museu do Mamulengo, Olinda, Pernambuco.

Together with visual characteristics, the meaning of mamulengo also resides in the movement of puppets. Brochado's semiotic analysis of puppet play in the early 2000s devotes significant attention to movement vis-à-vis "semantic" messages and their corresponding "syntactic" expressions. For example, the author shows how the puppeteer might communicate fear by shaking the puppet's body, or they might simulate sex, including rape, by forcing one puppet on another.[44]

While we cannot address puppet kinetics because we lack archival film footage, we should bear in mind that the objects are more or less limited by their physical assembly.[45] Works published after Hermilo Borba's trailblazing study agree that hand and glove puppets are the most prevalent in the universe of mamulengo. These puppets, of course, are controlled by the hand and fingers. Their ubiquity can be attributed to two factors. First, they offer the greatest control because movement is transferred from the hand to the object without strings and rods as conductors. Second, glove puppets are presumably easier to produce and transport given their relative simplicity. This is not to say manipulators did not enlist the help of stringed marionettes or rod puppets, as the former are represented in institutional collections (such as Olinda's Museum of Mamulengo) and we know the latter, because they could be operated synchronously, were sometimes used in more complex dance numbers.

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[44] See Brochado, chapter 3.

Examining puppets' ranges of movement augments our understanding of many kinds of puppet traditions. In the context of mamulengo, however, remarkably little has been said about puppets' color. This is even more unusual because large numbers of nonwhite characters seem to distinguish mamulengo from comparable forms in Europe. When one looks broadly across surviving puppet specimens (incidentally immobilized in photographs and museum collections), one notes that pigmentary codes for denoting blackness and whiteness are remarkably different. Whereas whiteness seems to encompass several different gradations – including paper white, cream, pink, and very light brown (fig. 44) – blackness is visually restricted (figs. 45-48).

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[45] For excellent discussions of movement as a communicative channel, see Brochado, 247-60 and Tillis, 133-145. Puppets are also conventionally organized by "object-control" taxonomic schemes, which categorize them by kinds of movement. Peter D. Arnott, for example, holds that there are four broad classes of puppets: glove-puppets, shadow-puppets, rod-puppets, and marionettes. See *Plays without People: Puppetry and Serious Drama* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964). For an overview and critique of comparable classificatory schemes, see Tillis, 89-112.

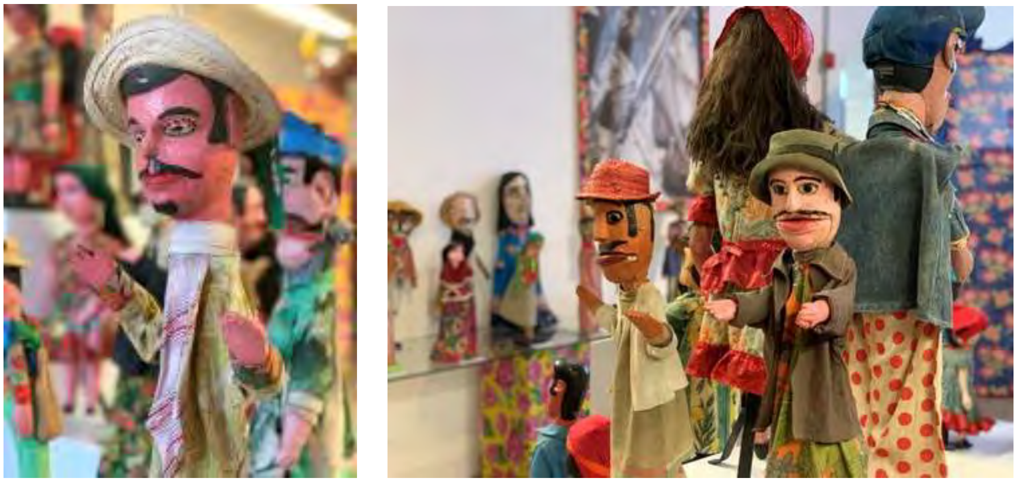

Figure 44: Details of three Simão puppets who are clay, beige, and white, respectively. Photographs by the author, December 2019. Museu do Mamulengo, Olinda, Pernambuco.

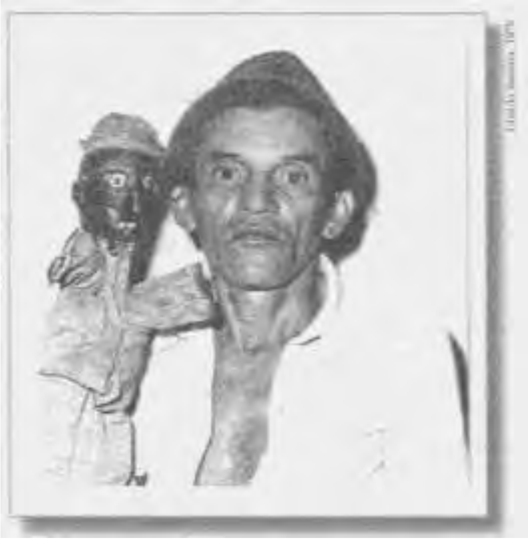

Figure 45: Puppet artist Zé Relampo with a Baltazar puppet. Note the exaggerated sheen of Baltazar as well as the similarity in the hats worn by the puppet and its manipulator. The rough, leather like texture of Baltazar's skin is achieved by the way paint or resin is applied. Photograph by Ubaldo Bezerra, 1979. Published in Deífilo Gurgel, *O reinado de Baltazar: teatro de João Redondo* (Natal, RN: Fundação Capitania das Artes, 2008), 27.

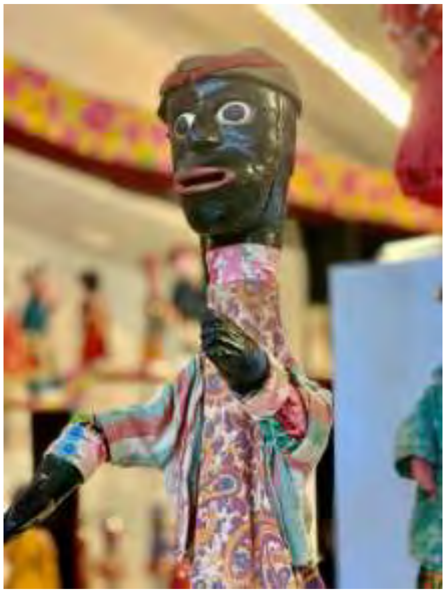

Figure 46: A wide eyed and toothless Benedito. From the collection of Mestre Luiz da Serra. Photograph by the author, December 2019. Museu do Mamulengo, Olinda, Pernambuco.

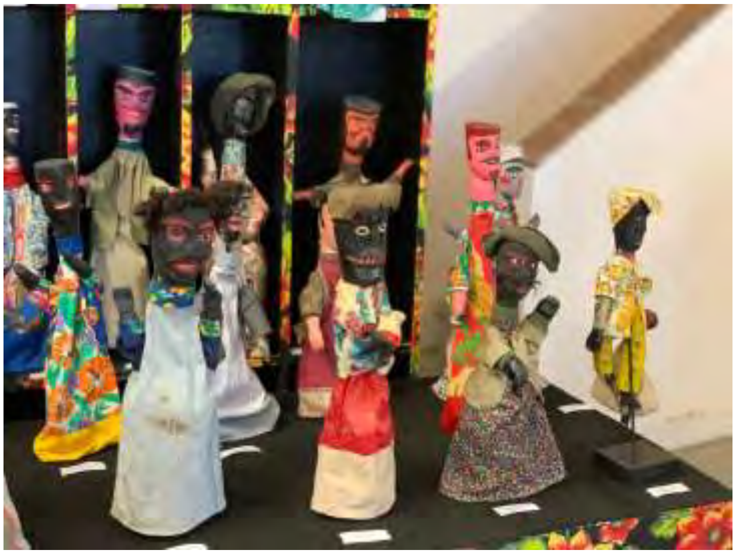

Figure 47: Unnamed puppets belonging to Mestre Pedro Rosa and Manuel Marciano. Note the various colors used to convey non-blackness, which range from dark black to a blueish black, gray, and clay. Photograph by the author, December 2019. Museu do Mamulengo, Olinda, Pernambuco.

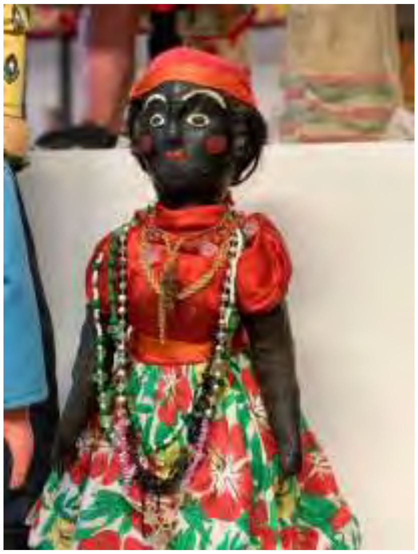

Figure 48: Sinhá Chica, who is probably a healer (*curandeira*). Note the surprised or entranced expression. Collection of Mestre Luiz da Serra. Photograph by the author, December 2019. Museu do Mamulengo, Olinda, Pernambuco.

Like objects of "racial kitsch" in the Southern United States, black puppets are astonishingly monopigmentary. They would be aptly described as "really black" (*preto mesmo, preto preto*, or *preto retinto*) in colloquial Portuguese, a dark hue that is completely unmixed.[46] This comes as surprising because black puppets' physical color is not reflective of the complex realities of race in Brazil. Indeed, largely absent are references to the intermediate but historically amorphous category of "brown" (*moreno* or *pardo*), consequently bifurcating a world marked by significant racial fluidity.[47]

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[46] Tavia Nyong'o, "Racial Kitsch and Black Performance," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 15, no. 2 (2002): 371-391. Nyong'o references mammy dolls and lawn jockey figures (among others).

[47] Additional explanation needed especially since there is a confounding array of historical terms that express different configurates of white, indigenous, and black. *Cabra* is only one example. A new generation of puppeteers has eschewed the color binary espoused by "traditional" mamulengo. Sensitive to the perpetuating of historical stereotypes, Heraldo Lins has lightened the skin of traditionally black characters such as Benedito in didactic plays funded by government entities. Rather than being black or white, Zidalte

When one examines physical inscriptions of color alongside dialogue, it becomes evident that while whiteness is visibly differentiated, it is largely unspoken. Figures in positions of authority are represented as white but their skin color is never explicitly defined. In contrast, Black protagonists are visibly and verbally raced. Benedito and Baltazar, for example, are often identified not by their social group or occupation, a characteristic of white (or at least non-black) characters, but merely as *the* black (*o preto* or *o negro*). Thus, these figures' social situation as dependents or employees of powerful landowners (*coronéis*) is superseded by their racial alterity.[48]

The presumed inclusivity of whiteness and restrictedness of blackness might be explained in at least three ways. First, painting puppets a dark black (or even purple) leaves no room for uncertainty as to their positions as "blacks" (*negros*) rather than "browns" (*morenos* or *pardos*). Second, the exaggerated darkness of puppet figures who themselves enacted color-based stereotypes (as we will see in the next chapter) probably enabled nonwhite audience members to distinguish themselves from the boisterous protagonists on stage. That is, Black and brown spectators could assert that they might

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Ramos de Macêdo finds that Lins employs a "mestizo (*mestiço*) that might better represent the ethnic mixtures of Brazil." In one case, a functionary representing a state-run water utility suggested that Heraldo change a dialogue between Benedito and João Redondo, the landowner. Rather than changing the conversation, which entailed Redondo asking why Benedito does not take a bath, the puppeteer substituted a puppet with lighter skin to avoid suggesting that black people are dirty. Heraldo described this substitute doll as pardo. Macêdo, 103.

[48] Several studies on which this chapter draws feature indigenous characters, especially *caboclos* (persons of mixed indigenous and European ancestry). However, none of the 17 transcripts that form my evidentiary base references these figures.

be "not white," but they were *not* "black" like Benedito or Baltazar. A third and final hypothesis can be found in a passing observation of Altimar Pimentel (1971), who speculated that black puppets served as puppeteers' "alter egos."[49]

When we examine human manipulators and their puppets side by side, even the most visibly black mamulengueiros still do not match the skin tone of their black puppets.[50] Thus, black protagonists convey a kind of hyperblackness, a condition that surpasses the limits of human skin color. In terms of Pimentel's reading of the puppet as an inverted double, one might wonder whether Benedito and Baltazar also function as masks.[51] The considerable literature on blackface minstrelsy shows how the donning of makeup by *white* performers enabled them to simultaneously exploit fears of a racial other as well as circumscribe them.[52] Yet puppet play in Northeast Brazil offers an intriguing contrast. While it could be argued that mamulengueiros – black, brown, and white – used their black protagonists to exploit racial anxieties (an interpretation picked up in chapter 5), it seems equally plausible that the likes of Benedito and Baltazar allowed puppeteers to pronounce that which could not be said. An important feature of what Tillis calls the "license of the puppet" is its freedom to "present a corrosive portrait" of the living because it is not itself alive.[53] Nevertheless, the tendency for these puppets to speak from a position of hyperblackness cannot simply be subsumed by puppets' intrinsic nonconformity, as their color seems to enable them to name abuses in a world in which freedoms remain historically tenuous rather than absolute.

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[49] Pimentel, 6.

[50] The color of puppeteers was never explicitly documented in formal studies of mamulengo, but we can surmise that not a trivial proportion was nonwhite based on a small number of photographs. I refer to the photographs of Borba (1966) and Gurgel (2008). We cannot, of course, access puppeteers' self-identification.

[51] In his systematic examination of popular celebrations (*folguedos populares*), Camarotti found that multiple cultural forms involved the darkening of performers' skin or the wearing of masks. (…)

[52] Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 25.

3.3 Communities of Expectation: Mamulengo As a Social "Co-Creation"

Writing on mamulengo, the poet Campello held that an "invisible fluid" connected the artist, puppet, and spectator. Writing a year before Borba's study, she clearly distinguished popular puppetry from bourgeois theater. "One does not watch mamulengo," Campello said, "they live it."[54]

Besides noting that spectators were representatives of the "popular strata" (*camadas populares*), historical studies of mamulengo do not offer much information on audiences. Although we cannot see their faces, so to speak, at least half of the 18 transcripts we have include some reference to the actions of audience members, including shouts, bursts of laughter, and short exchanges with puppets. Hermilo Borba and Santos, a puppet artist himself, were most diligent in including audiences' reactions.

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[53] Tillis, 23-4.

[54] Campello de Mello, "Mamulengo."

Both, like Campello before them, understood that the audience was expected to intervene.[55]

Puppet traditions are governed by specific rules and assumptions concerning audience participation. Whereas elite audiences are usually immobilized by "social conventions" of restraint, popular audiences actively and creatively intervened in play.[56] In the universe of mamulengo, spectators cajoled and cursed at the puppets, and even bet on their winning or losing a fight. Furthermore, they asserted their prerogative to change the course of play should it become less engaging. Thus, our investigation into the links between artist, puppet, and audience proceeds with the understanding that mamulengo is a dialectical interchange between audiences and puppet artists, or, in Proschan's terms, an act of "co-creation."[57] After discussing the conventions and rules that framed mamulengo, we move to the broader affective and material links that bound the artist to his audience. In doing so, we attain a better understanding of the community engendered by and through puppet play in terms of interests and expectations.[58]

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[55] We regrettably have no audiovisual evidence for how adult spectators responded to plays. Verger, a French photographer and scholar of Afro-Brazilian and African diasporic religions, likely assumed that puppet shows would resonate more with young viewers as opposed to their parents, as in Paris puppets were probably associated with juvenile and didactic activities.

[56] Proschan in Dina Sherzer and Joel Sherzer, eds., *Humor and Comedy in Puppetry: Celebration in Popular Culture* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Press, 1987), 30.

[57] Proschan in Sherzer and Sherzer, 30-46.

[58] Proschan in Sherzer and Sherzer, 39.

A mamulengueiro in small-town Pernambuco explained that audiences came to expect "stories of fighting, stories of struggle."[59] Across 18 transcribed episodes, 45 characters are subjected to beating, lashing, and stabbing, and seven men are murdered. Although they are not killed, women are not exempt from whipping and thrashing.[60] Borba conjectured that audiences found acts of violence amusing because puppets rather than people were on the receiving end of blows.[61] Puppet artists who did not meet audiences' demand for physical confrontation risked confusion, or worse, disengagement. In 1968, Altimar Pimentel recorded an episode performed in João Pessoa, Paraiba. The play, titled "The Punishment of Baltazar," did not feature a youthful, wisecracking, and truculent Baltazar but rather an alcoholic gambler who decided to leave his white wife and daughter. The piece, which Pimentel described as being executed in the style of 1930s popular melodramas, left the audience perplexed. In this case, characters' extended soliloquies on the dangers of alcohol and other vices simply did not satisfy them. Aware that he was losing his public, this mamulengueiro inserted a small scuffle toward the end of the episode.[62]

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[59] Santos, 71.

[60] I refer to acts inflicted upon single characters. If I were to take into consideration repeated beatings or whippings performed multiple times on the same character, this number would be higher.

[61] Borba, 259.

[62] Santos, 171. This scenario was probably familiar to most poor and working-class audiences. However, displays of interpersonal violence seem to have rendered these "serious" topics more palatable because fights between puppets were deemed humorous. Rosalind Crone argues that nineteenth-century Punch and Judy shows "present a stark opposite to melodrama, particularly with their debunking of sentimentality." Northeastern puppet play also seems to offer an alternative to melodrama. See "Mr and Mrs Punch in Nineteenth-Century England," *The Historical Journal* 49, no. 4 (2006): 1055-1082.

Although conflict is by far the most recognizable feature of loose and improvised plots, attacks need not be physical in nature much less inflicted by puppets. Chauvinist (*machista*) attitudes are particularly abundant in verbal slights, many of them hurled at puppets by members of the audience. For example, during a 1963 performance of "The Death of Sergeant Zé Fincão," spectators derided Captain João Redondo as "limp" or "spineless" (*mole*) – referring to a flaccid penis – while calling Sergeant Zé Fincão a "big chin" (*queixo de tamanco*). The sergeant returned the insult and threatened to "arrest" the offending spectator.[63]

A major source of humor also resides in puns and wordplay (*trocadilho*). In a performance transcribed by Deífilo Gurgel, an angry Benedito warned that he was a ruthless "goat" (*cabra*) who would put his enemies "six feet underground." In colloquial Portuguese, calling someone a "goat" is roughly analogous to "guy" in English. Yet Benedito literally characterized himself as a leaf-eating beast reared in the pasture.[64] Moreover, the puppet drew on an even broader array of potential meanings, such as being a mixed-race person, someone of questionable morals, and an outlaw such as a cangaceiro.[65]

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[63] Pimentel, 15. In Portuguese, the expression literally translates to "clog chin." See "Dicionário de Cearês - Os defeitos estéticos do pé ao cabelo, segundo a denominação da mundiça cearense," accessed January 16, 2021, https://linguajarcearense.blogspot.com/2014/04/os-defeitos-esteticos-na-visao-da.html.

[64] Benedito said, "Eu me chamo Benedito de Lima, alecrim das menina, cabrinha muito jeitoso, com um tapa mata sete, foi criado no morro cumendo folha seca, mai sai um cumê gostoso; nego dum sarto bota seis embaixo. Pendendo pr'esse lado é no cano de espinarda, pendendo pr'esse outro, já sabe, é ponta do punhá." Gurgel, 118.

[65] Cabral, 168.

Puppet artists hoped that their audience would reward them for exceptional displays of wit and fighting. Since audiences usually did not pay for admission to puppet shows, attendees were often the targets of intervallic requests for contributions.[66] The techniques the puppeteer and his assistants solicited money went by many different names, such as "hitting the square" (*botando a praça*), "taking the luck" (*tirando a sorte*), or the act of *arrecadação,* referring to the act of taking a "collection." Altimar Pimentel wrote that assistants often preselected an audience member, sometimes the best dressed, who was coaxed into giving money. They might also drape a brightly colored ribbon over the spectator's shoulder, a method that commonly employed in bumba meu boi and boi de reis (although a dried ox bladder might also be used).[67] As in Punch and Judy and the Russian Petrushka, puppet artists made their collections part of the plot. Thus, their helper might solicit contributions so a "murdered" puppet could be given a decent burial, or perhaps alms for the poor.[68]

Implicit rules of mutuality are well-illustrated by the fact that audiences could directly influence the outcome of play. Not uncommonly, mamulengueiros' assistants took bets on which character would win a fight. It is unclear whether the character that received the most money would automatically win, but performers disclosed that outcomes did vary. In her 2005 study of Pernambucan mamulengo, Costa describes even more direct ways that paying members of the audience determined the direction of the show. One night, she observed a male spectator offering to pay the puppets to stop dancing. Irritated, an older woman countered that she would pay the figures to keep dancing.[69] Of course, audiences that failed to pay up risked having the evening's entertainment cut short by the mamulengueiro. However, spectators who met or even surpassed the expectations of the puppet artist were likely treated to much longer shows, reprises of crowd favorites, and perhaps small premieres of new episodes.

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[66] Business owners or those who helped negotiate the terms of the contract were also entitled to collecting small contributions. Santos, 58.

[67] Pimentel, 2-3.

[68] In their pathbreaking study of modern European puppet traditions, John McCormick and Bennie Pratasik argued that the practice of paying a contribution rather than a set admission fee was more common in places where money was tight. The authors found that Portuguese puppeteers who took collections during scheduled intervals, when audiences could request musical numbers. A practitioner of the Bonecos de Santo Aleixo revealed that a "stingy collection miught well mean a very second short half" of the spectacle. See *Popular Puppet Threatre in Europe, 1800-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 72-3. On Petrushka, see Catriona Kelly, *Petrushka: The Russian Carnival Puppet Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 136.

Inbuilt assumptions of interactivity and improvisation make mamulengo unruly by definition. Artists needed to be deft in their handling of spectators' interventions so that a basic degree of artistic control could be maintained. Yet an adroit mamulengueiro could incorporate even the most disruptive interventions. In milieus characterized by an abundance of alcohol and drunkenness (sometimes by performers themselves) presented a difficult challenge.[70] Besides having to contend with inebriated spectators, puppet artists undoubtedly had to control heckling. At the same time, it is likely that brawls and ensuing arrests derailed performances. Yet trying audiences need not be intoxicated or even adults. Two mamulengueiros refused to admit children and flatly rejected contracts for birthday parties. Young spectators perhaps did not understand the universe of puppets, or they might have demanded dramatic action at the expense of serious character development. Whatever the exact reason for their disavowal, as Manuel Amendoim put it, youngsters "mess up my plot."[71]

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[69] Brochado, 362.

[70] While several puppeteers explained that they took a shot of *cachaça* or *aguardente* to "warm" themselves before play, assistants or partners were so intoxicated that they could not work, placing another kind of burden on the performer.

If satisfying the demands of popular audiences was exasperating, meeting the expectations of middle-class audiences was likely even more difficult. To be sure, the spectator/performer dichotomy of bourgeois theater was alien to the guiding logics of mamulengo. An ever-attentive Altimar Pimentel observed one puppeteer's monumental struggle to involve a "sophisticated" audience (*plateia sofisticada*) in João Pessoa. Because the spectators neither understood the rules nor terms of engagement, they did not intervene where it was expected. Unlike representatives of the povo, who enthusiastically cajoled black protagonists and insulted their enemies, spectators did not greet the black puppet Gregório:

> Gregório: (*Emerges dancing*) – My people, good evening! – (*The music stops*) – Man, everything is all quiet. This kind of thing makes me mad, you know! My people, here goes another good evening! – (*Nobody responds once again*).[72]

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[71] Borba, 148 and 177. According to Borba, mamulengueiro Manuel Amendoim also interrupted performances to rebuke the more "salient" interrupters. Pimentel found it odd that during a performance of Manuel José Lucas da Silva, a child engaged with the puppets. Pimentel, 63-4.

[72] Pimentel, 53. The parenthetical remarks are Pimentel's observations.

Gregório's human manipulator attempted to school the public, but the first few seconds of the performance set the uncomfortable tone for the remainder of the show, which was a flop.[73]

Much is to be gained from the single documented case of a failed performance. The above episode suggests that the basic problem was not a matter of spectators "messing up" the plot, but rather the audience itself. The puppet artist's failure to reach a public for whom puppet shows were not created resulted in a show that was discernibly "chaotic and reduced" in the judgment of Altimar Pimentel.[74] Perhaps more importantly, the mishap exemplifies puppet artists' worst fear. They could be defeated by their audience.

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[73] Pimentel, 47.

[74] Pimentel, 47.

4. The Public Secret of Race: Anti-Blackness and Male *Brigas* in Puppet Play

Humiliating racial violence and speech-acts are startling mainstays of mamulengo puppetry. Captain Round One (Redondo), a cudgel-toting landowner, is given to boasting that he "couldn't care less about blacks (*nêgos*)" because his oversize weapon doubles as a "special medicine."[1] He is also given to invoking vast swaths of racist aphorisms. On one occasion, Round One boldly proclaims that Black men are pigs and twisted tree stumps.[2] Still other characters directly reference Brazil's slaveholding past in racist harangues. For instance, a singing puppet croons that "coffee is a white man's supper. A black man's coat is a fetter."[3] A self-declared "scourge of the blacks," a reference to the slavecatcher (*capitão do mato*) of colonial and imperial Brazil, even anticipates receiving a monetary reward for killing his one-hundredth Black man.[4]

The oft neglected mamulengo puppet tradition reveals that the racist mores of a slave society had by no means disappeared three quarters of a century after the end of slavery. It also powerfully confirms the 1883 prophesy of the white, Recife born abolitionist Joaquim Nabuco (1849-1910). On the eve of emancipation, he warned that slavery had indelibly scarred the worldview of *all* Brazilians, and that the damage would take many generations to disappear, if ever.[5] The mythic origins of mamulengo lie precisely in an unnamed plantation in the rural interior, where an enslaved person inflicted the punishments of their masters on the creatures he himself fashioned.

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[1] João redondo declares, "A minha volta pra nêgo é por dentro. … Tenho um xarope pra nêgo." Manuel Francisco da Silva, "A morte do cabo Zé Fincão," December 23, 1963. Cabedelo, Paraiba. Episode transcribed in Altimar de Alencar Pimentel, *O mundo mágico do João Redondo* (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço Nacional de Teatro, 1971), 30.

[2] The landowner says, "Negro deitado é porco. Negro de pé é toco. Nego não toma banho; se lameia." Manuel José Lucas, "O filho que deu na mãe," August 24, 1964. Cabedelo, Paraiba. Transcribed in Pimentel, 75.

[3] "Café, ceia de branco, / Palitó de negro é peia." Octacílio Pereira, "Você já viu negro prestar?" September 1964. Cabedelo, Paraiba. Episode transcribed in Pimentel, 145.

[4] This puppet says he is "andando matando nêgo. Já vou matando 99 nêgo. Sube que tinha esse aqui e vim matá-lo." Chico Daniel, "Disputa de João Bondade (o flagelo dos Negros)," October 1979. Natal, Rio Grande do Norte. Transcribed in Fernando Augusto Gonçalves Santos, *Mamulengo: um povo em forma de bonecos* (Rio de Janeiro : Edição FUNARTE, 1979), 102.

Although performances no longer explicitly identify characters as masters and slaves, they show an ineffaceable anti-blackness given that leading Black protagonists are cast in the racist stereotypes of a slaveholding society. Limited to the roles of fools (*bobos*) and troublemakers (*desordeiros*), Beneditos and Baltazars serve to exemplify the stupidity, malevolence, animal-like characteristics, lack of cleanliness, and immorality of Black Brazilians. What is more, the voices presented explicitly draw upon a broad gamut of popular aphorisms that unrelentingly demean blackness and the Black body from the outside-in.[6] Indeed, the collection of 34 transcribed plays (Table 4) that are examined here tracks closely with the corpus of racist expressions that were compiled, but not analyzed, by Brazilian and foreign intellectuals between the early 1900s and the late seventies in Pernambuco and Bahia.[7]

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[5] Joaquim Nabuco, *O Abolicionismo.* This chapter exemplifies what history of mentalités, long dismissed by professional historians, already knows to be true. In opposition to the rapidity of political and economic change, stories and signs – the stuff of cultural history – change quite slowly and enjoy remarkably long afterlives.

[6] A more comprehensive listing of these words that wound is found in the appendix.

Mamulengo is a world in which Baltazars and Beneditos, the Black central characters, are routinely called scoundrels (*cachorros* and *safados*), boys (*moleques*), imbeciles (*imbecís* and *besta*), bandits (*bandidos*), bullies (*bambas*), dishonorable (*desgraçado*), and indecent (*indecente*). These loaded insults are rendered even more demeaning when racialized. Thus, its Black protagonists might be attacked as a "stupid black" (*negro besta*) or "dishonorable black" (*negro desgraçado*). Although the term "negro" does not carry the same weight as the N-word in the United States, it registers a desire to humiliate or otherwise offend when it is uttered to someone's face.[8]

This preservation of racist stereotypes and verbal abuse might surprise those convinced that Brazil is "less racist" than other slaveholding societies in the Americas. To understand this, this chapter argues, we must look at the life experience of popular audiences that produced and consumed puppet play. Poor and overwhelmingly nonwhite, spectators who laughed were in their own lives the objects of racist and classed domination and stigmatization. For the common people, Brazil was hardly the racial democracy that was propagated by intellectuals in print. And still, the non-white viewing public was somewhat distanced from the heroes and butts of jokes owing to the puppets' tar black appearance.

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[7] Five published studies by Francisco Augusto Pereira da Costa (1908), Arthur Ramos (1935), Donald Pierson (1944), José Pérez (1969), Paulo de Carvalho Neto (1973; 1978), and Mário Souto Maior (1976) encapsulate a remarkably coherent and consistent body of racist sayings that were collected in multiple states over a nearly 100-year period. Their works include (in the order indicated above): *Folk-lore pernambucano: subsídios para a história da poesia popular em Pernambuco* (Recife: Cepe, 2004); *O folk-lore negro do Brasil; demopsychologia e psychanalyse* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1935); *Negroes in Brazil: A Study of Race Contact at Bahia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944); *Provérbios brasileiros* (Rio de Janeiro: Edições de Ouro, 1969); *El folklore de las luchas sociales: un ensayo de folklore y marxismo* (México, DF: Siglo XXI, 1973); "Folklore of the Black Struggle in Latin America," *Latin American Perspectives* 5, no. 2 (1978): 53-88; "O folclore do negro," *Folclore* no. 5 (1976): 1-4.

[8] Carl N. Degler, *Neither Black Nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 201. Degler notes that the term is "especially crushing … when used against a mulatto." See also Donald Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil: A Study of Race Contact at Bahia* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1944), 218-9 and Thales Azevedo, *As elites de cor: um estudo de ascenção social* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1955), 40.

The backbones of the chapter are neither irreducibly nor entirely unrelated to the domain of "life." Play is always engaged with the world that lies beyond it.[9] Indeed, working through three decades of transcribed mamulengo performances in three states reveals the public secret that few, whether Brazilian or foreign, have been willing (or even able) to directly address.[10] By speaking of race directly and without euphemism, this archive offers unprecedented insight into everyday forms of racism from above and below. The unrelentingly racial dimension of interpersonal conflict in mamulengo stands in sharp contrast to what has been termed Brazil's "recreational" racism precisely because it rejects subtlety.[11]

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[9] Robert Anchor, "History and Play: Johan Huizinga and His Critics," *History and Theory* 17, no. 1 (1978): 87-9. Jacques Ehrmann, "Homo Ludens Revisited," *Yale French Studies* 41, Game, Play, Literature (1968): 31-57. Anchor and Ehrmann offer important critiques of the field-defining scholar of play, Johan Huizinga. See *Homo Ludens: A Study in the Play Element in Culture* (New York: Roy Publishers, 1950).

[10] Jan Hoffman French, "Rethinking Police Violence in Brazil: Unmasking the Public Secret of Race," *Latin American Politics and Society* 55/4 (2013): 161-181.

[11] Adilson Moreira, *Racismo recreativo* (São Paulo: Pólen Livros, 2019). Edward Eric Telles, *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 154-5.

Like many forms of Brazilian plebeian culture, mamulengo is a "dark rock that resists all assimilation" into any easy either/or categorization.[12] Neither conservative nor subversive tout court, this chapter will show that the escapades of Baltazar and Benedito both derive from and validate prevailing anti-Black prejudices in the minds and on the tongues of audience members as well as their superiors. It also contends that audiences were drawn to identify with these Black heroes when they exacted revenge on abusive social superiors by verbally outsmarting and even physically attacking and killing those who spouted racist abuse. Private fantasies of revenge were realized by unapologetically Black heroes whose surfeit of vulgar jokes and uncontrolled violence offered a cathartic thrill for those living humble lives of subjection and deference to the more powerful.[13] Thus, puppet play is shown to track between reproducing a racist status quo and a spirited and violent resistance to its orthodoxies by Black male heroes who do as they wish rather than what they are told. Introducing himself in self-laudatory speech (*loa*), the Black hero declares: "The little black Baltazar has arrived, who fights in the barn and every manner, head on and in a gang. I am a little black all above the rules."

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[12] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trad. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 18.

[13] Altimar Pimentel's 1971 study of puppetry in Paraiba supports this interpretation. He wrote that audiences did not express an affinity for Benedito because they identified with his color per se (although some probably did), but rather because he, like spectators, was a rural peon (*peão*). Pimentel, 7.

4.1 The Fool Who Deceives: The Black as a Bobo (Fool)

After a musical prelude or jokes, Captain Round One, the "master" of the puppet play, announces the arrival of its protagonist: "Now I am going to call the puppet that everyone likes most, [in terms of his] funniness and struggle, the black Baltazar."[14] Bearing vague marks of ruralness – such as a straw or leather hat – yet often lacking a specified occupation, the tar black protagonists of mamulengo arrive with much whooping and laughter. As representatives of the "inferior strata" (*camadas inferiores*), their names may vary but their character attributes and flaws remain the same. Whether called Baltazar, Benedito, or even Gregório, the pint-sized figure is either a fool (*bobo*) or troublemaker (*desordeiro*).

The Black protagonist assumes the role of a clown or fool in six transcribed episodes.[15] Simpleminded and sometimes crass, the bobo frequently gives literal and suggestive answers to riddles and tests the patience of more "serious" characters. Liêdo Maranhão, our Mayhew of the São José Public Market, transcribed an exchange between a puppet artist named Inaldinho and his Benedito in November 1975. The mischievous puppet provoked uproarious laughter among nearby women and street vendors with his literal responses to his operator's questions. Inaldinho asked where Benedito had been born, and the puppet replied, "in the bed." The artist reframed his question in terms of the puppet's geographic origins (*natural*), which Benedito interprets as an inquiry about how he liked his water ("natural" as in mineral water). The headliner finally shared that he was born in the state of Bahia followed by a series of confused demonyms. Someone from Piaui, he said, is a *piolhento* (someone infested with lice), a Paraense is a *paralítico* (paralyzed person), and a Chinese person is a *chinelo* (slipper).[16]

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[14] Chico Daniel, "As desaventuras de Baltazar," October 1979. Natal, Rio Grande do Norte. Transcribed in Deífilo Gurgel, *O reinado de Baltazar: teatro de João Redondo* (Natal, RN: Prefeitura Municipal de Natal, 2008), 73.

[15] Of the 34 episodes examined in chapters 3 and 4, 21 include a Black protagonist.

Although a major source of humor, the bobo does not exist independently of the desordeiro (to be discussed below). A sequence of ten episodes documented by folklorist Deífilo Gurgel in 1979 Rio Grande do Norte suggests that both are two sides of the same coin. The first episode features João Round One poking fun at Baltazar's simplemindedness. The protagonist tells a rambling story about being lost in the rural interior. Baltazar cannot remember the difference between a "train station" (*estação*) and "extraction" (*estração*), which he uses interchangeably. Amused but perhaps also moved with pity, Round One insinuates that Baltazar's good-natured simplemindedness is characteristic of a broader – and more crucially, unraced – class of country people (*matutos*) who "never speak correctly."[17]

Elsewhere in the multipart spectacle, Baltazar tests the patience of other authority figures. An earnest but serious-minded teacher from Rio de Janeiro arrives to teach poor people how to read. Baltazar agrees to study with "Professor Master" (Professor Mestre) Guedes, but he uses the opportunity to insult his instructor and to make sexual jokes.[18] In the following episode, the protagonist consults with a priest because he wants to get married. Baltazar admits to knowing nothing about religion but uses the opportunity to pose a series of humorous riddles.[19] The exchange culminates with the protagonist asking the cleric why old people smell bad. Initially taken aback by the question, the priest explains that elderly people are sometimes too weak to take a bath. Baltazar corrects him, saying old men smell bad because they "carry two fetid balls and a dead dick."[20]

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[16] Liêdo Maranhão de Souza, *Classificação popular da literature de cordel, Que só, Marketing dos camelôs de remédio ou o mundo de camelotagem* (Recife: Cepe, 2013), 221-2.

[17] "Eu num gosto de lutar com gente matuta, não, que gente matuta nunca fala direito." Chico Daniel, "As desventuras de Baltazar e a viagem de João Redondo," October 1969. Rio Grande do Norte. Transcribed in Gurgel, 64-160.

In each of the preceding examples, the protagonist draws on the stereotype of the ignorant and unrefined Black. But we must not mistake the act of *playing* the fool for *being* one. We can almost see the flicker of deceit in Baltazar's eyes as he sees how far he can push his questionable conduct. In the plays examined here, it is significant that all instances of the bobo are never treated disapprovingly, for their behavior confirms the ignorance, foolishness, and impropriety of Black Brazilians. However, the act of playing the fool comes into focus as a defensive strategy that resonated with the audience.

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[18] Chico Daniel, "Professor Mestre Guedes," October 1969. Rio Grande do Norte. Transcribed in Gurgel, 140-6.

[19] A saying recorded by Donald Pierson and Paulo de Carvalho Neto holds that if a priest is white, "he says mass. But if he is a Negro, he only pretends to be saying it." See Pierson, 363 and Carvalho Neto, *El folklore de las luchas sociales: un ensayo de folklore y marxismo* (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, S.A., 1973), 37.

[20] "Nada disso," Baltazar tells the Padre. "O velho fede, purque carrega dois ovos podre e um pinto morto." Chico Daniel, "O casamento de Baltazar," October 1969. Rio Grande do Norte. Transcribed in Gurgel, 154.

Popular spectators doubtless played the fool many times in their lives, perhaps to mitigate the rage of a foreman or police officer.[21] Feigning simplemindedness was safer than adopting the tactics of our next figure, the desordeiro, whose course of action was suicidal for all but the most audacious of the povo.

4.2 Um negro fora do seu lugar: Crashing João Redondo's Party

Ten of our puppet plays revolve around the figure of the troublemaker. This hotblooded bully's refusal to act in a deferential manner combines with a thirst for vengeance. In virtually all the episodes in which the protagonist is cast as a desordeiro, the initial conflict involves the hero being blocked from attending a dance hosted and overseen by Captain Round One. The exclusion is based on a racist stereotype that Blacks, if admitted, are likely to pick fights and cause a general disturbance (figs. 49 and 50). This belief is captured by the saying, "A black at the party, a club to the forehead."[22] In mamulengo, this is a self-fulfilling prophecy because Baltazar and Benedito cannot help but ignore the prohibition, thus inciting animosities that boil over into open, and not rarely, bloody conflict.

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[21] In his 1990 follow-up to *Weapons of the* Weak, James C. Scott writes discusses the "theatrical imperatives" whereby subordinate actors present "a more or less credible performance" by "speaking the lines and making the gestures" that are expected of them. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 3-4.

[22] "Negro na festa, pau na testa." See Carvalho Neto, 113 and José Pérez, *Provérbios brasileiros* (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. de Ouro, 1969), 86.

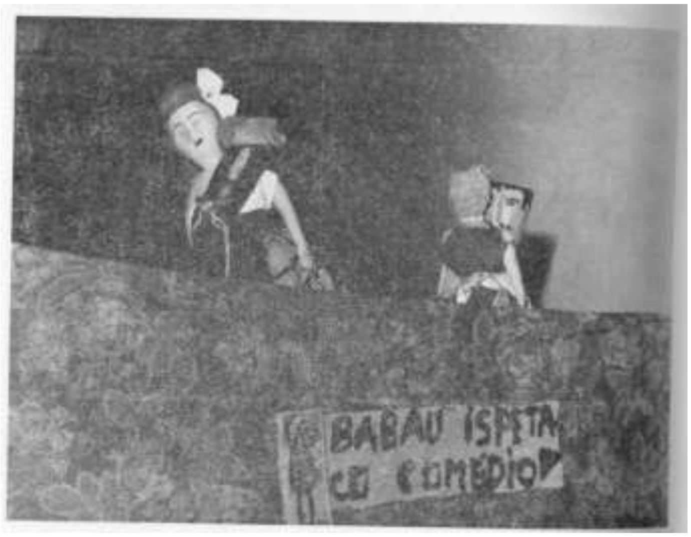

Figure 49: "Benedito dancing with a white woman. The low level of literacy among mamulengueiros, including Babau, is suggested by the handwritten sign for a "comedy spectacle" misspelled as "ispetaco comédio." The sign is held up by an image of a U.S indigenous person wearing a headdress. Photograph by M. Clemente, published in Hermilo Borba Filho, *Fisionomia e espírito do mamulengo (o teatro popular do Nordeste)* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1966), 178.

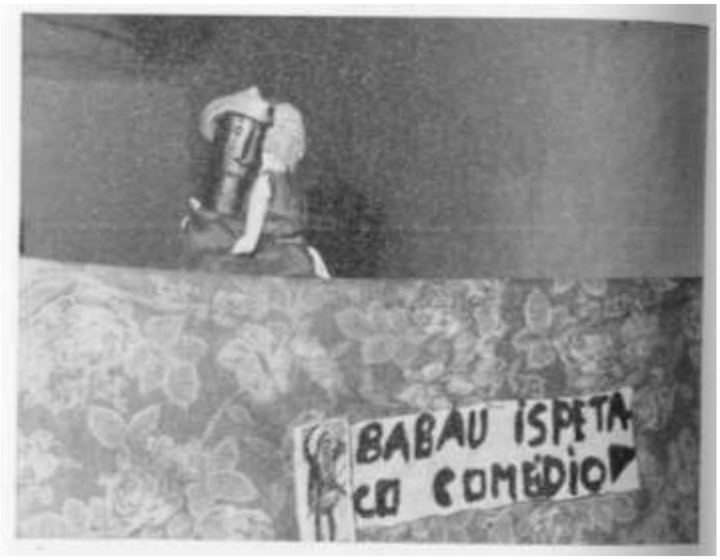

Figure 50: Benedito dancing alone with a white partner. Photograph by M. Clemente. Published in Borba, 182.

In the plotlines of our mamulengo plays, dances are significant because they expose characters' racial prejudices.[23] Blacks are forbidden to attend dances in five transcribed episodes, three of which are explicit in their take on interracial relations. The first piece is also among the most complex in its range of interpersonal conflicts. One disagreement leads to another after the protagonist confronts a swaggering philanderer named Zé das Moças (Ladies' Joe), who tells a young woman that she should only dance with white men like himself.[24] A fuming Benedito beats Zé, his female dance partner, and even her mother. A new cycle of assaults begins after Benedito scolds another man for telling his dance partner to "get together with a white man, but [not] a …" He stops midsentence, seemingly unable to utter the word for "black" (negro).[25] Another reveler warns Benedito that he cannot kiss other people's dance partners. Someone in the audience urges the protagonist to kiss her, which Benedito does without hesitation, and then proceeds to beat her date.[26]

The barring of Black protagonists from such dances thus generates the conflict needed for dramatic storytelling. It exposes deeper concerns in mid-20th century Recife about social contact between the races, especially between white females and nonwhite males. Indeed, interviews conducted by the anthropologist René Ribeiro (1914-1990) for a 1956 study of race relations in Recife reveal a broadly shared belief that "black men are crazy for white women," recalling the predatory black male figure central to racism in the United States.[27] When Ribeiro surveyed university and high school students (inevitably upper class), he found clear evidence that they were far less likely to accept a Black "relative by marriage" than a mulatto, although they insisted that they were amenable to having Black Brazilians as friends and neighbors.[28] Ribeiro also found that the white women he interviewed were substantially less tolerant of blacks and mulattoes than their male counterparts. Multiple females said they were fearful of blacks because, in the words of a 17-year-old girl of the "complex they have, and thus the harm they do." If she had her way, she would expel Blacks and mulattoes from the country.[29]

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[23] In their study of racism and social mobility in white southern Brazil, sociologists Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Octavio Ianni noted that dances and families constituted sites of significant racial prejudice among all social classes. Cardoso and Ianni, *Cor e mobilidade social*, 177. Findings translated and visualized in Degler, 137-8.
[24] The father says, "Minha fia, a senhora se ajunte com homem branco, mas não se ajunte com home ..." Manuel Amendoim (Babau), "As trapaças de Benedito." Goiana, Pernambuco. Transcribed in Borba, 162.
[25] Borba, 162.
[26] Borba, 163.

Although he was uncomfortable with the vulgar belief that Black males were infatuated with white females, René Ribeiro acknowledged Brazil's practices of customary rather than legal segregation.[30] In many Brazilian cities, nonwhite persons were deliberately barred from clubs, some public spaces, and other establishments on the grounds that they were inclined to poor conduct. This pattern of exclusion was often camouflaged with the denial that their non-admittance was explicitly based on color as opposed to dress codes, culture, and comportment.[31] Interviewing Black Recifenses, Ribeiro found that many went out of the way to "avoid unpleasant incidents" by taking special precautions at dances where white women were present. Laser focused on social etiquette, they approached white women only if they had been properly introduced. As we will now see, the impetuous heroes of mamulengo present a striking contrast to this level of prudence.[32]

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[27] René Ribeiro, *Religião e relações sociais* (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Educação e Cultura, Serviço de Documentação, 1956), 110. For an English language discussion of the study and its findings, see Degler, 131-6.

[28] See sequence of tables in Ribeiro, chapter 4 ("Sondagem do preconceito"), 155-205.

[29] This 17-year-old female informant would reject the advances of a Black man "por causa do complexo que eles têm, e assim fazem o mal." Ribeiro, 118.

[30] In a small digression, Ribeiro suggests that black men resort to "sexual magic" (*magia sexual*) to attract white women. One of his informants, a white plantation owner, describes a spell (*trabalho*) whereby the black supplicant would join locks of hair and bits of clothing. He associates the tactic with catimbó, an ill-defined set of magical practices. See Ribeiro, 111-2. On catimbó, see Roger Bastide, *The African Religions of Brazil: Toward a Sociology of the Interpenetration of Civilizations*, trans. Helen Sebba (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

4.3 The Black Hero Takes on the Police

A predictable mamulengo plotline involves the Black lead character attending the dance, being insulted, and then physically retaliating against and defeating his adversary. The situation is not quite so simple, however. If disparaging remarks towards Black characters often initiate and escalate hostilities, the protagonist often strikes preemptively against the representatives of public authority at the service of the

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[31] Thales Azevedo, Roger Bastide, and Florestan Fernandes independently confirmed this practice, and their Black and mulatto informants indicated a deliberate avoidance of spaces where they were not welcomeDegler, 145-6; Thales Azevedo, *As elites de cor numa cidade brasileira: um estudo de ascenção social & classes sociais e grupos de prestígio*, 2nd edition (Salvador: Edufba/EGBA, 1996), 35, 88, and 91; Florestan Fernandes, *A integração do negro na sociedade de classes*, vol. 2 (São Paulo: Universidade de São Paulo, 1964), 333; Roger Bastide, *Relações raciais entre negros e brancos em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Editora Anhembi, 1955), 163. Fernandes also observed that many whites avoided inviting blacks into their homes. See Fernandes, 321. Cited in Degler, 136.

[32] Ribeiro, 144-5.

Captain. Hotheaded and all too eager to demonstrate their boldness and daring, they do not wait to be humiliated by their adversary.

In many instances, troublemakers' headstrong and stubborn qualities (*teimosidade*) are openly linked to the characters' blackness. In fact, some iterations of Baltazar and Benedito are given to emphatically affirming their violent predisposition. Impeded from attending the captain's dance, he warns Round One that "blacks (*nêgo*) are a good group. They don't promise anything, [they] give it right away."[33] At another dance, Benedito swoops in and steals the dance partner of Doutor Mané Relojo. He accuses Benedito of being a "black thief" (*nêgo bandido*) and a "disgrace" (*nêgo desgraçado*) and proceeds to strike him. Benedito demands respect and fiercely rejects being called a "black." The protagonist ultimately kills the fellow partygoer. After trying to blame the musician for the crime, Benedito accepts his fate because he is a "man [and] the black man does not promise anything; he gives it right away! The black man only has one word. It's a hand on the ear and a knife in the stomach." He then attempts to "sell" the corpse as fresh meat to the audience.[34]

In an episode performed by Manuel Francisco da Silva in 1963, Benedito kills a tyrannical officer of the law named Sergeant Zé "Big Support" (Fincão). After the protagonist arrives to the dance, Fincão shuts down the party because "blacks don't dance here," adding that his "punishment is deeper than a candlewick."[35] Benedito responds, "I'm the one who's in charge of this mother. It's me! Benedito de Lima, ladies' clove and girls' rosemary!" Zé Fincão obtains an oversized revolver and taunts his opponent by daring Benedito to put him. The hero then wrests the gun away from the police officer and thrusts a large knife into the puppet, stabbing him multiple times. So vicious was his "assault" that a member of the audience shouted "enough, Benedito!"[36] The episode ends with Benedito offering Captain Round One his services as a "criminal" (*criminoso*). Bearing witness to the ordeal, the captain concedes that "black men are really wrong." Benedito eagerly accepts being "really wrong and resilient" but also suggests that the ends justify the means.[37]

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[33] "Nêgo é uma classe muito boa. Não promete, dá logo." Manuel José Lucas, "O filho que de una mãe," August 24, 1964. Cabedelo, Paraiba. Transcribed in Pimentel, 74.

[34] "Eu sou home. Nêgo não promete não: dá é logo! A palavra de nêgo só é uma. É mão no pé-de-ouvido e faca no bucho." Paulo Vitorino Monteiro, "O preço do casamento," November 7, 1964. Cabedelo, Paraíba. Transcribed in Pimentel, 120-1.

In a later match-up, performed in Rio Grande do Norte in 1979, Baltazar provokes the sergeant but does not kill him. In this episode, Baltazar squares off with the officer, who terminates the brincadeira because João Round One did not obtain authorization. Speaking to him in the informal and undeferential second person, Baltazar warns the officer not to test him:

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[35] Zé Fincão says: "Nêgo aqui não dança. Nêgo aqui não dança. … A vorta aqui é pro dentro que nem pavio de vela." Manuel Francisco da Silva, "A morte do cabo Zé Fincão," December 23, 1963. Cabedelo, Paraiba. Transcribed in Pimentel, 32.

[36] Benedito retorts that "Quem manda aqui nessa pitomba sou eu. E eu! Benedito de Lima, cravo das moças, alecrim das meninas!" He later taunts: "Toca, toca. Tá com medo? Você tá com medo, tá?" Silva, "A morte," in Pimentel, 37-9.

[37] João Redondo likens blacks' "wrongness" to blacks' hair and tapioca: "O cabelo do negro é mesmo que tapioca no taboleiro, viu? O negro é muito errado." Benedito responds: "Eu sou errado, mas tem uma coisa. A guerra quem venceu foi eu e o soldado eu tirei do mundo, não sabe? Eu sou muito errado e raçudo." Silva, "A morte," in Pimentel, 37-9.

> Baltazar: Man, go raise your family, guy. Guy, don't play with me, guy.
>
> Zé Fincão: Oh, you want to play, do you? You're under arrest, boy. Surrender.
>
> Baltazar: I'm not going to surrender. I've seen a negro surrender and it was the ugliest thing I have ever seen. … You can go away now, raise your family, guy.

Baltazar attacks Fincão and the sergeant's verbal response becomes more unequivocally racial:

> Fincão: But what a troublesome black! A black like this, if I had a knife here, I would teach him a lesson.
>
> Baltazar: No, but do you want to know something? You aren't in charge here.
>
> Fincão: Do you want to know something? You're under arrest, negro![38]

The protagonist continues to beat the officer and runs him off the stage.

The belligerent behavior of the Black troublemaker does not set him apart from his enemies. To be sure, the laudatory preludes spoken by virtually all male characters (especially elite figures) are equivalent displays of machista feather ruffling. These loas reference one's bravery, viciousness, and in the case of Baltazar and Benedito, their sexual appeal. Besides exhibiting a keenness to prove his worth, the Black hero also distinguishes himself through mimicry. The notion that the Black protagonist duplicates the actions and words of his superiors reveals a shared connection with the oppressor.

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[38] Baltazar says to the officer: "Rapaz, vai criar tua famia, freguês. Freguês, tu não brinca comigo, não, freguês." Fincão: "Ai, você quer brincar, mesmo? Teje preso, moleque, se renda!" Baltazar: "Eu não me rendo não senhor. Que eu vi um negro rendido e foi a coisa feia que eu já vi. … Vá simbora pra lá, criar sua família, freguês." Note: Gurgel suggests that Baltazar refers to a "herniated" black person instead of "submitted." See footnote 16. Continued: Fincão: "Mas que nêgo da mulesta! … Tá, um nêgo desse, se eu tivesse aqui uma faca, eu ensinava os camin." Baltazar: "Não, mas o senhor sabe de uma coisa? O senhor aqui, não manda em nada, não." Fincão: "Sabe de uma coisa? Você tá preso, nêgo!" Chico Daniel, "A autoridade de Zé Fincão." Performed in Natal in early 1979. Transcribed in Gurgel, 52-5.

In "The Death of Zé Fincão," Captain Round One and Benedito deliver identical introductory remarks. Appearing first, the landowner contends that he is a "beast that never dies and isn't afraid of those who die." He warns of fits of gratuitous violence by invoking a club to the head, "phlegm running, and these kids with swollen bellies licking" their wounds. Benedito delivers the same impassioned preamble a second time. The first repetition includes a small personal touch, however. Instead of mentioning diseased children (swollen stomachs are classic indications of worms), he says that his enemies are forced to swallow their phlegm.[39] Although Baltazar and Benedito physically attack the captain in only two episodes (fig. 51), expressing defiant and even mocking attitudes are the norm. A small and seemingly innocuous game of imitation imparts a deeper truth about the subjugated modeling themselves on their abusers. Not one to physically remove Benedito from the dance, Round One orders the human musician to do so. The protagonist imitates his orders and insults:

João Redondo: Send this guy away.

---

[39] João Redondo and Benedito declare that they are a "bicho que nunca morreu e nem tem medo de quem morre, bicho de tampa e rampa, o cabelo é pouco e não aguenta grama, pisa no chão a tapioca alevanta. Aqui é nove ou noventa, é o couro da testa e o pau da venta, é o pau batendo e o catarro correndo." While the former references "esses meninos sambudos lambendo," the latter simply mentions "o catarro correndo e mandando engulir." Chico Daniel, "A autoridade de Zé Fincão," December 23, 1963. Cabadelo, Paraíba. Transcribed in Pimentel, 23 and 31.

Benedito: Send this guy away, Mr. Luís.

João Redondo: Oh, you are imitating me, are you black?

In his response, Benedito humorously confuses the words for imitation (*arremendando*) and mending or patching (*remendando*), questioning, "You are patching me up, are you black?" Unamused, Round One tells the musician that any "place where blacks play is no good."[40]

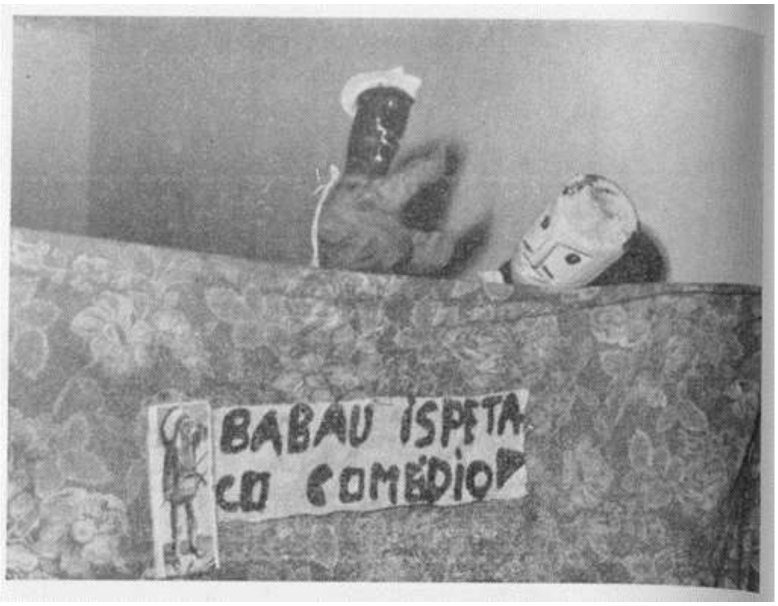

Figure 51: "Benedito gives a thrashing to João Redondo." Photograph by M. Clemente. Published in Borba, 182.

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[40] Redondo says to the musician, "O sinhô mande esse camarada ir-se embora," which Benedito repeats verbatum. The captain responds: "Ai, nêgo você tá me arremendando é?" Benedito asks João Redondo whether he is "me remendando." The captain concludes that "lugá qui nêgo brinca não presta." Manuel José Lucas, "O filho que deu na mãe." Performed in Cabedelo, Paraíba on August 24, 1964. Transcribed in Pimentel, 73-4. While black protagonists beat, whip, stab, and murder police officers and bohemians, rare are their direct physical confrontations with the colonel or captain. The paradigmatic conflict between patron (*patrão*) and peon (*peão*) is largely verbal, undoubtedly because attacking the local embodiment of power is inconceivable to artists and audiences alike.

Like powerful elite actors, the Black desordeiro does not necessarily adjust his confrontational behavior when interacting with subordinate figures. In one scene, a partially deaf Mané Braz answers an increasingly annoyed Benedito's questioning with nonsensical statements. The humor of the exchange resides in the fact that Braz answers in closely rhyming words. Thus, when Benedito asks for his name (*nome*), Mané responds, that he is not hungry (*com fome*) because he already ate. Getting nowhere, an infuriated Benedito tells Mané Braz he is not welcome at the dance and beats him, inflicting the same humiliation he experiences on someone presumed to be weak.[41] Because he cannot see beyond the rule of violence and uncontested authority, Benedito acts like the police officer or landowner, suggesting that there is always an oppressor to the oppressed.

4.4 How Baltazar Gets His Wish, and Afterwards

We have already seen that Black protagonists are excluded from white dances to prevent romantic relationships. One episode stands out for contemplating how a Black figure like Baltazar or Benedito might win over (and even marry) not just any white woman, but Round One's daughter. Another imagines what this marriage would look like from the perspective of family life.

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[41] Mané Braz's remarks offer rare glimpses at the economic situation in the rural interior. For instance, he explains that beans are in short supply: "Feijão! Feijão tá caro, rapaiz. No interior num tem nada não. Com esse inverno aí, acabou-se foi tudo." Braz also references flour and rural peasants: "Farinha? Farinha tá barata agora. Foram inventá esse negoço de camponês, butaram os home pra fora. E sabe duma coisa? O negoço tá ficando é ruim!" Lucas, "O filho que de una mãe," in Pimentel, 96-9. Whereas João Redondo, priests, and teachers are patient with (or poke fun at) the black bobo, the black desordeiro responds to the Braz the bobo with impatience and a heightened sense of aggression.

In an untitled but purportedly "representative" piece performed in Rio Grande do Norte in the 1940s, Baltazar de Sousa Miguel decides that he wants to date and marry the captain's daughter, Minervina de Morais.[42] The protagonist is promptly arrested at the captain's desk, but he does not resist or otherwise heighten animosities. Instead, he confers with an attorney to secure his release and, even more determined to win Minervina, later decides to hatch a plan. Baltazar implores Barroso, the captain's second in command, to tell the woman that "I am rich. I'm not black, no. I have a stable color." Minervina arrives and she is told that a "brown man" (*moreno*) arrived from the South and is looking for beautiful women. The ploy is successful, and the pair finally meet. Baltazar assures Round One's daughter that he is indeed a "brown man of color. But free and unhindered," implying that he is nonwhite but "lighter" because of his purported wealth.[43]

The young woman agrees to marry Baltazar, but there is a catch. They must do so in secret because her father would never approve. The couple finds a priest to marry them. Rather than demanding a cash payment, the cleric offers to perform the secret ceremony for a mere turkey wing.[44] Baltazar then kills a bull to celebrate the wedding. In a surprise ending, the captain is not thrown into a fit of rage when he learns of the secret nuptials, perhaps because his new son-in-law apologizes for his "ungratefulness" owing to his extreme "youth" (*mocidade*). The captain accepts Baltazar's apology and welcomes him into the family.[45]

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[42] José Bezerra Gomes, untitled but "representative" play put on by Sebastião Severino Dantas Bastos. Transcribed in ibid., *Teatro de João Redondo* (Natal: Fundação José Augusto, 1975), 32-50.

[43] Baltazar says, "Não sou negro não. Tenho uma cor segura" and he assures Minervina that "Sou um moreno de cor. Mas livre e desimpedido." Sebastião Severino Dantas Bastos, untitled, 1940s. Episode transcribed in Gomes, *Teatro de João Redondo* (Natal, RN: Fundação José Augusto, 1975), 41.

It is uncertain whether the artist intended for the captain to be impressed with or duped by the ruse. Yet the clever act of deception is significant for two reasons. First, it helps Baltazar evade the stigma of color. Second, the tactic presents a variation of the troublemaker that is noted for his cunning (*malícia*) rather than strength and cruelty alone.[46] Regarding the first point, Baltazar recognizes that wealth overrides (or at least mitigates) the blemish of blackness. In the mid-1950s, a Recife resident used the analogy of a Black man wearing a ring to illustrate that the symbol of wealth – rather than the color of the bearer's skin – was socially accepted.[47] Although Baltazar does not wear such a ring, the claim of wealth prompts Round One's approval, who perhaps approaches the prospect as a means of elevating or recuperating the status of his family.

Bastos' interpretation of Baltazar differs from other characters in the same predicament in one major way. When a police sergeant arrives to take him into custody, he does not resist arrest; instead, Baltazar explains that he was "not born to fear man

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[44] Bastos in Gomes, 41.
[45] Bastos in Gomes, 44-5.
[46] In Portuguese, the term "malícia" does not necessarily invoke the same meaning as "malice."
[47] Ribeiro, 124.

[when I'm] within my rights."[48] Rather than accosting his captors and causing a scene, he devises a workaround for his temporary setback. Thus, while the other characters might mistake Baltazar's actions for resignation or passivity, we understand that he is about to outwit the social group that barred from the party. Ultimately, Baltazar overcomes both the stigma and the stereotype while carrying out what might be an act of revenge.

A second episode, performed in Paraiba in 1968, examines the marriage between a black man and white woman once the nuptial merrymaking has concluded. Luís Barbosa dos Santos' "The Punishment of Baltazar" centers on an older version of the hero.[49] Usually presented as a fighter or clown, this Baltazar is a shiftless drunkard (cachaceiro) and self-declared follower of Satan. The episode begins with the antagonist leaving his white wife and young daughter so he can pursue a life of drinking and gambling. As Baltazar coerces his wife into giving him spending money, she blurts out that her father, Captain Round One, was correct about "never trusting blacks."[50] Right after abandoning them, Baltazar learns that his wife is the sole beneficiary of a recently deceased brother's estate, thus providing him with another source of spending money.

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[48] Baltazar declares that "Eu não nasci para ter medo de homem dentro do meu direito." Bastos in Gomes, 37.

[49] Luís Barbosa dos Santos, "O castigo de Baltazar." Performed in João Pessoa, Paraiba in 1968. Transcribed in Pimentel, 170-184.

[50] The wife declares that her "Papai bem que me dizia que eu não desse confiança a negro." Pimentel, 179.

Baltazar reassesses his situation 12 years after falling into the world (*caindo no mundo*). He regrets leaving his family and implores viewers to never "be against your wife, … your children, because if not, you are on the path to hell."[51] The protagonist-turned-antagonist wanders the streets asking for pocket change, until one day he encounters a woman and young girl. Perhaps to lighten the mood of the demoralizing episode, the woman explains her situation to the "beggar" in the form of a riddle. She says she is neither married, nor dating, nor widowed. After Baltazar asks how this can be, she reveals that her husband abandoned his family 12 years ago. The young girl then reveals herself to be Xandoquinha Redondo, Baltazar's daughter and Captain Round One's granddaughter. Overjoyed to be reunited with his family, Baltazar implores his wife to forgive him. She accedes after Baltazar – still malevolent at the core – grabs, and threatens to kill, her.[52]

Although one might understand Santos' performance as morality play targeting the vices of gambling and drink, the superseding conflict pertains to a mismatch between a Black husband and his white wife. Moreover, the episode reveals these arrangements to be major sources of consternation in Northeast Brazil until at least the late 1960s. To be sure, Ribeiro found significant opposition to what he termed "extremely unequal" marriages among the lower, middle, and upper classes, especially if these arrangements did not bring improvements in status and wealth.[53] An informant who claimed many years of "experience and observation" explained that a "white woman and black man never live well; they always live in disharmony" because the wife ends up betraying her husband.[54] The Black partner is faulted for this discord because he, like Baltazar, is inherently deceitful and malicious. Indeed, a poor Black man related that his mother-in-law tried to throw the brakes on the marriage by warning her daughter that "he will unleash his color on her" during their first fight.[55]

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[51] He sermonizes: "Não seja contra a sua esposa, não seja contra seus filhos, porque senão tá no caminho do Inferno como eu já tou atolado dentro do Inferno." Pimentel, 181.

[52] Pimentel, 183.

The Baltazar who successfully overcomes the stereotype in the first episode reveals his true nature after getting married and having a child. Seemingly extraneous to the plotline, his devotion to Satan is in fact central. The character's remarks about his "father" and "protector" appeal to an enduring belief that Black men are children of evil, a myth ineradicably linked to Brazil's slaveholding past. Fresh traces of these historical associations are to be found in an immense body of popular expressions (see Appendix). Several of the most common sayings rank racial groups in descending order of their moral standing. Whites are devoted children of God while Blacks are sorcerers

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[53] Ribeiro, 116 and 118. A subject who the author describes as a mixed man of indigenous descent explained that he would "historically kill" a black man if they appeared in his family. Ibid., 119. One of Ribeiro's informants relayed that a church in one of Recife's noble neighborhoods was filled to the brim with strangers who wanted to see a rich white woman marry a mulatto navy official. He found that this anecdote exemplifies the "strangeness provoked even today by extremely unequal marriages." Ibid., 116.

[54] Ribeiro, 110-1.

[55] Ribeiro, 111. Ultimately, the wife left her husband to live "maritally" with a mulatto man.

(*feiticeiros*) and sons of Satan who are condemned to hell.[56] Baltazar's wife, who the transcriber describes as a "pure, correct, model victim," suffers tremendously at the hands of her "perverse" and "knavish" husband, who is at once a bad father and husband and a "rebel against God."[57]

Santos' episode offers an explicit warning. White women, who are honorable and pious, should not marry Black men, whose intrinsic evil will destroy both her and her family.[58] In the previous chapter, we saw that this episode perplexed the audience, for it did not feature regular paroxysms of heroic struggle. Yet we might also infer that the "The Punishment of Baltazar" was uncomfortably sobering. Indeed, it probably marred the fantasy of the Black protagonist winning the prize long denied to him. In this regard, the "seriousness" of the subject matter perhaps impinged upon the magical circle of play. When this episode is examined alongside Santos's cautionary tale of unhappily-ever-after, it appears even more dreamlike. Baltazar fools not only his bride-to-be and her father – a figure who is given to espousing racist abuse – but also the priest, who agrees to perform the marriage without the consent of the all-powerful landowner.[59]

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[56] For instance: "The white man is a son of God, / The mulatto is a foster-child, / The *cabra* has no relatives, / The Negro is a son of Satan" and "Every white man comes from God, / Every mulatto is a *pimpão* [braggart], / Every caboclo is a thief, / Every Negro is a *feiticiero*." See Pierson, 364 and Carvalho-Neto, 36 and 85.
[57] Pimentel, 170.
[58] Pimentel found that Santos's performance was marked by a "reactionary racism." Pimentel, 170.
[59] In René Ribeiro's study, two figures charged with performing marriages, a rural priest and justice of the peace, flatly refused to marry interracial actors who belonged to the inferior social class. The justice told the researcher that marriage between a black man and white woman is an "insult." Outright opposition and no small amount of murmuring even seem to accompany marriages that ostensibly elevate one of the partners. Ribeiro, 116.

Apart from being the only episode that features the Black protagonist being married, the 1968 performance is also unique for how it defines Baltazar. Elsewhere in mamulengo, the Black desordeiro forges his own path by transcending socially acceptable notions of right and wrong, this version of Baltazar is morally "wrong." Unlike other iterations of Baltazar or Benedito, who can transmute isolated acts of wrong into a positive (such as killing a police officer), Baltazar the truculent son of Satan is unable to exploit this ambiguity. This puppet artist thus presents an uncomfortable and troubling assessment of the hero, and perhaps even the audience itself.

4.5 Racial Aggression in Verbal Duels: Northeastern Desafios

Mamulengo is not the only northeastern brincadeira that consists of racial aggression between whites, Blacks, and non-Blacks. The exchange of racial slights plays a central role in the celebrated form of verbal dueling known in the northeast as *desafios* (or *pelejas*). When looking for a North American counterpart to this "stylized exchange of personal insult," one might turn to the game known as "the dozens," "sounding," and "signifying" within the North American black communities.[60] Arthur Ramos (1903-

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[60] Linda Lewin, "Who Was "O Grande Romano"? Genealogical Purity, The Indian "Past," and Whiteness in Brazil's Northeastern Backlands (1750-1900)," *CLIO – Revista de Pesquisa Histórica* 25, no. 1 (2007): 86. The Pernambucan folklorist F. A. Pereira da Costa describes the desafio as an improvised poetic "challenge" or duel. See footnote 85 in ibid., 600. See, for example, William Labov, "Rules for Ritual Insults," in *Studies of Social Interaction* (New York: Free Press, 1972), 120-69.

1949), a leading scholar of Afro-Brazilian cultural practices, found that Black challengers were spurred by a discernible "spirit of revenge"[61]

A much cited, albeit undated, duel between a white washerman and Black nurse's servant highlights the timbre of racial insults. Both men were inmates at Recife's Detention House (Casa de Detenção), and the duel took place in the facility's laundry facilities. A small crowd gathered around the contenders. The white washerman targeted his opponent's color right out of the gate. He accentuated the differences between blacks and whites and even mocked two of Brazil's most important abolitionists, Joaquim Nabuco (1849-1910) and José Mariano (1850-1912):

> […]
> There are many insolent blacks,
> I don't want any mistake;
> Look here we are not
> Of the same cloth,
> Of this were guilty only
> Nabuco and Zé Mariano.[62]

The nurse's servant responded:

> I am black but I am fragrant,
> You are a disheveled white,
> If you want to sing with me, take a bath first;
> I once had a white horse:
> That was worse than a path.[63]

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[61] Arthur Ramos, *O folklore negro do Brasil: demopsicologia e psicanálise* (São Paulo: Livraria-Editora da Casa do Estudante do Brasil, 1954), 250. Citing the account of Leonardo Mota, Ramos also includes an encounter between a black and mestiço. Ramos, 252-3.

[62] "Há muito negro insolente, / Com eles não quero engano; / Vejá lá que nós não somos / Fazenda do mesmo pano, / Disso só foram culpados / Nabuco e Zé Mariano." Costa, 601.

[63] "Sou negro, mas sou cheiroso, / Você é branco foveiro, / Se quiser cantar comigo, / Vá tomar banho primeiro; / Eu tive um cavalo branco: / Que era pior que um sendeiro." Costa, 601.

Building on a theme of filth, which is usually associated with people of color, the washer man's attacks intensified:

> […]
> The black is a flea,
> He is a pest, is dirty, is smelly,
> By day he snores in the fetter,
> At night he steals hens,
> The white man was born for the parlor
> And the black for the kitchen.[64]

The white man reiterated the platitude that blacks were dirty and inclined to theft while upholding the "natural" social order. After debating whether the black or white man was responsible for a series of misfortunes (such as a horse dying), the contest was interrupted by a prison guard and no victor was declared.[65]

Folklorist Théo Brandão (1907-1981) transcribed a desafio between Joaquim Carpina, a black guitarist and singer, and the famous mixed-race (*caboclo*) singer Manuel Nenen. Anticipating racial insults, Carpina sung:

> Mr. Nene, I am a black,
> but a unique black,
> I am sweeter than sugarcane,
> I smell just like the rain.
> I am a fine hand doll
> that girls dawdle.[66]

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[64] "O negro é bicho-de-pé, / É peste, é sujo, é morrinha, / De dia ronca na peia, / De noite rouba galinha, / O branco nasceu p'ra sala / E o negro para a cozinha." Costa, 602. One might recall that an audience member exclaimed that Zé das Moças said Benedito had stolen hens.

[65] Costa, 600.

[66] "Seu Nene neu sou um preto / Mas um preto singulá. / Sou doce que nem a cana, / Cheiro iguarmente a amaná. / Sou calunga de loiça fina, / Das menina vadiá." Théo Brandão, *Folclore de Alagoas* (Maceió, AL: Ofic. Graf. Da Casa Ramalho, 1949), 136.

Carpina's remarks, like the imprisoned nurse's servant, exemplify an element of truth embedded in racist stereotypes while simultaneously presenting him as an exception to the general rule. Nenen did not directly target Carpina's color until the latter described himself as a ladies' man. More specifically, the caboclo responded to the black man's assertion that white women kissed him:

> Girls who kiss blacks (*nêgo*)
> for a crazy person does nothing to satisfy,
> blacks do not kiss young women,
> blacks kiss "cod"
> blacks kiss other black women (*nêga*)
> which is one side of the same stick.[67]

When approached as proportional responses intended to heighten and impede hostilities, dramatic provocations and reactions exemplify what I all racial acrobatics.[68] This difficult dance, common to both desafios and mamulengo, entails complex evasions together with partial affirmations and negations.

Though less prevalent in the context of desafios, evasion is an important strategy in puppet plays. The absence of verbal retorts to instances of racial aggression should not, however, be mistaken for silence, for protagonists' acts of physical retaliation are responses.[69] However, partial affirmations seem to be most abundant in desafios, mamulengo, and a collection of popular aphorisms. A common situation involves the character being subjected to micro and macro aggressions simultaneously upholding and exempting them from the social "truths" etched into the verbal slight. This kind of response is best understood using the shorthand "black *but*." To give one example, Joaquim Carpina accentuates his uniqueness because he is "sweet" and pleasant smelling. In a 1964 puppet show in João Pessoa, José Barreto do Nascimento's Benedito decides to dance with Dona Pelonha, Captain Round One's mother. She calls him a "nêgo" several times despite his objections. Irritated and perhaps stunned by her subordinate and younger partner's rebuke, she calls him "pencil lead" (*miolo de lápis*). Benedito says at least he "writes well."[70]

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[67] "A moça que beija nêgo, / P'ra doida não farta um grau; / O nêgo não beija moça, / Nêgo beija é "bacalhau" / Nêgo beija é outra nêga / Que é cunha do mesmo pau." Brandão, 137. In Brazil, cod (*bacalhau*) was a food associated with the poor and especially nonwhite.

[68] Michel de Certeau elaborates an interest in how subordinate groups "us[e] imposed systems [to] constitute[e] the historical law of a state of affairs and its dogmatic legitimizations." He argues that historical actors' use of trickery, ruse, deception, and so on constitute various "ways of playing and foiling the other's game." De Certeau, 18.

The Black heroes of mamulengo are rarely called "pretos" by other characters. Their adversaries—including Captain Round One, police officers, and others—eschew this more respectful term and instead designate Baltazar and Benedito as "negros," an historical term that recalls chattel slaves and a plethora of negative attributes. We do encounter Black protagonists who do not profess their blackness and evade or ignore antagonists' racialized insults. In an episode that involves Baltazar's conflict with the police sergeant Zé Fincão, the hero chooses not to race himself in his opening soliloquy and does not respond to the officer calling him "boy" (*moleque*) and an angry or uncontrolled black (*nêgo da mulesta*). Others distance themselves from stigma by "softening" their blackness when it is invoked in social situations. Cognizant of these associations, Baltazars and Beneditos sometimes refer to themselves as "negrinhos," a diminutive that lessens the blow of the term "negro," or simply "pretinho" (little Blacks). Only once in 18 transcribed plays does the black lead self-identify as a "moreno" (brown), but this, as we saw, was a tactic Benedito used to marry the daughter of his boss and patron.

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[69] Studies of ordinary Brazilians' responses to racial aggressions are scarce, but a 2016 trinational study authored by Michèle Lamont, Graziella Moraes Silva, and others contributes much to our understanding of "normative" and "idealized" responses to racist and discriminatory incidents. See ibid., *Getting Respect: Responding to Stigma and Discrimination in the United States, Brazil, and Israel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 175.

[70] José Barreto do Nascimento, "O namorado de D. Pelonha," January 13, 1964. João Pessoa, Paraíba. Transcribed in Pimentel, 55-6.

Rejecting racist stereotypes or affirming that Blacks *can* be "good" falls short of declaring one's pride in being Black. Assertions of "Black but" – which might also be read as "despite my blackness" – present the stigmatized as exceptions to the general rule. The notion of "Blacks with white souls" – Black persons whose merit or status does not correlate with the color of their skin – is a compelling example of Black exceptionality.[71] It should be noted that "Black but" simultaneously opens the way for the "Black *and*" statements associated with Black pride.

One of the more striking aspects of transcribed desafios involves frontal assaults on whiteness. In the example of prison duel, the black contender mocked his opponent not only for being filthy but a dirty and fetid white man (*branco*).[72] But exposing one's tenuous claim to whiteness is also presumed to be fair game. In a much-analyzed 1874 encounter between the enslaved poet Inácio de Catingueira (1845-1878/1879) and "The Great" Romano, the former targeted the supposed white ancestry of the latter:

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[71] See the *Tipos populares* vignette of the Black doctor with a "white soul" in chapter 1.

> For someone supposed to be white,
>
> Your color duplicates mine,
> your hair is riled up,
> I, black, and you, white –
> the color of roasted coffee beans!
>
> Your grandfather came to Brazil
> as merchandise to be transacted.[73]

Inácio's maneuvers vis-à-vis Grande Romano's origins facilitated the shocking defeat of his opponent.

Although disparaging remarks about whiteness find their way into desafios and our larger set of aphorisms, they do not occur in our modest collection of mamulengo episodes. A larger sample size would perhaps yield similar examples. Even so, it is possible that assaults on whiteness are more permissible in the case of the desafio because duelers are expected to trade insults of matching caliber, which in turn escalate in intensity. An inbuilt assumption of reciprocity does not seem to be a characteristic of mamulengo, where hostilities are markedly disproportionate. Indeed, Black counter-aggression is not equal in power to the assault that obliges protagonists to defend themselves.

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[72] Costa, 601.

[73] "Para o senhô ser branco / Sua cor imita á minha, / Seu cabelo é agastado. / Eu negro e o senhô branco / Da cor de café torrado! / Seu avô veio ao Brasil / Para ser negociado." Translated by Linda Lewin in ibid., 86.

4.6 Laughter "Out of Place"?

This chapter has shown that the Black heroes of mamulengo are stereotypes that each in their own way represent threats to the established social order. We first encountered the fool whose impropriety and unsophistication appears nonthreatening, if irritating. Nevertheless, the bulk of evidence suggests that this figure is hardly as harebrained as his adversaries believe him to be. Instead, the fool (*bobo*) seems to be perfectly aware of the rules he transgresses. It may be that inside every fool is a troublemaker (the desordeiro) just as there is a fool inside each troublemaker. The Black troublemaker is quick-witted, capricious, and more importantly, not beholden to conventional notions of right and wrong that apply to those like him. His violent and often murderous rampages closely adhere to the "fragmented sense of morality" espoused by the Russian Punch and Judy show, Petrushka, named for its eponymous humpbacked jester who also assaults and kills with impunity.[74]

Our detailed examination of race and racist violence in the world of mamulengo, the first of its kind, reveals that the practice means multiple things simultaneously. The earliest white documentarians insisted that it represented a form of "valorizing" Black

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[74] Catriona Kelly, *Petrushka: The Russian Carnival Puppet Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 90-1.

Brazilians.[75] Yet the question, of course, becomes at what cost. The "victories" of Black protagonists to some degree offsets the emotional and physical damage done by their superiors, even as it confirms stereotypes about African-descended actors. The question remains: How could any of this possibly be funny?

The previous chapter argued that mamulengo is an irreverent form of play. It is not clear whether fits of sidesplitting laughter were direct responses to the racist abuse, for humor resides in multiple areas such as verbal banter, the outlandish physiognomies of puppets, and tricks of size and proportion.[76] Still, the fact that "racial aggression" is a recurring plotline in this laughter-oriented form of raucous play suggests that we have yet to understand "popular" forms of humor.[77] For this reason, the question is less about how enactments of racist abuse can be humorous – or even whether this form of humor is misplaced – but rather what laughter tells us about "serious" topics and vice-versa.

The Black anthropologist and author Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960) wrote that laughter had a "hundred meanings" among Black southerners under Jim Crow segregation. It may have meant pleasure, despair, confusion, embarrassment, "or any other of the known or undefined emotions."[78] If Hurston reminds us that pleasure is not identical to laughter, anthropologist Donna M. Goldstein argues that it can also be strategic for poor Brazilians responding to injustices. In her provocative study of poor women in Rio de Janeiro, she found that jokes about abortions, murder, and rape were powerful ways in which marginalized social actors acted out a "'counter-theater' of objection, defiance, and absurdity." To middle-class observers, whether foreigners or Brazilians, these jokes are vulgar or even "out of place." But for their enunciators they comprise a "fugitive form of resistance."[79]

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[75] Borba argued that the Black heroes of mamulengo served to "paint the bravery of blacks (*pretos*) and emphasize the value (*valor*) of the Black race." Borba, 144. While Pimentel found that Black protagonists were representations of the presumed "overcompensation" (*supercompensação*) of the "black race," he also held that their violent escapades were useful for those who faced "social inequality and humiliation." Pimentel, 6.

[76] CITE Freud in Jokes of the Unconscious. Includes a few lines about disagreements in size being common sources of humor.

[77] Brochado writes that the both the high level of sexual and racial aggression constitutes "without doubt, the major ambivalence of the Northeast puppet theatre." Brochado, "Mamulengo puppet theatre in the socio-cultural context of twentieth-century Brazil" (Ph.D. diss, Trinity College Dublin, 2005), 326.

Yet such dark humor among plebeians is as conforming as it is uncompromising. While marginalized Brazilians might "laugh so as not to cry" (*rir para não chorar*), there is a basic acceptance of their station as a "suffering people" (*povo sofredor*). Thus, laughter can be a precious form of recourse in a world stacked against the poor, although this type of venting is unlikely to produce concrete change.[80] Popular forms of play, thus, are Janus-faced. They are simultaneously redemptive and conformist: redemptive in that representatives of the "little people" defy and attack abusive superiors and conformist in that the models of authority and social conduct – petty despotism and violence – inherited from 350 years of slavery, remain unchallenged.

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[78] Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1990), 62-3.

[79] Donna M. Goldstein, *Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 5; 12-3.

[80] De Certeau, 26.

From here we turn in the next chapter to a "spoiled" son of a literal Captain Round One who came to channel the irreverent and implacable spirit of mamulengo. As the first to document Pernambuco's puppet traditions, dramatist Hermilo Borba Filho (1917-1976) reduced the world of the big house to a performing booth and its inhabitants and symbols, into grotesque puppets.

Table 4: Transcribed puppet plays along with episode titles and their translations.

Title	Translation	Puppet Artist	Locality/Year	Source
1. As bravatas do Professor Tiridá na Usina do Coronel de Javunda	The Defiance of Professor Tiridá on the Plantation of the Colonel of Javunda	Januário de Oliveira (Mestre Ginu)	Recife, Unknown	Borba 1966
2. As aventuras de uma viúva alucinada	The Adventures of a Raving Widow	Januário de Oliveira (Mestre Ginu)	Recife, Unknown	Borba 1966
3. As trapaças de Benedito	The Tricks of Benedito	Manuel Amendoim (Babau)	Goiania, PE, Unknown	Borba 1966
4. Passagem do Padre	The Passage of the Priest	Solon Alves de Mendonça (Mestre Solon)	Pernambuco, c.1970s	Santos 1979
5. Passagem do Zangô	The Passage of Zangô	José Severino dos Santos (Mestre Zé de Vina)	Pernambuco, c. 1970s	Gomes 1975
6. Untitled		Sebastião Severino Dantas Bastos	Rio Grande do Norte, Unknown	Gomes 1975
SPECTACLE OF 8 EPISODES				
7. [Introduction of Captain Round One]				
8. Apresentação da Escandelosa	Presenting the Scandalous			

(Sambista)	Woman (Samba Dancer)	José Soares de Assis (Zé Relampo)	Rio Grande do Norte, early 1979	Gurgel 2008
9. **Dr. Xalexandre encontra seu compadre João Redondo**	Dr. Xalexandre Meets His Godfather João Round One			
10. **Encontro com Dr. Xalexandre e João Redondo**	Meeting between Dr. Alexandre and João Round One			
11. **Torneiro de Violas (Apresentação de dois violeiros, cantando ao desafio)**	Guitar Tournament (Presenting Two Guitarists Singing Desafios)			
12. **Autoridade do sargento Zé Fincão**	Authority of Sergeant Zé Fincão			
13. **Praga de mãe**	A Mother's Curse			
14. **A dança do touro**	The Dance of the Bull			
SPECTACLE OF 10 EPISODES				
15. **A Contradança do Dr. Pindura-Saia com Etelvino de Morais, filha do Capitão Redondo**	The Square Dance of Dr. Pindura-Saia with Etelvino de Morais, daughter of Captain Round One	Francisco Ângelo da	Rio Grande do Norte,	Gurgel 2008
16. **As desventuras de Baltazar e a viagem de João Redondo**	The Misadventures of Baltazar and the Trip of João Round One			
17. **Vida, paixão e morte do "Boêmio da Cidade"**	Life, Passion, and Death of the "Bohemian of the City"			
18. **A frustrada vingança do primo do "Boêmio"**	The Frustrated Revenge of the Bohemian's Cousin			
19. **O desafio do**	The Challenge of			

Dr. João Bondade, Carrasco dos Negros	Dr. João Kindness, Punisher of Blacks	Costa (Chico Daniel)	October 1969	
20. “Perfeitamente! É lógico! Claro que sim!”	“Perfect! Logically! Of Course!”			
21. O advinhão Adelson e as respostas de Baltazar	The Riddle Teller Adelson and the Answers of Baltazar			
22. A chegada do professor Mestre Guedes, do Rio, para ensinar Baltazar a ler	The Arrival of Professor Master Guedes from Rio to Teach Baltazar to Read			
23. Preparação ao casamento de Baltazar	Preparing for Baltazar’s Wedding			
24. O casamento de Baltazar	Baltazar’s Wedding			
25. A morte do cabo Zé Fincão	The Death of Sergeant Zé Fincão	Manuel Francisco da Silva	Cabedelo, December 23, 1963	Pimentel 1971
26. O namorado de D. Pelonha	D. Pelonha’s Boyfriend	José Barreto do Nascimento	João Pessoa, January 13, 1964	Pimentel 1971
27. O filho que deu na mãe	The Son Who Hit His Mother	Manuel José Lucas	Cabedelo, PB, August 24, 1964	Pimentel 1971
28. O preço do casamento	The Cost of Marriage	Paulo Vitorino Monteiro	Cabedelo, PB, November 7, 1964	Pimentel 1971
29. Você já viu negro prestar?	Have You Ever Seen a Black Be Useful?	Octacílio Pereira	Cabedelo, PB, September 1, 1964	Pimentel 1971
30. Nem solteira, nem casada, nem viúva	Neither Single, nor Married, nor Widowed	Octacílio Pereira	Cabedelo, PB, December 22, 1964	Pimentel 1971
31. O castigo de Baltazar	The Punishment of Baltazar	Luís Barbosa dos Santos	Cabedelo, PB, 1968	Pimentel 1971
32. O compadre funcionário	The Godfather Functionary	Geraldo Cláudio	Cabedelo, PB, April 25, 1964	Pimentel 1971

		Mendes		
33. Remédio para mulher braba	Medicine for an Angry Woman	Geraldo Cláudio Mendes	Cabedelo, PB, April 25, 1964	Pimentel 1971
34. Os exemplos do Padre Simão	The Examples of Father Simão	Geraldo Cláudio Mendes	Cabedelo, PB, April 25, 1964	Pimentel 1971

5. Recife's Poète Maudit: The Predatory Male Privilege of the Plantation Big House and City Mansion

As a joyously unapologetic son of the big house, Hermilo Borba Filho (fig. 51, 1917-1976) mischievously memorialized the passing of Pernambuco's famous planter-patriarchs in two of his later works. His 1972 stage adaptation of Freyre's *The Mansions and the Shanties* (Sobrados e mocambos) concludes with an ailing patriarch becoming aroused on his deathbed. In a grotesque scene worthy of mamulengo, the dying planter asks for the "little mulatta (*mulatinha*) Tonheta," his enslaved domestic servant. As the young woman sits beside him, he slowly slides his hand up her dress while the mourners, gathered around, ignore his fondling of her genitals. With his dying breath, he pronounces his last words on earth: "Goodbye, sweet pussy!"[1] In a similar fashion, the first volume of his erotic tetralogy, published in 1966), describes in pitiless detail the lifeless corpse of Captain Hermilo. Contemplating his father's penis, "unused, dead, shrunken, [and] wrinkled," the narrator-protagonist reminds himself of how it had once had a "rigidity, proportion, [and] bright redness" when it was pleasured.[2]

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[1] Borba, *Sobrados e mocambos (Uma peça segundo sugestões da obra de Gilberto Freyre nem sempre seguidas pelo Autor)* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1972), 166-7.

[2] Hermilo Borba Filho, *Margem das lembranças*, 2nd ed. (Porto Alegre: Mercado Aberto, 1993), 16-7.

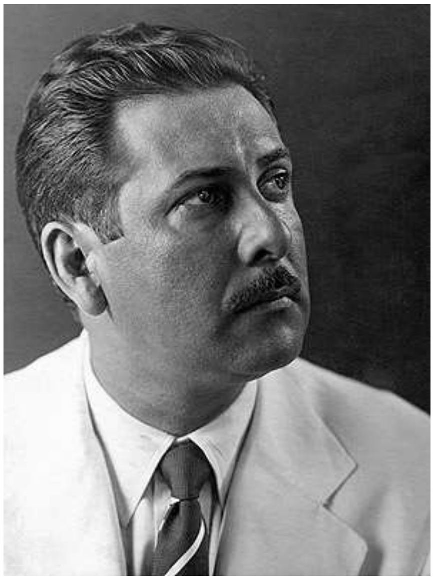

Figure 52: The dramatist and novelist Hermilo Borba Filho. Photographer unknown undated.

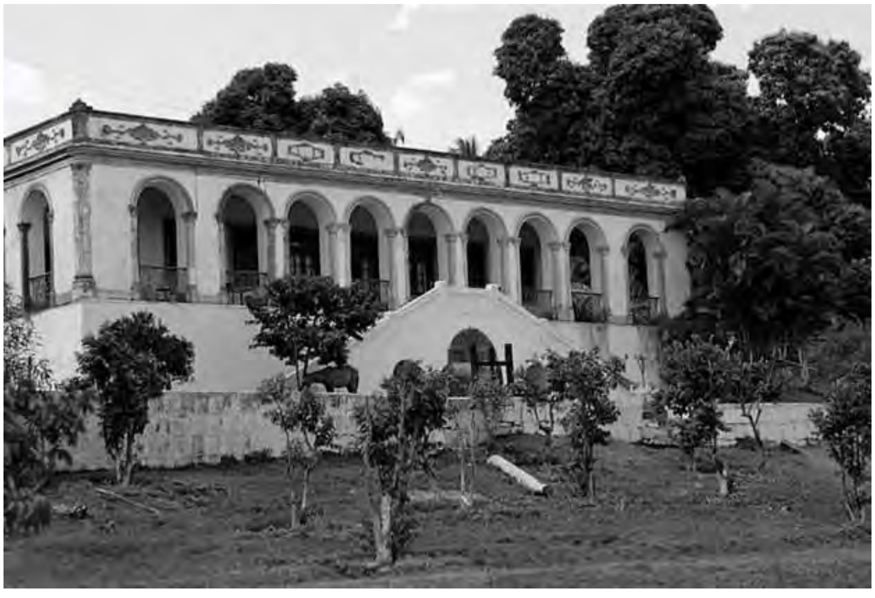

Figure 53: Engenho Verde, the birthplace of Hermilo Borba Filho. The estate was submerged in 2014 by the Serro Azul Dam. Hélia Scheppa for *Jornal do Commercio*, 2014.

Borba's tetralogy, *A Gentleman of the Second Decadence* (*Um cavalheiro da segunda decadência*), divulges the attitudes and dispositions of elite men.[3] In this unrepentant form of storytelling, the narrator-protagonist, an enfant terrible of the big house, also named Hermilo[4], unloads a lifetime of social transgressions and vulturine behavior without condemning his actions. Whether defrauding his employers or tricking poor and nonwhite women into intercourse, the anti-hero's behavior elucidates a mode of being that he implies was—and presumably will continue to be—admissible for the son of a real-life Captain "Round One." Grounded in three volumes of the work[5], this chapter probes a logic of predatory privilege that permeates the proverbial spoiled suns of the casa-grande and senzala. It examines Borba's fictionalized version of himself alongside analogous protagonists in the novels of José Lins do Rego (1901-1957) and Machado de Assis (1839-1908). All self-proclaimed disciples of libertinage (*libertinagem*), these characters embody a *savoir-vivre* that encompasses and normalizes violence and impunity.[6]

5.1 Hermilo the Damned

In mamulengo, the spoiled son of Captain Round One is a frequent target of mockery. One such character, who introduces himself as the "Bohemian" (*boêmio*) in a

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[3] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 72-95.

[4] For this reason, I use "Hermilo" to refer to the tetralogy's protagonist and "Borba" for the author. I do not, of course, assume that they are one in the same.

[5] The third volume is omitted because it centers on the protagonist's adventures in São Paulo.

[6] Michel Delon, *Le Savoir-vivre libertin* (Paris: Hachette Littèratures, 2000).

1979 play by Chico Daniel, asserts his attractiveness and wealth. "I am handsome," he reminds the audience, and "daddy is rich and gives me money to spend." The self-obsessed puppet, who claims he is a better singer than pop star Roberto Carlos, monopolizes the stage and performs a series of sentimental songs about death and violence. Inevitably, Baltazar strikes the Bohemian and is pursued by his vengeful cousins.[7]

Borba, the first Pernambucan to transcribe and publish on mamulengo, proudly exhibited a self-centeredness and bluster that befit a puppet more than a human being. Consuming large amounts of alcohol, food, and cigarettes were his most conspicuous forms of overindulgence. A plaything of angels and demons, he experienced wild vacillations between religious asceticism and unbridled hedonism, the cost of an unbounded, but apparently torturous, personal freedom.[8] His life and modes of being, as he presented them, did not reflect a basic freedom "from" but rather an untrammeled freedom to push the boundaries of socially acceptable behavior.

Borba attributed his outlandish behavior to the social and material conditions of his upbringing. His father, also named (Captain) Hermilo, had fallen victim to what he called the "first decadence," the coup de grâce of Pernambuco's planter class that resulted in their material, but not necessarily social, downgrading between 1875 and

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[7] He says, "Sou boêmio, sou bonito, papai é rico e dá dinheiro só prá eu luxar." Deífilo Gurgel, *O reinado de Baltazar: teatro de João Redondo* (Natal: Fundação Capitania das Artes, 2008). 88.

[8] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Baudelaire*, trans. Martin Turnell (New York: New Directions Books, 1967).

1930.[9] Hermilo also suggested that he, like his father before him, was predisposed to cursedness. Without explicitly mentioning Charles Baudelaire and the "cursed poet" (*poet maudit*) Paul-Marie Verlaine, he cherished a special fondness for the dregs of humanity (especially sex workers and homosexuals) and not only chose – but was fully permitted – to act "unconventionally" in each of his roles as a director, teacher, writer, and municipal functionary. While his uncompromising stances were perhaps most evident in his abhorrence of fixed schedules and official commitments, Hermilo held that his nonconforming attitudes were in fact virtuous.[10] The fact that his family was chock "full of great, extraordinary" cases of unconventional behavior – ranging from eating ants to practicing sadism and spiritism – prevented him, he said, from harboring any prejudices other than his disdain for "fascist manifestations." Borba would also reveal that one of his paternal uncles married a Black woman, and another wed a known prostitute. For these reasons, he claimed to approach all social taboos with an open mind (and perhaps a sense of humor).[11]

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[9] Thomas D. Rogers, *The Deepest Wounds: A Labor and Environmental History of Sugar in Northeast Brazil* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

[10] "I act, therefore, in all my activities, with absolute exemption from conventionalism. As a result, there is no clash between my various functions." Undated interview published in Olbiano Silveira and Josias Florêncio, eds., *Hermilo vivo* (Recife: Editora Comunicarte, 1981), 50. See also Hermilo Borba Filho, "Assim fala um escritor maldito," *Jornal da Noite* (March 1970). Interview with Renato Carneiro Campos published in Juareiz Correya and Leda Alves, eds. *A palavra de Hermilo* (Recife: Compania Editora de Pernambuco, 2007), 88.

[11] Undated *Ele & Ela* interview with Ricardo Noblat in Correya and Alves, 159-60. See also Borba, *Margem*, 38.

Borba's admitted that his characteristic overzealousness sometimes got the better of him. His 1963 play *The Peace Bomb* (*A bomba da paz*) is a notorious instance of his indifferent, if rash, cheekiness followed by a halfhearted repentance. Baiting the left on the eve of Brazil's 1964 military coup, the work lambasted leftists of the local Popular Culture Movement (Movimento de Cultura Popular, MCP), a novel experiment in popular education. It also ridiculed Pernambuco's then-reformist governor for having "saved" the impoverished Northeast with a proposal to transform human excrement into energy.[12] Borba would later explain that the piece was a form of personal revenge against Germano Coelho, an MCP leader and influential educator. Although the work curried favor with non-leftists and insisted controversy, it would cast a pall over Borba as a reactionary.[13]

Hermilo Borba Filho captured the "nude and crude" grotesqueries of himself and his society through a confessional mode of writing.[14] From the mid-sixties through 1974, he penned an erotic tetralogy that was inspired by the likes of Saint Augustine, Rosseau, Restif de la Bretonne, Sade, and Henry Miller.[15] Borba implied that this first-person work of "autobiografiction" allowed him to explore qualitative truths at the threshold between fact and fiction.[16] As he described it, the tetralogy served to "scandaliz[e] through roughness and nudity, [his] own nudity and that of others." If, as Borba claimed, James Joyce claimed that he did not know how to write without offending anyone, Borba did not know how to "hide" the disreputable qualities of others. He claimed to be fundamentally incapable of hiding (perhaps from) himself.[17]

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[12] Mimeographed script for "A bomba da paz" by Hermilo Borba Filho, 1962, Fundo Jordão Emerenciano (FJE.232), folder 86, Arquivo Público Estadual Jordão Emerenciano.
[13] April 1977 interview with Celso Marconi, Carlos Reis, and Marcos Siqueira. Published in Serviço Nacional de Teatro, *Coleção depoimentos*. Vol. 5 (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério de Educação e Cultura, Secretaria de Cultura, Serviço Nacional de Teatro, 1981), 102-3.
[14] Undated interview published in Silveira, 51.
[15] Borba also wrote a biography of Henry Miller. See *Henry Miller* (Rio de Janeiro: José Álvaro, 1968).

Already inscribed in the rolls of the "cursed," Borba claimed a commitment to "tell[ing] things as they are." This empowered dramaturg to say what was on his mind without being constrained by what people wanted to hear.[18] Rather than wallowing in his privilege or disavowing material possessions, which he also did, Borba would often express his appreciation for the finer things in life: imported whiskeys rather than domestic rum, stroganoff to liver, and sleeping in an air-conditioned room.[19] Some of what he wrote bordered on the pretentious and even grotesquely insensitive. In a playful interview with his friend and fellow litterateur Renato Carneiro Campos (1930-1977), Borba explained that he detested sweat, preferred to lay in his hammock while sipping a cocktail, and supposed that writing a novel or piece for theater was not all that different from toiling in a field of sugarcane.[20] However, in an interview with representatives of Brazil's National Theater Service (Serviço Nacional do Teatro), Borba accentuated his material "poverty."Like Liêdo Maranhão (chapter 1), he claimed that what he lacked in material wealth he made up in intangible "experience." "I'm really a poor man," he confessed. "I don't have property. I don't have a cent in the bank. I really don't. And I don't have a house, car, nothing. I don't want to."[21]

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[16] Max Saunders, *Self Impression: Life-Writing, Autobiografiction, and the Forms of Modern Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[17] Undated interview published in Silveira and Florêncio, 51.

[18] Being dead allows Brás Cubas to be conforming, as he is not held to the same standards of behavior. See Susan Sontag forward in *Epitaph of a Small Winner: A Novel*, trans. William L. Grossman (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980), xi-xxi.

[19] "Assim fala um escritor maldito," in Correya and Alves, 88.

[20] "Assim fala um escritor maldito," in Correya and Alves, 88.

Borba made a habit of staking out multiple, even contradictory, positions. Yet these shifting positions were integral parts of his avowed "anti-conventionalism" rather than being matters of inconsistency.[22] To be sure, he asserted his prerogative to represent multiple and clashing ideas in much the same way that the actor-institution of Gilberto Freyre could anoint himself a "modernist-traditionalist," "revolutionary conservative," or "constructive anarchist," ameliorating a maddening array of contradictions and imbuing them with "virtues and the richness of originality."[23] One might even argue that what noted intellectuals uttered from one day to the next was less important than the notion that it came from the mouth of a Borba or Freyre.

Like Freyre before him, Borba wrote freely and openly about sex. In the realm of literature, Borba is infamous for his lurid and unembellished depictions of intercourse. The fact that he employed vernacular expressions for body parts and sex-acts made him

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[21] April 1977 interview with Marconi, Reis, and Siqueira, in SNT, 106.
[22] Undated interview in Silveira and Florêncio, 50.
[23] Assis Claudino, *O monstro sagrado e o amarelinho comunista: Gilberto Freyre, Dom Hélder e a Revolução de 64* (Recife: Editora e Distribuidora Opção, 1985), 41.

"cursed" in the eyes of who he dismissed as moral-minded critics.[24] In a mail survey on swearwords found in Brazilian novels, he ranked just behind the bestselling Bahian novelist Jorge Amado, whose coarse language was especially controversial.[25] Much of Borba's repertory (sometimes dubbed the *obra hermiliana*) is consciously erotic and reflects a lifelong interest in classic pornography. Like the collector Liêdo Maranhão (chapter 1), he collected and commented on the works of the Marquis de Sade, Louvet de Couvray, and the Viscountess de Coeur-Brulant. In the mid to late 1960s, he translated and published works of erotica under the auspices of an *Erotic Collection* (*Coleção Erótica*). In fact, Borba translated a portion of the suggestive diary (chapter 2) belonging to Túlio Carella, whom he invited to teach at the School of Fine arts (EBA) in 1960-1961.[26]

Borba's interventions in the realm of pornography corresponded with Brazilian intellectuals' heightened interest in classic and modern erotica in the late 1960s. In 1969, Rio de Janeiro's military police complained of a "sensible increase" in the circulation of "licentious, pornographic, and erotic" materials in bookstores, newsstands, and book fairs. It determined that these works, including Borba's Erotic Collection, were "consecrated by a minority in a confused society who looks for sex in response to their frustrations."[27] For this reason, at least two of his works were censured – the first volume of his tetralogy in Argentina and a theatrical adaptation of Gilberto Freyre's tome *The Mansions and the Shanties*, whose final scene we saw in the opening to this chapter.[28] In the 1970s, Borba claimed that Recife's critics erected a deafening "zone of silence" around him and his work not only for his language choices and lascivious situations, but also his social and political positions.[29]

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[24] No minor amount of detail concerns characters' emissions of bile, vomit, sputum, blood, ejaculate, feces, and urine. In her study of Petrushka, Catriona Kelly shows carnival humor is "centered on the body." Kelly, *Petrushka: The Russian Carnival Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 93.

[25] Personal papers of Mário Souto Maior (MSM), Fundação Joaquim Nabuco.

[26] Túlio Carella, *Orgia*, vol. 1, trans. Hermilo Borba Filho (Rio de Janeiro: José Álvaro, 1968).

In Recife, Borba described an enduring struggle with the city's "Pharisees," intellectuals who he claimed feared his words but ultimately failed to write against him. Unlike his "well-behaved" critics, he was willing to foreground his "many sins."[30] Borba's claim of neglect was echoed by Campos-who spoke about the lettered city's "indifference" toward a writer who possessed such "notable qualities as a writer."[31] For this "cursed" letrado, being ignored seemed to have been appreciably worse than being misunderstood.

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[27] Ofício no. 069/69-GP. May 6, 1969. Presidente da Comissão Geral de Inquérito Policial-Militar to Secretário do Estado de Segurança Pública da Guanabara. Fl. 1. Detective Renato Caravita de Araújo to Chief of the Departamento de Ordem Política e Social. July 31, 1969. 2 fls. BR_DFANBSB_AAJ_0_IPM_0527. Arquivo Nacional. Rio de Janeiro.

[28] Borba to Osman Lins, July 31, 1973, in Anco Márcio Tenório Vieira, ed., *Osman e Hermilo: correspondência* (Recife: Companhia Editora de Pernambuco, 2019), 282. See also "Hermilo Borba diz que não é escritor imoral," *DP* (January 18, 1974), Segundo Caderno, 7.

[29] Raimundo Carrero, "Hermilo Borba Filho: o escritor e suas confissões," *DP* (April 13, 1972), Terceiro Caderno, 3.

[30] Undated interview in Silveira and Florêncio, 55-7.

[31] "Inexplicavelmente, porém, aqui no Recife, Hermilo Borba Filho não vem merecendo da crítica uma acolhida à altura de suas notáveis qualidade de ficcionalista. Aliás, Sylvio Rabello sofreu a mesma indiferença." Renato Carneiro Campos, "Pagando uma dívida," *DP* (September 10, 1972), Primeiro Caderno, 4.

In his public instances of self-fashioning, Borba's cursedness comes into focus as both preordained and carefully manicured.[32] The fact that he sought swift and merciless condemnation is explained by Sartre's famous 1950 diagnostic of another *poet maudit*. The existentialist argued that Charles Baudelaire wanted to inspire revulsion because feeling "horror and disgust was still a way of not merely paying attention, but of paying a great deal of attention."[33] The "cursed" son of Palmares simply did not receive the disdain that he craved and felt entitled to. Indeed, published reviews refute Borba's claim that his work was neglected. Numerous political and literary figures commented on his tetralogy, and most, if not all, recognized the importance of Borba's towering accomplishment by teasing out its many animating themes and situating it within established literary genealogies. The Marxist philosopher and academic Leandro Konder (1936-2014) did criticize the first volume, *Margins of Memory* (*Margem das lembranças*), for being too "picaresque" and "sensationalist" without having anything else to offer by way of character development or plot. Literary critic Valdemar Cavalcanti (1912-1982), while warning "prudish" readers, nonetheless praised *Margem* as a "beautiful novel."[34]

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[32] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

[33] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Baudelaire*, trans. Martin Turnell (New York: New Directions, 1950), 54 and 64.

[34] Há descrições ambientais aparentemente um tanto puxadas para o pitoresco e há ocorrências e pormenores de sabor sensactionalista." Leandro Konder, "Margem das lembranças: sexo e violência no romance," *DP* (October 16, 1966), front page. "Tanto que não recomendaria nunca este livro aos leitores pudicos que ainda por acaso existam; aos que não o são nem o aparentam, recomendo de "forma particular", por se tartar de um belo romance." Valdemar Cavalcanti, "Margem das lembranças," *DP* (November 13, 1966), 1.

5.2 “Where God and the Devil Meet”: The Racist Logics of Predatory Privilege

Borba corresponded with the novelist and short story writer Osman Lins (1924-1978) as he drafted what would become the first installment of his tetralogy. He warned his friend that *Margins of Memory* was a “terrible work,” a “catharsis where God and the devil meet.”[35] In this sprawling work of what Susan Sontag would call the “pornographic imagination,” the anti-hero regales the reader with tales of sexual conquest and general mischief making. Nevertheless, the protagonist’s lack of serious introspection and imperviousness to other subjectivities – in short, his puppet-like attributes – offers at best an incomplete sketch of the sons of the *casa-grande*.[36] We arrive at a more complete understanding by juxtaposing the brash subject of Borba’s mamulengo-like tetralogy with the more introspective narrator who appears in a comparable sequence of autobiographically informed novels about the local world of the planter class. Whereas Hermilo offers fantasies based on an idealized self-image, the neurotic and anxiety-ridden protagonist of three novels by José Lins do Rego enriches by offering a more comprehensive profile of an elite male engaged in the same practices as Borba but full of self-doubt.[37]

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[35] “Osman, é um livro terrível. Uma catarse, onde encontram Deus e o demônio. Que é que eu vou fazer? Sou eu.” Borba to Osman Lins, August 11, 1966, in Vieira, 48.

[36] Susan Sontag, “The Pornographic Imagination.”

[37] These works are *Plantation Boy* (1932), *Doidinho* (1933), and *Bangüê* (1934).

Superimposing two radically different works written by men of similar social standing will be used here to lay out the racist, sexist, and predatory mores of the planter upper class. Though different in their outlooks and conduct, both characters tie their right to possess and disobey to aristocratic and decidedly "libertine" notions of personal freedom. Indeed, Hermilo and Carlos de Melo, the anti-hero of Lins' novels, explicate a long tradition in which elite males recounted and defended their rapacious sexual behavior as customary libertinage (*libertinagem*).[38]

Both works offer a richness of detail regarding the sexual activities of plantation boys across their lives. They include 40 explicit discussions of sex-acts that meaningfully connect the thoughts and behaviors of their protagonists to the larger habitus of the planter class.[39] We watch as they pursue, and in some cases assault and threaten, rural dependents such as cooks, servants, and the daughters and wives of fieldhands as well as sex workers and desperate jobseekers in the big city. Although both sets of novels spare little detail by way of sex and lust, they also reveal that sex is but one facet of a broader form of power that encircles elite men and social subordinates. Especially interesting are the narrators' assessments of the Beneditos and Baltazars of their world. Accounts of Black men who defend the *casa-grande* and *sobrado* as plantation foremen, managers, police officers, and jailors illuminate what is shared between – as well as what distinguishes – two parties locked in asymmetrical power relations.

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[38] Given the Europe- (especially France) centric models of litterateurs' thinking, I refer to a broader ethos of predatory privilege in these exact terms. For a useful discussion of these polyvalent categories, see Jean-Pierre Cavaillé, "Libertine and Libertinism: Polemic Uses of the Terms in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century English and Scottish Literature," *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 12, no. 2 (2012): 12-36.

[39] See Table in the Appendix.

Novels are an especially rich terrain for addressing Brazil's history and legacies of racial and patriarchal violence.[40] Tightening the focus on author, text, and context illuminates the attitudes and dispositions that guide actors' understandings of their place in the world. Discerning these patterns requires careful exegesis, a process that is particularly tricky when dealing with questions of race in sexual encounters. As in our body of puppet plays (chapter 4), whiteness is characteristically unmarked in both works of autobiografiction owing to what Brazilian anthropologist José Jorge Carvalho terms its assumed "ontological" universality.[41] In contrast, Black and brown individuals – including *negros*, *mestiços*, and *mulatos*[42] – are explicitly raced. In situations where actors' color is not readily evident, we are able to glean their probable race through other markers including descriptions of their bodies, speech patterns, and other mannerisms. Details about occupation, marital status, and schooling provide additional clues, although they are never failsafe indicators given that social positions are symbolically raced in Brazilian society.

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[40] Lamonte Aidoo, *Slavery Unseen: Sex, Power, and Violence in Brazilian History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018).

[41] José Jorge de Carvalho, "The Multiplicity of Black Identities in Brazilian Popular Music," in Larry Crook and Randal Johnson, eds., *Black Brazil: Culture, Identity, Social Mobilization*, vol. 86 (Los Angeles: UCLA Media Center Publications, 1999), 284.

[42] Here I employ specific terms in their masculine forms as there are several instances of same-sex encounters in both works.

In the first volume of Borba's tetralogy, the narrator recounts a series of formative sexual encounters with six adolescent girls in his hometown of Palmares, Pernambuco. Only two are more overtly (albeit subtly) raced in the text. The narrator presents a young woman named Luíza, the daughter of a humble tavern-keeper and the most satisfying of Hermilo's juvenile conquests, whose rear end is a "pale brown" (*moreno pálido*) and used to "stir as if it were in a samba."[43] The other partner, with whom the protagonist stars in a local play, is presented as a blonde (*loura*), both in terms of her head and genitals.[44] Lacking are physical descriptions of the four remaining young women. Nevertheless, their social positions – the sister of the town prosecutor, an exemplary student at the nuns' school, an amateur actress, and the daughter of a plantation owner – suggest that they are all, in fact, white.

A remarkably more overt reflection on whiteness is to be found in a sexual encounter with the town physician's Hungarian wife, Júlia. The protagonist supplies the woman's morphine addicted husband with stolen ampules in return for sex. Hermilo's account of this "savage fuck," as he describes this "adventure" and "donation," emphasizes the European attributes of Júlia's genitals. Indeed, her vagina "transform[s] itself into very pale flakes, like snow, like cotton, like soap, in our pelvises, like the

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[43] Borba, *Margem*, 53-4.

[44] Borba, *Margem*, 66-8.

Danube in winter but without the cold." Borba's character also describes her "cosmic" genitals as a throne of God, volcano, constellation, agricultural turbine, and forest.[45]

Unfortunately for Hermilo, the consensual rendezvous ends abruptly. His cousin discovers the ruse and subsequently fires him from the Farmácia dos Pobres. When Júlia learns that her husband's supply has been cut off, she brusquely withholds sex from the narrator. "If the pharmacy is closed, for you, my *pisca* [little thing or tiny grain] is also closed." The Hungarian further humiliates Hermilo when she reminds him that sex was part of a specific arrangement: "Do you really think I was going to bed with you because of your fine manly qualities? How funny! It was a sacrifice like any other, it was the price of the vials." Humiliated, the protagonist slaps her across the face, which she returns with a "catlike" claw to the face, drawing blood. After a few moments of scuffling, Hermilo kicks Júlia in the rear and escapes through the front door. The assault provokes a strange sensation of arousal in him, leading him to "violently" masturbate in a dark alleyway.[46]

The violent end to the tryst with the Hungarian Júlia is but one example of Hermilo responding violently to humiliation by a social equal. But perhaps the most revealing cases involve physical and verbal aggressions toward nonwhite subordinates with whom Hermilo has intercourse. In the nearly 1,000-page tetralogy, the only detailed account of sex with a dark-skinned woman concerns Dona Micaela, the protagonist's teacher and mentor in Palmares. Hermilo variously calls Micaela a mestiça and mulata who is acutely "aware of her *mestiçagem* (racial mixture), her origin, and her cultural limitation."[47] Thus, the is acutely aware that the woman's status as a teacher is offset, even annulled, by her social and racial subordinacy. Although she introduces her protege to theology and classic literature, Hermilo determines that Dona Micaela harbors an "Oedipus complex." One night, after his teacher admittedly "drink[s] more than custom," she forces him to free dive into what Hermilo characterizes as an "enormous" and "phallic" vagina. After she first instructs Hermilo to sodomize her, the pupil and student are unable to free themselves from what the narrator dubs the "anal vice," which they reenact with increasing frequency.

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[45] Borba, *Margem*, 87-8.

[46] Hermilo claims the assault left him feeling "possessed, … almost sensual." The situation excited him, causing him to "violently masturbate" himself in the shadows after the assault came to an end. Borba, *Margem*, 116-7.

Whereas Hermilo's retelling of intercourse with the Hungarian Júlia invokes heavenly bodies and verdant fields, sex with the mulatta is inherently filthy. Likely intending for his racist account to be "humorous," he compares her anal cavity to a subterranean world filled with humus, oil, lava, fossilized trees, mummies, and gnomes.[48] The narrator also fixates on "fecal" babies, wondering whether intercourse with Dona Micaela would generate a "creature the color of burnt clay, its eyes swollen, its arms like octopus tentacles, all gelatinous."[49] If Borba presented sex as a lucky adventure, his relations with the mulatta – a hypermasculine and domineering woman – generate a sensation of emasculation. At the hands of his teacher, Hermilo finds himself "dominated [and] subjugated," a mere "instrument for her pleasure."[50]

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[47] Borba, *Margem*, 108.
[48] Borba, *Margem*, 139.
[49] Borba, *Margem*, 142.

Fed up with her attempts to regulate his behavior – ranging from her effort to curb his smoking and to prevent interactions with women his own age – he decides to confront Dona Micaela. If Hermilo's response to the Hungarian's remarks is predicated upon physical retaliation, his reaction to the mulatta woman consists of words alone. One night, he humiliatingly puts her in her place by invoking her inherent inferiority and nonconforming sexual practices. He accosts his mentor as a *bundeira* (a woman who practices anal sex) whose "cretin behavior" – including her manner of speaking, clothing, and even smell – make her a "shit (*cagona*) without morals, without any value." Conceivably shocked, the woman does not respond to her pupil's aggressions. Claiming to feel a combination of pity and an "animalesque, savage, infantile" happiness, Hermilo then escapes into the night.[51]

Elsewhere in the tetralogy, Borba's anti-hero also violently confronts acts of insubordination by lower-class women. Hermilo obtains a position at a female employment agency in Old Recife after relocating to the coastal capital in the second volume. He and his boss, Zoroastro, use their positions to bed candidates, especially virgins and those deemed "accessible." The narrator identifies a quota of three sex-acts for every 10 interviews. If the jobseeker is unemployable but attractive enough, he explains, they see if she is willing to have sex. If her performance in bed satisfies the employees, they take her to dinner. The men also offer her a small amount of cash, not to exceed 10,000 *mil-réis*, what Hermilo notes is the going rate for sex workers located behind the employment agency.[52]In his role as a private employee, Hermilo meets a "short, well-made" woman named Irene, whose white dress accentuates her "heavy brown" (*moreno*) color. Irene rejects his sexual passes (including the question of whether she is a virgin) and declines to join him for dinner.[53] Hermilo later runs into her at a "third rate" nightclub frequented by stevedores, oil workers, and sailors. The two end up engaging in hurried, paid sex at Irene's apartment. He spends the night after which the morena utters the "magical phrase" that everything she has also belongs to Hermilo. After their one-night stand, Irene discovers his address and visits the pension's dining room exactly when other guests are having lunch. Scandalized by the "invasion," Hermilo beats her which is followed, he admits, by a week of violent beatings (interspersed with sex) that do not deter Irene, who he eventually leaves in the street after attempting to explain things she "did not understand or only half understood."[54] Although the narrator does not specify what exactly he tells Irene, one may infer that the conversation invoked the same class and color difference that Hermilo used as the unsurmountable truth that justified his humiliation of Dona Micaela.

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[50] Borba, *Margem*, 140. Tracks with Freyre's description of the manly, authoritarian woman. Also makes an appearance in Borba's play.

[51] "Listen here," he says. "I am tired and sick of your butt, your tyranny, your cretin behavior (cretinice). I am horrified by your way of speaking, the dresses you wear, the smell of your mouth. To me you are a shit (cagona) without morals, without any value, who can only think of opening her legs from behind, satisfying yourself like a female dog. [...] I want a woman my own age, someone who doesn't smell like armpits, who has sex through the front and not a depraved rat like yourself." Borba, *Margem*, 159-60.

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[52] Hermilo Borba Filho, *A porteira do mundo*, 2nd ed. (Porto Alegre: Mercado Aberto, 1994), 15.
[53] Borba, *Porteira*, 18.

The male protagonist's underlying touchiness links each of the above examples in Borba's tetralogy. Carlos de Melo similarly acts out of "humiliation" when he believes that his sexual partners pose a threat to his confessedly tenuous claim to virility. Unlike Hermilo, who performs an exaggerated form of masculinity, Carlos wallows in the perceived deficiencies and insecurities that no doubt characterized the experiences of many elite males. Although he acts on his seignorial impulses by having sex with the wives and daughters of field hands – overwhelmingly Black and mulatta women he likens to prostitutes – he is fearful of tongue-wagging. After Carlos learns that a mulatta laundress named Maria Chica is likely pregnant with his child, he tries to silence her with money, the threat of violence, and being forcibly removed from the plantation. However, Santa Rosa's overseer reminds him that Maria Chica had been "running around" with multiple men simultaneously, meaning someone else could take the blame.[55]

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[54] Borba, *Porteira*, 23-4.

[55] José Lins do Rego, *Plantation Boy*, trans. Emmi Braum (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 375-6.

Carlos also assures himself that any physical likeness on the part of the illegitimate child (*filho natural*) could be explained by the fact that his own male relatives have long fathered the children of the "street," as the site of the former slave quarters is called.[56] Indeed, the lustful predation by his Uncle Juca are known to all who live on the plantation. Juca even allows male subordinates to be punished for acts they did not commit. In one instance, a sugar mill worker is shackled and placed in the stock (decades after the abolition of slavery) for impregnating a mulatta named Chica Pia. The captive vehemently denies any wrongdoing and insists that the victim was trying to trap him through marriage. Unable to bear watching the worker suffer, Chica Pia finally confesses that "it was Doctor Juca who did this to me."[57]

Carlos is similarly unconcerned about the fate of a Black woman who is the first he possesses in the "way of a man."[58] As a 12-year-old, he stalks the hut of Zefa Cajá, a woman infamous for being the "choice of every hand" on the plantation. Zefa initially rejects the boy's advances, but Carlos quickly learns that intimacy is transactional. She accedes when provided with purloined goods from the big house, such as food and even his grandfather's money. This "precocious love affair," as Carlos recalls it, left him with an unintended but prized mark of manhood: a sexually transmitted infection. Like the 19th-century plantation boy invoked in Freyre's *The Big House and Slave Quarters*, Carlos de Melo eagerly shows the signs of illness to his friends.[59] The jubilance of the occasion overshadows the fact that Zefa Cajá is promptly thrown in jail. Although wives and daughters fear Carlos's predatory inclinations, male denizens of the big house applaud the boy's antics "as if it were the most innocent thing for a twelve-year-old to be such a libertine."[60]

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[56] Lins, 382.
[57] Lins, 38-40. Carlos recalls that the last person he saw imprisoned in the stock was a Black horse thief.
[58] Lins, 103.

Although Carlos de Melo does not want his sexual relationship with Maria Chica and illegitimate son to be known, he is unprepared to fully rid himself of either. In fact, he believes that the mulatta bears his second son who dies in childbirth. Rather than renewing his threats to send mother and child away from Santa Rosa, Carlos expresses a conflicted interest in the boy and decides that it would be in his best interests to keep both close in proximity. He refuses to formally recognize the son as his own but contemplates paying for the child's education as a means of "making him into a man" of renown. In the very same breath, Carlos accepts that his mixed-race offspring will most likely become a manual laborer, perhaps a cane cutter, ox cart driver, or boiler. However, Carlos is angered when Maria Chica flees the plantation with his son leading him to emphatically deny any "love for the little bastard." He reports a kind of

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[59] Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization*, trans. Samuel Putnam (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), 68 and 358-9.
[60] Lins, 104-5.

"despondency," borne out of humiliation, because the mulatta found the "courage" to openly defy his wishes.[61]

5.3 Rapacious Physicians and Priests

In the first volume of Borba's tetralogy, Hermilo tells the story of the police chief of his hometown of Palmares who invited him to observe a virginity exam performed on an underage Black woman. The unnamed victim's parents were told to leave the room. The attending physician, the same morphine addict presented above, swiftly locked the door and ordered the victim to remove her clothing. Hermilo characterizes the victim as a lewd and naughty subject (*safada*) who was unusually eager to be "examined" by Dr. Bertoldo in the presence of male onlookers. In his depiction, her visible arousal transformed the medical-legal examination into a "private and free exhibition by a woman who wanted to explode in front of men."[62]

The narrator goes on to graphically describe Dr. Bertoldo making disparaging remarks about the victim's genitals as he "practically dove into the woman, his fingers pulling back flesh and hair with a certain brutality." After the exam, the doctor judges the victim was a virgin leading her, in Borba's fantasy, to beg the onlookers to perform "this [act] of charity" by having sex with her. Intoxicated by the smell of her genitals and foul breath, Hermilo claims she grabbed his hands and seductively passed them over her breasts. Although prepared to have sex with the victim, the physician impedes consummation by protesting that she was a minor. Almost with a mischievous wink, Dr. Bertoldo jokes to young Hermilo that he could later "marry [her] and make some mulattos" like his father, Captain Hermilo. Frustrated, the doctor could not prevent him from fantasizing about what he would do to the woman leading to a quick act of solitary masturbation.[63]

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[61] Lins, 506-7.
[62] Borba, *Margem*, 27.

In the above account, Hermilo refers to the young victim as a "black" (negra) 14 times. This fetishistic invocation of blackness appeals to a broader racist fantasy about the presumed sexual availability and lasciviousness of nonwhite women. In addition to this vile and disparaging account of Black female sexuality, it is worth emphasizing his matter-of-fact admission—not even worth comment—that the physician in question use his position to himself violate a vulnerable woman. In her examination of "deflowering" exams in early 20th century Rio de Janeiro, historian Sueann Caulfield showed the high demand for such services, including among lower-class women. Noting that experts increasingly decentered the hymen in legal questions of virginity and honor, she recounts no cases of perverse legal-medical professionals in her discussion of their antihymenolatry "crusades."[64] Nevertheless, there is no reason to believe that exams like those carried out by Dr. Bertholdo did not occur. Rather, it is more than likely that poor mothers placed their trust in medical and legal experts, unaware of when these practices became aberrant.[65]

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[63] Borba, *Margem*, 28-9.

[64] Sueann Caulfield, *In Defense of Honor: Sexual Morality, Modernity, and Nation in Early-Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

The physician in the preceding episode recalls similarly vulturine figures in mamulengo. As we saw in chapter 4, priests are routinely depicted as especially lascivious beings who use religion, especially confession, to seduce humble parishioners. Although Hermilo Borba Filho does not incorporate wayward priests in his four-part epic (as his protagonist rediscovers his Catholic faith), the figure of the lewd or salacious priest (*padre safado*) is a common place in puppet plays (fig. 54).

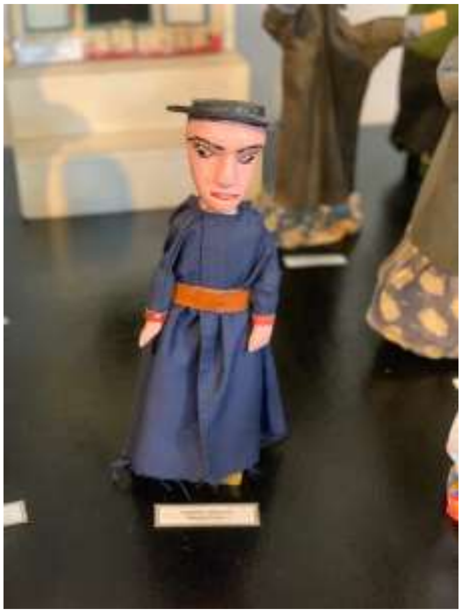

Figure 54: The "Depraved Priest" (*Padre Safado*) with an articulated penis underneath his cassock. From the collection of Mestre Solon. Photograph by the author, December 2019. Museu do Mamulengo, Olinda, Pernambuco.

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[65] Caulfield also shows that there was little consensus among practitioners as to how proper exams were to be conducted, on the one hand, and how virginity (or a lack thereof) was to be ascertained, on the other.

In a performance recorded by Santos in 1979, Simão—likely a Black avatar of a typically white protagonist—defends his sister, Maricota, from the sexual aggressions of one such cleric. The Padre, eager to extract fees from credulous parishioners, asks Simão if he would like to help confess her. The textual transcription notes the priest puppet approaching the young woman in a "libidinous" manner. Simão attacks the Padre for "practically smelling" his sister, and the cleric produces a scythe to coax the brother into paying for the "confession." Simão gets his wish for revenge when a giant cobra swallows the perverted priest.[66] While Solon Alves de Mendonça's imagined encounter is somewhat unrealistic, given that mothers and sisters historically tended to accompany females to confession, the takeaway is that the Padre would have gotten away with the act if Simão had not been present. In this regard, the episode reaffirmed what the povo already knew about lecherous priests, the butts of numerous jokes in an historical undertow of popular anticlericalism.[67]

5.4 Beneditos as the Black Lackeys of the Big House

In December 1963, Benedito killed an officer of the law. He drove an oversize knife into Sergeant Zé Fincão, who arrived to shut down the party crashed by the defiant hero. Impressed by the little Black man's audacity, Captain Round One (João Redondo) described Benedito as his "good cowboy" leading the puppet to offer his services to the landowner “if he need[ed] a criminal.” Although he accepted Benedito’s offer, the Captain cautioned that his subordinate must do everything he ordered: “If I order [you] to stomp on the musician, you give it to him. If I order [you] to get these guys over there beside the musician, you get them.” The captain confessed that he needed Benedito because “here no one likes bad people” and that “blacks are really wrong.” Benedito accepted his new boss’s assessment, taking ownership of his intrinsic malice.[68]

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[66] Solon Alves de Mendonça, "Passagem do padre." Transcribed in Fernando Augusto Gonçalves Santos, *Mamulengo: um povo em forma de bonecos* (Rio de Janeiro: Edição FUNARTE, 1979), 195-7.

[67] For a sampling of expressions in which priests, nuns, and monks serve as the butts of jokes, see Liêdo Maranhão de Souza, *Que só*. 2nd ed. (Recife: Companhia Editora de Pernambuco, 2013).

This episode speaks to the historical practice of enlisting Black and mixed-race men as bodyguards and enactors of punishment and revenge. Capangas, jagunços, and pistoleiros – all various kinds of “criminals for hire,” as Benedito might describe them – were enlisted for their supposed brutality but, perhaps more importantly, their obedience. We now turn to what various Captain Round Ones of the world think about their Black subordinates, on the one hand, and how they relate to them, on the other. If Manuel Francisco de Silva’s 1963 play gives us a glimpse of a Benedito figure before he serves the powerful, how might he change as he settles into a new role? Is he always the obedient instrument of coercion and violence that his patron imagines him to be?

Hermilo divulges that a Benedito-like figure had a sanctioned place in what he derisively calls his hometown’s “guardian quartet of law, decorum, good customs, and honor."[69] Palmares, a city located in the fertile zona da mata, claimed a "poor and null" police chief named Barromeu who, despite being practically illiterate, was a respected family man and took his duties seriously. Barromeu was the lackey of the local judge and prosecutor, who "killed" when his superiors ordered him to "kill"; "skinned" when they ordered him to "skin"; and "castrated" when he was told to "castrate."[70] The delegado did not, however, dirty his own hands; instead, he ordered his second-in-command, a Black sergeant named Luís, to mete out various forms of violence and torture.

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[68] Manuel Francisco de Silva, December 1963 performance of “A morte de Zé Fincão” (Cabedelo, Paraíba). Transcribed in Altimar Pimentel, *O mundo mágico de João Redondo* (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço Nacional de Teatro, 1971), 41-2.

Borba depicts this imbiber of cachaça and guitar player as a born torturer whose perennial grin earned him the nickname the "smiling beater" (*espancador sorridente*).[71] In a particularly heinous scene, this disturbing fusion of the troublemaker and fool (chapter 4) takes pleasure in methodically torturing a horse thief (perhaps Black himself). The sergeant stripped the victim of his clothing and secured him to the door of his cell with cords and hooks. The captor fondled and then brutally thrashed the victim's genitals, making him bleed and urinate on himself, all the while with his tormentor laughing hysterically.[72] Elsewhere, Hermilo adds that Barromeu also ordered his well-endowed subordinate to rape homosexuals while they were held in police custody. Astonishingly, the narrator transforms this account of sexual torture into a joke, claiming that the town's "pederasts" deliberately broke the law so they could be "possessed" by the "smiling beater."[73]

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[69] In 1940, the city had a population of 30,000. Over 70% of palmarenses were nonwhite (preto or pardo), making it substantially darker than the state of Pernambuco as a whole, which was 45% black and brown. Slightly more than a quarter of inhabitants above the age of five could read and right, while only 401 residents had completed primary schooling, high school, and college (a mere 16). lightly more than a quarter of inhabitants above the age of five could read and right, while only 401 residents had completed primary schooling, high school, and college (a mere 16). Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, *Recenseamento Geral do Brazil (1o de Setembro de 1940)*. Série Regional, Parte IX (Pernambuco), Vol. 1 (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço Gráfico do Instituto de Geografia e Estatística, 1950), tables 1, 59, and 62.

[70] Hermilo recalls that the delegado's subordinates learned to decipher their chief's nonverbal cues during depositions. Blinking the eye meant the scribe needed to omit part of the testimony. Barromeu raising his shoulders meant that a detail should be accentuated. Balancing his legs, Hermilo says, meant that the officers needed to act quickly to catch the accused in a trap. Borba, *Margem*, 24-5.

[71] In many ways, the city's "smiling beater" has much in common with the protagonist of Luís Barbosa dos Santos's play "The Punishment of Baltazar" (chapter 4). Like Baltazar, Luís is an alcoholic whose lodestar might well be Satan given the sheer depravity expressed through his actions. He barely speaks, as the booming of laughter and cracking of his whip convey more than words. One might even imagine the officer's inner Baltazar or Benedito explaining that he might be "evil" or "wrong," but fear demands respect.

The police chief could, of course, call his subordinate to task if he disapproved of the excesses being committed. Yet the sergeant's actions fit squarely within a well-established racist stereotype of the good and docile creole (*bom crioulo*).[74] It was precisely Luís's obedience, combined with his brutal, even murderous inclinations, that made him indispensable to his boss. Police chief Barromeu would likely agree with a Pernambucan planter's 1966 claim that Black Brazilians were to be valued because they were as "loyal [to him] as his dog."[75]

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[72] Borba, *Margem*, 20.

[73] This vignette parallels an earlier reconstitution of a young Black woman being invasively "examined" by the town's legal physician. Hermilo insists that the victim enjoyed the public violation. Borba, *Margem*, 50-1.

[74] The Black protagonist of Adolfo Caminha's 1895 novel *Bom-crioulo* (translated as *The Black Man and the Cabin Boy* by Gay Sunshine Press in 1982) invokes the stereotype of murderous docility.

[75] In a June 1966 interview with Robert J. Alexander, Caio Lima Cavalcanti, a planter and leader of the 1930 Revolution, confessed that he could not "understand the racism in the United States." Alexander noted that although Cavalcanti "doesn't want to mix with the Negroes, and would rather die than see a daughter of his marry a Negro, he doesn't think that any damage is done to him when he shakes hands with a Negro."

The protagonist Hermilo would find himself the victim of just such a "smiling beater" in the mid-1930s in Recife. Hermilo was ordered to turn himself in to the authorities for derailing a right-wing nationalist (*integralista*) rally in Palmares. The prison guard assigned to him and his friend at Recife's House of Detention was not overtly raced in the narrator's account, but the "giant," as Hermilo refer to him, is certain to be Black given the description of the guard as exhibiting a look of "subservience of a dog to his owner" in relation to his supervising officer, who was most likely white or light. Almost with the wink, the giant asked if it would not be better for the newcomers to take a bath first. The supervising officer agreed, and the colossal figure "bathed" the duo with a high-powered hose, laughing uncontrollably as a stream of iced-cold water lanced their flesh and genitals. After the friends were shown to their cell, the "giant" hurled the body of another man into the corner. To their horror, they found that his testicles had been crushed in an act of wanton sadism.[76]

In Borba's interpretation of *Sobrados e mocambos*, another avatar of the Black lackey (in this instance, a capanga) does the unpleasant bidding of his boss. A nineteenth-century patriarch who resides in Recife learns from the Capanga that his own son, the Senhorzinho (literally "little senhor"), is planning to secretly elope with his

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Interview with Caio Lima Cavalcanti, June 14, 1966 in Rio De Janeiro by Robert J. Alexander. Robert Alexander Archive, Rutgers University, New Brunswick.

[76] Borba, *Margem*, 211-2 and 217-8.

favorite mulatta. After expounding upon his power to give life and take it away, the Senhor orders the hitman to execute his son, which he does without as much as a flinch.[77] Yet a later story makes clear that the Capanga is not entirely an unthinking instrument. One day, the enraged mulatto confides in his patron that he is prepared to kill his unfaithful wife because she ran off with another man. Despite being depicted as having ordered the death of his son for a lesser infraction, the Senhor urges the Capanga to simply find another woman.[78] Later, an unsalaried worker, hoping for a reward, lets the Senhor know that the Capanga has since taken back his wife. Thrown into a fit of blind rage, the Senhor orders the Capanga to be brought to him for an "exemplary form of punishment."[79]

The Senhor proceeds to verbally accost his cuckolded henchman for not simply arranging another woman to "serve" him "in bed, at the table, and at work." He alleges that the Capanga humiliated himself by "making up with "that whore / as if her legs / were not open to another."[80] Yet the planter's admonition – itself a projection of the Senhor's worldview upon his subordinate – divulges the starkly different attitudes that separate the servant from his master. In this depiction, the patriarch cannot comprehend relationships outside an extractive logic of domination and submission leading him to wrongly assume that his client's relationships reproduce the same disparities of power.

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[77] Borba, *Sobrados*, 26-7.
[78] Borba, *Sobrados*, 133-4.
[79] Borba, *Sobrados*, 135.
[80] Borba, *Sobrados*, 135-6.

For the plantation owner, it is simply unfathomable for the Capanga to make amends with his wife because he *loves* her. In this case, the Capanga avoids punishment (and further emasculation) by appealing to his patron's misogynism. While he agrees that there "may be many women in the world," he vulgarly claims that there is "only one *moenda* like that," comparing his wife's genitals to a grinder of sugarcane or flour.[81]

In his autobiografiction, José Lins do Rego imbues the figure of the Black or mixed-race subordinate with an even greater degree of psychological depth. Carlos de Melo evokes the "good Negro" Nicolau, an overseer tasked with administering the Santa Rosa plantation, who he depicts as an obedient "dog, lying at his master's feet."[82] As we have already seen, Carlos languishes in his personal weakness, dithering in his responsibilities as the estate's owner. He attempts to raise the rents of neighboring residents (*agregados*) but allows the seditious tenants to have their way. One day, Nicolau takes Carlos's pistol and confronts the dependents. He and a handful of other residents are brutally stabbed in the ensuing confrontation.[83]

Carlos mourns the slain overseer-capanga, convincing himself that the "good Negro" respected and identified so completely with his patron that he sacrificed himself. The narrator also feels an immense amount of guilt for the murder. He blames himself for delegating too much to his right-hand, as many responsibilities were the planter's alone. And yet Carlos also seems to absolve himself of all responsibility by casting Nicolau as a figure whose need for his white master's validation sealed his fate.[84] Although he does not do so in the novel, one might even imagine Carlos reassuring himself that his fiercely loyal second-in-command would have died even if he had ordered him to act.

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[81] Borba, *Sobrados*, 136-7. The Capanga's final word is followed by a suggestive "Song of the Mill" (Canção da Moenda).

[82] Lins, 508.

[83] Lins, 517.

Carlos de Melo's reading of his enforcer and the circumstances of his death is one-sided. Prior to the murder, Carlos had also briefly considered the possibility that his overseer was conspiring with his sworn enemy, the mulatto José Marreira. Yet what if the narrator's underlying mistrust is more than a paranoid delusion (as many of Carlos's thoughts are)? It is possible that Carlos misreads his bom criolou in the same way that the Senhor projects his own attitudes and outlooks onto the Capanga in Borba's 1972 play. In this case, however, Carlos refuses to acknowledge Nicolau's autonomy of thought and action, as the latter's inability to exercise himself independently of the former makes him less threatening.

The overseer's decision to take his master's weapon and take care of the problem is open to multiple interpretations. For one thing, Nicolau may have confronted the landowner's rebellious tenants to *spite* Carlos. After all, the overseer has a reputation to uphold among the agregados, as he – rather than the landowner – enforces the rules despite the pleading and protests of these dependents.[85] Thus, shrinking from this hardliner stance would negatively impact his reputation as a no-nonsense administrator. It is also possible that Nicolau may have intended to appropriate the property in question for himself. This would mean that the "good Negro" confronted the disobedient agregados with the intention of removing them from the land. Finally, Nicolau may have taken matters into his own hands in the hope that Carlos would reward his ambition. If he were successful in subduing the agregados, he could demand something from his boss—payment in kind or perhaps a cultivable tract of land. Finally, we cannot rule out Carlos's supposedly fleeting suspicion that the overseer colluded with the mulatto José Marraeira, consequently exploiting the festering rivalry for his own gain. Whatever the case, there is no certainty that Carlos de Melo's second-in-command likely intended to die for his boss when he seized his pistol and confronted the defiant agregados. Rather, his demise was more likely the result of a fatal miscalculation.

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[84] The moral lesson drawn from Nicolau's death shares much in common with the most famous instance of self-sacrifice in twentieth-century Brazilian politics. In August 1954, another "good Black," the personal bodyguard (dubbed the "Black Angel") of Getúlio Vargas, Gregório Fortunato (1900-1962), attempted to kill a journalist critical of the Brazilian president. Carlos Lacerda (1914-1977) survived the assassination attempt, and Fortunato was sentenced to 25 years in prison. Vargas committed suicide on August 24. Fortunato was killed by a fellow inmate in 1962.

5.5 Cross-Racial Marriage: The View from the Big House

Hermilo divulges that interracial sexual relationships, both marital and extramarital, were not unknown among his male relatives. The narrator confides that

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[85] Carlos acknowledges the precarity of Nicolau's position: "The hatred that the people reserved for the plantation owner did not reach me in my hammock; Nicolau deflected and absorbed it." Lins, 511.

Captain Hermilo, the crestfallen family patriarch, kept a Black concubine named Isabel, who he arranged after inexplicably discarding the woman's blonde predecessor. In both cases, Hermilo's father broke the unspoken rules of discretion that recognized the dignity and primacy of the legal wife, Mãe Néa. Isabel did not herself overstep her bounds as the "other" (*a outra*). Rather, Captain Hermilo found ways to remind his wife of the affair, almost certainly to humiliate her. Indeed, Mãe Néa regularly intercepted secret messages being passed from her husband to his concubines, even catching them in the act on the family property.[86]

If his father cared little for prudence in a generally acceptable practice, Hermilo's brother and uncles provoked much tongue-wagging for formalizing their relationships with unrespectable women. The narrator confides that the captain's brother, himself a plantation owner, married a Black woman. The family practically "spit with contempt" whenever they refered to "the negra." According to family lore, she controlled her husband through witchcraft (*feitiçaria*) by bathing herself in egg whites and yolks and using the mixture to bake cakes for her husband.[87] The belief that only malevolent forces could explain romantic relationships between Blacks and whites also surfaced in René Ribeiro's 1956 study of race relations in Recife. An unidentified informant held that "when a black man wants to capture (*prender*) a lighter woman … [he] puts her down in bed three times at night while reciting The Lord's Prayer." A white member of the "traditional" planter class seconded this belief. He recounted "saving" a young woman from a spell (*trabalho*) performed by a Black laborer whom she had declined to marry.[88]

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[86] Borba, *Margem*, 37.

[87] Borba, *Margem*, 38. Link with sweat and bodum. Cite Freyre passage about plantation owner in the South (southern Brazil) needing to use a Black woman's sweat-soaked nightgown to have sex with his new (white) wife.

Hermilo also shares that his brother Jonas, a railroad stoker, married a mulatta. Although this decision was his to make, the union "provoked the biggest scandal in the family." Consequently, the brother rarely came around.[89] Although the narrator could spin a fantastical account of why his brother married a mulatta, he does not do so, perhaps out of respect for his older brother, who dies in a work-related accident before the protagonist moves to Recife in the mid to late 1930s. Although Hermilo leaks salacious family secrets vis-à-vis the captain's brothers – one who married the "negra," and the other, a judge who married a known prostitute – his uncles' names are not provided.[90] Yet this is not because the narrator wants to avoid scandalizing his family members. After all, he identifies stammerers, masturbators, and general eccentrics, mostly on his mother's side, by their first names. Nevertheless, we might surmise that a small measure of discretion is needed when referring to especially sensitive matters of interracial (or interclass) marriages in a racist and classist society.

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[88] On one occasion, the planter found a large, swollen frog that he initially thought had been bitten by a snake. The mouth had been stuffed with blonde hair and, upon further investigation, he discovered that the lock of hair belonged to a young woman who caught his eye. René Ribeiro, *Religião e relações raciais* (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério de Educação e Cultura, Serviço de Documentação, 1956), 111-2.
[89] Borba, *Margem*, 44.
[90] Hermilo explains that after this uncle, a judge in the state of Minas Gerais, married Maria Bolachinha, a "prostitute de porta aberta." Borba, *Margem*, 38.

One of the more arresting memories of Hermilo's childhood involves the "libidinous" adventures of his brother Carlos. Like Carlos de Melo of Lins do Rego's novels, the protagonist's brother forms a sexual relationship with the daughter of a dependent. The victim, in this case, is the mulatta daughter of the family's domestic servant. Hermilo's mother ends the relationship by breaking the news that Tudinha is his sister. Although Hermilo himself does not say so, his brother and Tudinha share the same father, Captain Hermilo, meaning the patriarch had a sexual relationship with the Black or mulatta servant. The family prevents further scandal by sending the brother to live with an aunt and uncle.[91]

The theme of incest is also central to Borba's 1972 play. In fact, the opening scene presents a brother and sister engaged in anal intercourse. The girl asks her sibling whether the act is "natural," and he reasons that it "is more than natural to preserve [her] virginity." Brother and sister are caught mid act by their parents. The Senhora is outraged by the display but her husband (and first cousin) reassures her that children will marry in a few months' time and that that sex is only natural. Levity gives way to severity when the Senhor allows his wife to punish the Sinhàzinha (little mistress, the daughter), who will be locked in her bedroom. He promises to give his son an "exemplary" but unspecified punishment.[92]

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[91] Borba, *Margem*, 37-8.

[92] Borba, *Sobrados*, 5-7.

In the same play, the Capanga is ordered to kill the planter's son for having sex with his father's favorite mulatta. But upon closer inspection, the patriarch makes an intriguing case for what is permissible and what is illicit. When the Capanga provides the distressing news, the Senhor exclaims that "no one has seen a more serious crime: a sister with her brother!" The planter's remarks would seem to reference what he had observed in the opening scene: his son and daughter copulating. Nevertheless, the Senhor's remarks assume a very different meaning when they are coupled with a short exegesis on his aristocratic license. He reasserts his "rights" over the bodies and souls of those who "belong" to him, irrespective of whether they were "bought" or "generated" by the planter. "I do not even allow," he continues:

> Someone to invade what is mine.
> This daughter of a negra
> My daughter isn't anything
> For she only has my blood,
> But she does not have the law behind her;
> To speak truthfully,
> She is my property.[93]

5.6 The Licentious License of a "Plantation Boy"

Borba's twentieth-century character recalls an infamously reprobate storyteller of the nineteenth century: the novelist Machado de Assis's (1839-1908) character of Brás

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[93] Eu nem por sombra permito / Que se invada o que é meu. / Esta filha de uma negra / Minha filha não é nada / Por ela só tem o sangue, / Mas não tem por ela a lei: / Pra falar toda a verdade, / é minha propriedade." Borba, *Sobrados*, 23.

Cubas. Both adhere to a kind of storytelling that is "stripped of all moral category."[94] If Borba's character reflects on the antics of an adolescent and young man, Brás Cubas's entertaining tales come from beyond the grave. In Machado's *Posthumous Memoirs* (*Memórias póstumas*), the deceased Brás Cubas wryly and quite proudly recounts his mortal "vulgarity of character, love of loudness and ostentation, weakness of will, domination by whim and caprice, and the like."[95] As a youngster he remembers riding and whipping a young slave boy as if he were a horse, throwing ash into a dessert prepared by a servant, and pulling the hair of his father's distinguished houseguests. As a young man Brás Cubas forges a kind of personalized "morality" that may seem at odds with the proclaimed public values of his class, religion, and society. For example, rather than feeling remorse for not giving a humble muleteer who saved him too little money, Brás felt guilt for giving him *too much*.[96]

The reviewer Parul Sehgla suggests that Machado de Assis does not necessarily invite the reader to "condemn or reform" Brás Cubas "but to inhabit his consciousness."[97] Inhabiting his mind – or as historian Sidney Chalhoub frames it, seeing the protagonist's world through his eyes – pulls back the curtain on the "ordinary barbarism, the condescension and reflexive self-absorption" characteristic of an entire seigneurial class.[98] Throughout the "memoir," the deceased reveals his tricks and cheats through a humorous "frankness" that he claims befits a dead man like himself. He finds relief and freedom in death because the defunct can cast off their cloak, to "dump your spangles in a ditch, to unfold yourself, to strip off all your paint and ornaments, to confess plainly what you were and what you failed to be!"[99] Much of the work's humor resides in the fact that the unvarnished reality depicted by the deceased narrator is broadly legible to readers in a comparable social position. Indeed, Brás Cubas serves as an expression of what any prosperous planter or merchant *knows* to be true but usually unexpressed because of social etiquette.

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[94] Giorgio Marotti, *Black Characters in the Brazilian Novel*, trans. Maria O. Marotti and Harry Lawton (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, UCLA, 1987), 267.

[95] Machado de Assis, *Epitaph of a Small Winner*, trans. William L. Grossman (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 29.

[96] Machado, 53.

[97] Parul Sehgal, "A Playful Masterpiece That Expanded the Novel's Possibilities," *The New York Times* (June 16, 2020). This review centers on the latest translation of *Memórias póstumas* by Flora Thomson-DeVeaux.

Like Cubas, Borba's anti-hero also engages in debauchery and general rabble rousing, albeit in the rural interior and Recife of the 1930s through the fifties. Yet his fictional rendering does differ from that of Brás Cubas in two major ways. First, while Machado de Assis' character does not seek redemption from beyond the grave, the narrator Borba anticipates his judgment by God and man, who he invites to judge him as if he were God. Indeed, the opening epigraph for the tetralogy's first volume, quoting Eleni N. Kazantzakis, beseeches the reader not to judge him for his acts but rather the

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[98] Sidney Chalhoub, "What Are Noses For? Paternalism, Social Darwinism and Race Science in Machado de Assis," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 10, no. 2 (2001): 172.
[99] Machado, 57.

"secret intentions [his] actions have."[100] Second, his character bears witness to and explicitly describes instances of sex and violence unlike Cubas. Throughout, Borba's protagonist is far from a passive onlooker; instead, his behavior consists of preying on vulnerable – especially nonwhite and poor women – alongside somewhat more inoffensive (but unmistakably illegal) exploits, such as defrauding his employer and proclaiming himself dead in his hometown's notarial records.[101]

Brás Cubas and Borba's narrator are both expressions of a Brazilian upper-class version of the *enfant terrible*, known in Brazil as "devil son" (*menino diabo*). The elite social panorama had always accorded these nonconforming and libertine figures – both in childhood and adulthood – a legitimate place even though they violated moral standards and "proper" behavior.[102] That is, these mischief makers operate *above* all laws, both sacred and secular. Not unlike Brás Cubas, Borba's character is profoundly individualistic while occasionally depicting his personal acts of rebellion as "cultural resistance against elitism and colonialism … [and] authoritarianism," even as he becomes more deeply religious across the volumes.[103] If Brás Cubas confesses to being morally inert from birth to death, Hermilo's character understands himself as moving toward goodness.

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[100] Borba, *Margem*, 13.

[101] See, for example, Borba, *Margem*, 131-2 and *Porteira*, 85-9.

[102] Flora Thomson-DeVeaux, "A gestão do menino diabo: como traduzir Memórias póstumas de Brás Cubas para o inglês com dicionários e bases de dados gigantescas," *Piauí* (June 2020).

[103] "Se não deixa de pecar, de um livro para outro Hermilo fica menos afoito, suas transgressões vão se resumindo à resistência cultural contra o elitismo e colonialismo, à resistência contra o autoritarismo, e à resistência controlada às orienações dos médios sobre o que comer e o que beber." Cristiano Ramos, review of *Um cavalheiro da segunda decadência*, by Hermilo Borba Filho, *Rascunho* no. 148 (August 2012). Accessed June 17, 2020. On Borba's conversion and faith, see Leda Alves, "Leda de Hermilo, da fé de do teatro," in Vera Regina Morganti, ed., *Confissões do amor e da arte* (Porto Alegre: Mercado Aberto, 1994), 187-299.

From cradle to adulthood, the "devil children" of the upper-class escape punishment and enjoy a lifetime of impunity. After each of his young son's tantrums, Brás's father playfully admonishes his "clever little rascal." Hermilo also escapes punishment even though many of his reported juvenile and adult antics are clearly illegal. After being "exiled" to Recife in the early 1940s, for example, Hermilo secures a job at the Glory Oil Company, where he first works as an office boy and later, technician. He soon determines that he can pilfer from the company by claiming that a small portion of fuel evaporated. After the firm's managing director fires Borba, he nonetheless provides him with a clean letter of recommendation to "avoid causing a scandal."[104] In scandalous episode after episode, we can imagine him congratulating himself as a "clever rascal" even as his no-nonsense Mother Néa would complain, "like father, like son."[105]

This chapter has shown that reading the antihero of Hermilo Borba Filho's explicit tetralogy alongside Carlos de Melo and Brás Cubas reveals similarities in the comportments of the male progeny of the big house. But we also find that the fictional

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[104] Borba, *Porteira*, 88-9.

[105] Or, as Hermilo's mother puts it, "the son of a cat is a kitten" (*filho de gato é gatinho*). Borba, *Margem*, 114.

Hermilo – in addition to the extensive work that wills him into being – is demonstrably viler than his literary precursors.

Unsurprisingly, the Brazilian letrados who reviewed Borba's crowning achievement some 50 years ago had no qualms about the work's racist and misogynist underpinnings. This silence can be read as their recognition that the grotesqueries of Borba's creation captured a world that they knew to be true. From their perspective, the onslaught of violent words and actions (including sex) coupled with contemptuous depictions of women and Black Brazilians were part of an established habitus familiar to a male and privileged reading public. If pushed on the subject, they would probably have noted that Borba was being the "same cursed guy as always," one who had committed to paper what elite men had long gossiped about late into the night while drinking.[106]

In recent years, one inevitably reads works of erotica in a much different light. Writing in the *New York Review of Books* in February 2020, Mitchell Abidor suggests that one cannot help but think of Jeffery Epstein when pursuing the works of Sade.[107] Multiple generations of intellectuals have seen in Sadean libertinism a celebration of personal "freedoms." Yet Abidor reminds us that this hallowed *savoir-vivre* extends beyond the domain of literature and encompasses real-world predators and their prey.

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[106] Undated interview published in Silveira, 44.

[107] Mitchell Abidor, "Reading Sade in the Age of Epstein," *The New York Review of Books* (February 12, 2020).

The “freedom” embraced by Sade and his devotees constrains the freedoms of others, often the more vulnerable. Yet, as with Sade, we are called on to do more than merely condemn or exorcise racist and sexist libertines. We need to grapple with how and why cultures of predatory male privilege and upper-class impunity have flourished for so long and expunge their values from a twentieth-first-century Brazil.[108]

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[108] Abidor, “Reading Sade.”

6. The Calunga Commands: White Recife and the Opacity of Blackness

Born in the zona da mata a mere seven years after the abolition of slavery, the poet Ascenso Ferreira (1895-1965) remembered the visceral contempt that surrounded Afro-Pernambucan culture in his native Palmares. In a 1951 work on the maracatu, edited by fellow Palmarense Hermilo Borba Filho, Ferreira recalled certain older ladies rushing to close the windows and doors as the regal corteges of kings, queens, and ambassadors passed by their homes in lurid displays of singing and drumming. This revulsion for "anything that smelled of blacks" was also felt in turn-of-the-century Recife.[1] Theater man Waldemar de Oliveira (1900-1976) described his childhood terror at seeing the processions and especially the black dolls (*calungas*) hoisted in the air by ladies-in-waiting (*damas de paço*) wearing eighteenth-century European court garb (fig. 55).[2]

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[1] Hermilo Borba Filho, *é do Tororó: maracatu* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria-Editora da Casa do Estudante do Brasil, 1951), 14.
[2] Valdemar de Oliveira, *Mundo submerso (memórias)* (Recife: Fundação de Cultura Cidade do Recife, 1985).

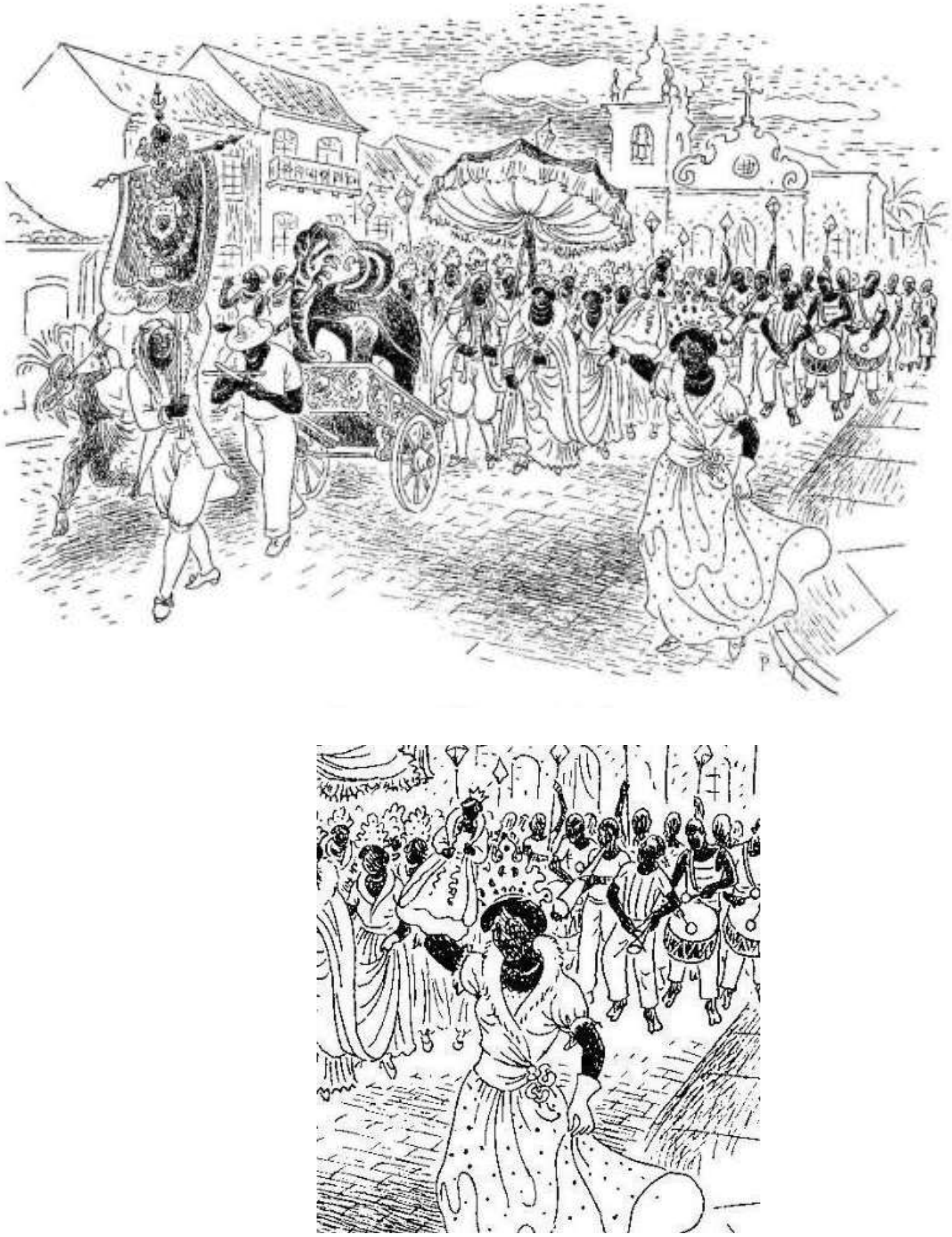

Figure 55: Drawing of a maracatu parading in the streets of Recife. Undated. Illustration by Percy Lau. Published in César Guerra-Peixe, *Maracatus do Recife* (São Paulo: Ricordi, 1956).

In the 1930s and 1940s, middle- and upper-class Pernambucans cultivated an environment of terror to counter their fear and loathing for African-descended cultural practices. At times, sugar planters ordered the maracatus to be halted and their members arrested.[3] In an attempt to stamp out the vestiges of so-called "low spiritism" (*baixo espiritismo*) in the capital, the police raided, set fire to, and plundered the sacred objects of Recife's centers of Xangô and spiritism.[4] And yet some members of the upper classes had always been drawn to Afro-Pernambucan culture, especially as it pertained to Carnaval.

Ferreira recalled having a conversation with a Palmarense plantation owner who was a devout reveler that never missed Recife's carnival. The man asked the poet why maracatus were first obligated to dance at the doors of churches before participating in the general merrymaking. It is uncertain whether the senhor knew that the nations (*nações*) appeared before not just any church, but those associated with Black confraternities such as the Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos. We cannot know whether the man's question was meant to test Ferreira or reflected his genuine curiosity. Nevertheless, it made the poet feel like a stranger in his own state. Ascenso in 1951 admitted that the cultural specifics of the maracatu never occurred to him as it was simply "one of the modalities" of Carnaval, and besides, he was more preoccupied with "having fun and enjoying" himself.[5]

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[3] Borba, 14.

[4] Freyre's cousin Ulysses Pernambucano de Mello Sobrinho (1892-1943) spearheaded the Mental Hygiene Service (Serviço de Higiene Mental, SHM). The SHM was primarily interested in understanding the consequences of spirit possession (known by practitioners as the "estado de santo," or the seating of the saint), a practice believed to have been a source and sign of mental illness. The entity studied many terreiros of Xangô and encouraged proper registration rather than indiscriminate destruction. See Albino Gonçalves Fernandes, *Xangôs do Nordeste: investigações sobre os cultos negro-fetichistas do Recife* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1937)) and Daniel Stone, "Charlatans and Sorcerers: The Mental Hygiene Service in Recife, Brazil," in Luis Nicolau Parés and Roger Sansi, eds., *Sorcery in the Black Atlantic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 95-120.

The calunga is a highly visible component of Recife's maracatus. These regally dressed dolls serve as dance partners to "ladies of the palace" (*damas-de-paço*), who slightly elevate the calungas as the procession passes through the streets and public squares. In the middle of the last century, calungas wore the same kinds of vestments and adornments as their human counterparts. Both maracatuzeiros and calungas showcased the accoutrements of an eighteenth-century royal court, including crowns, gowns, capes, scepters, necklaces, bangles, and swords.

For such a public figure, the calunga remains enigmatic. The care with which the doll is handled, dressed, and guarded suggests that it is far more than an attendant object of the maracatu. During Recife's catastrophic flood of 1975, the president of Maracatu Leão Coroado (Crowned Lion) risked his own life to save two dolls. The meaning of the daring rescue was lost on popular observers, who chafed at the "old man … who slept clutching his two calungas."[6] Some observers undoubtedly associated the calunga with witchcraft (*witchcraft*), perhaps linking it to the poppets for casting spells

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[5] Borba, 13.

[6] Leonardo Dantas Silva, "A corte dos reis do congo e os maracatus do Recife," *Ciência & Trópico* 27, no. 2 (1999): 380-1.

(*trabalhos*). In fact, Freyre categorized these ritual effigies, roughly analogous to "Voodoo dolls," as calungas.[7] Yet maracatuzeiros themselves, in the melodies (*toadas*) or chants (*cânticos*) transcribed by intellectuals in the 1930s through the fifties, held that the calunga "commands" (*a calunga é quem manda*).

The São Paulo writer and folklorist Mário de Andrade (1893-1945) discussed the calunga at the First Afro-Brazilian Congress held in Recife in 1934.[8] His first-rate analysis of the enigmatic object forged a now well-trodden path that explores the presumed etymological "origins" of the term. More important, while many intellectuals struggled to identify the correct meanings of the calunga as well as broader kinds of anthropomorphic dolls used in the rites of Afro-Atlantic religions, Andrade remained open to the undecidability of this spirited and performing thing.[9]

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[7] Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization*, trans. Samuel Putnam (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), 291.

[8] The Segundo Congresso Afro-Brasileiro was held in neighboring Salvador, Bahia in 1937. Gilberto Freyre, a student of Franz Boas, was the event's convener and organizer. Writing a day before the official opening, Freyre anticipated criticism, even outrage. He urged intellectuals to approach potentially "inflammatory" findings on Black culture calmly and with "scientific" rigor. In the same stroke of his pen, Freyre ridiculed Brazil's "official Aryanism" and called for a "rehabilitat[ion]" of black Brazilians as a "capable race … with notable contributions to national development." He also noted that holding the congress at the Teatro Santa Isabel was historically significant. Princess Isabel, the theater's namesake, emancipated enslaved Brazilians by imperial decree 46 years earlier. The great abolitionist and orator Joaquim Nabuco (1849-1910) also delivered impassioned speeches inside the Belle Epoque theater. Gilberto Freyre, "O Afro-Brasileiro," *DP*, November 11, 1934.

[9] The notion of the "spirited" is derived from the title of Paul C. Johnson's work *Spirited Things: The Work of "Possession" in the Afro-Atlantic Religions* (2014). I agree with J. Lorand Matory's use of the term to designate "physical things that have through ritual been animated with sacred value or humanlike agency." See Matory, *The Fetish Revisited: Marx, Freud, and the Gods Black People Make* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 331.

Andrade held that his predecessors and colleagues were each correct in characterizing the calunga as an idol (*ídolo*), charm (*feitiço*), mystical "excitement object" (*objeto de excitação mística*), as well as a religious and political symbol of "gods-kings." Indeed, Andrade contended that the object could simultaneously be each of these things, he reasoned, because the notion of the calunga was "never perfectly delineated in the black mind." And yet this conceptual fluidity was not characteristic of a "black mentality" (*mentalidade negra*) alone. He reasoned that devout Catholics, if asked to explain their conceptions of God, would produce the "most fabulous portrait gallery that not even a police file could produce."[10]

This chapter applies Matory's notion of the fetish to maracatus and, more specifically, the calunga, to capture the "competitive and strategic nature of meaning making."[11] It places not only the polysemic object, but also the words recorded by folklorists in the middle of the last century, at the center of a many sided and multi-sited debate over Afro-Pernambucan culture. We look most closely at how maracatus and maracatuzeiros unsettled prevailing assumptions about Black subordination through what Daphne A. Brooks calls "spectacular opacity."[12] Although the outward-facing manifestations of autonomy and nobility are most apparent, we will see that this embodiment of Black opacity strongly resists white Recife's attempts to define it.

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[10] Mário de Andrade, "A calunga dos maracatus," in *Estudos afro-brasileiros: trabalhos apresentados ao 1º Congresso Afro-Brasileiro realizado no Recife, em 1934*, ed. Gilberto Freyre (Recife: Editora Massangana, 1988), 46. See, for example Ramos, *O negro brasileiro* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1940), 109, 111, 186, 207, 310, 385; ibid., *O folclore negro do Brasil: demopsicologia e psicanálise* (Rio de Janeiro, Livraria-Editora da Casa do Estudande do Brasil, 1954), 91-3; Rodrigues, *O animismo fetichista dos negros baianos* (Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca Nacional, 2006); Ortiz, *Hampa afro-cubana: los negros brujos* (Madrid: Libreriá de Fernando Fé, 1906); and Pereira Costa, *Folk-lore pernambucano: subsídios para a história da poesia popular em Pernambuco* (Recife: Arquivo Público Estadual, 1974).

[11] Matory, 39.

6.1 The Calunga: A Spirited Thing on the Move

In a 1988 novel by Jorge Amado, the city of Salvador eagerly awaits the arrival of a rare wooden statue of Santa Barbara of the Thunder from a rural parish. She is to be the crowning object at a sacred art exhibit. As the ship transporting her enters port, Santa Barbara, who is syncretized with the god (*orixá*) Yansã (also known as Oyá[13]), assumes a human form and walks off the boat before she can be removed. Barbara/Yansã/Oyá deems it more important to attend to the needs of "her people" take part in the art exhibit.[14]

Like Amado's Santa Barbara, calungas are also "dolls on the move."[15] They not only dance and speak but are also given to vanishing and reappearing as if of their own volition. In 2014, two calungas that allegedly disappeared in the 1970s turned up at a terreiro of Xangô in Olinda.[16] Although their meanings are indecipherable to most revelers, these performing and spirited objects are generally believed to be the most important symbol of the maracatu as well as embodiments of its power.[17] Calungas are overwhelmingly black and female in “traditional” maracatus de nação, but it is not uncommon for so-called “rural” associations (also known as *maracatu de baque solto* or *maracatu de orquesta*) to possess white dolls (fig. 56-c).[18]

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[12] Daphne A. Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 8.

[13] Known as Ọya in Yoruba and Oyá or Oiá, Yansá or Yansã, and Iansá or Iansã elsewhere in the Black Atlantic diaspora, Yansã is an orixá of winds, lightning, and violent storms, death and rebirth.

[14] Jorge Amado, *The War of the Saints*. Trans. Gregory Rabassa (New York: Bantam Books, 1993).

[15] Marcus Wood, "Slavery and Syncretic Performance in the Noite do Tambores Silenciosos: Or How *Batuque* and the *Calunga* Dance around with the Memory of Slavery," *Journal of American Studies* 49, no. 2 (2015): 396.

[16] "Boneca Perdida há mais de 30 anos volta para maracatu do Recife," *Globo Pernambuco*, January 27, 2014, accessed February 18, 2021, http://g1.globo.com/pernambuco/noticia/2014/01/boneca-perdida-ha-mais-de-30-anos-volta-para-maracatu-do-recife.html. Like Matory, I am wary of attributing too much agency to

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“things and landscapes … [by] emphasizing their powers to *dictate* and *constrain* what we do with them, how we do it, and what we do in general.” Matory, 186.

[17] Frank Proschan, “The Semiotic Study of Puppets, Masks, and Performing Objects,” *Semiotica* 47, no. 1 (1983).

[18] Here we are concerned with the former kind of maracatu. For an excellent study of “rural” maracatus, see Christopher Estrada, “Caboclos of Nazareth: Improvisation and Renovation in Maracatu de Baque Solto of Pernambuco” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2015).

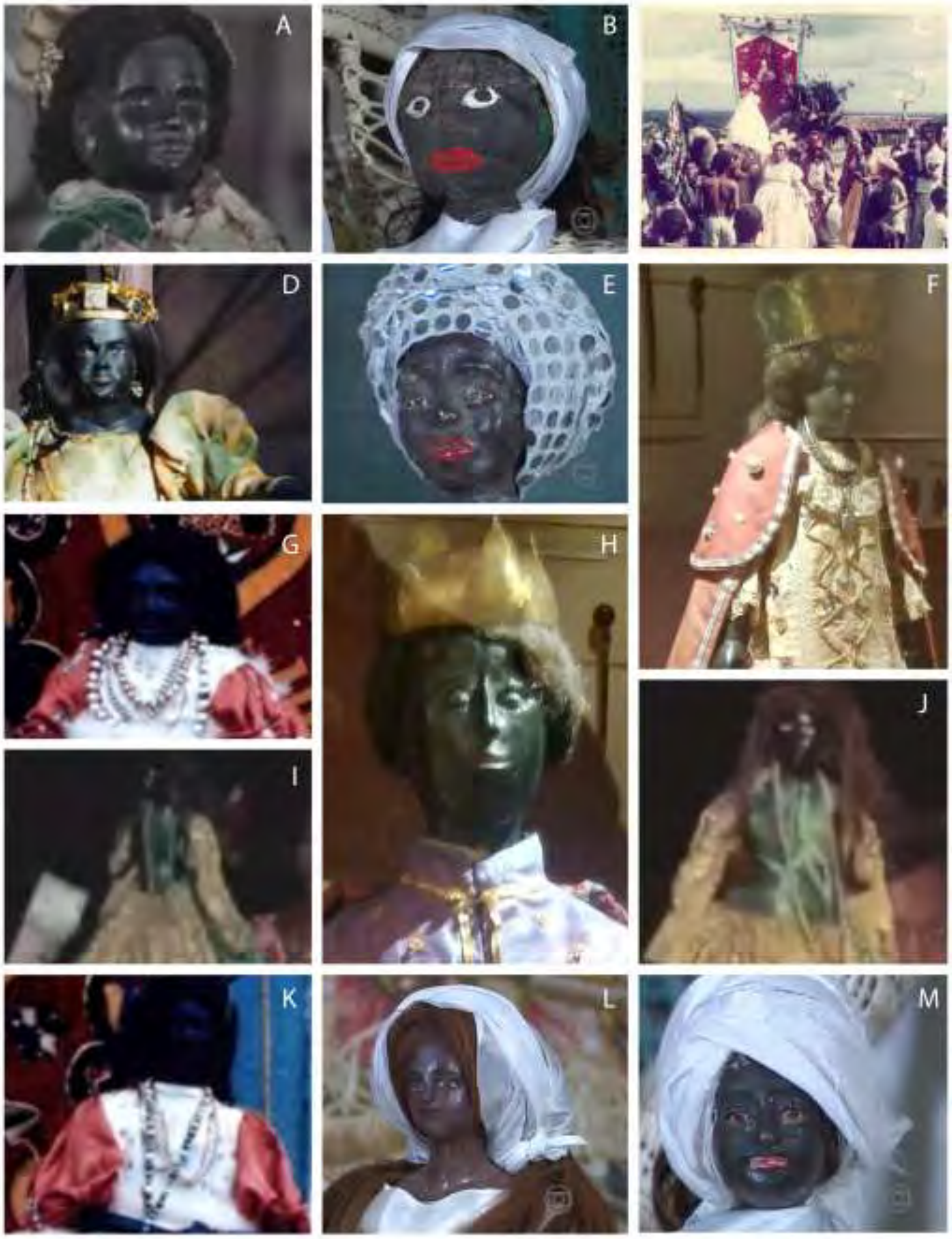

Figure 56: Close-ups of 14 calungas who represent eight maracatus. These are: (A) Dona Emilia [ME], (B) Dona Bela [PRc], (C) unidentified white doll [LS], (D) Dona Joventina [EB], (E) Dona Inés [PRc], (F) Dona Leopoldina [ME], (G) Dona Clara or Dona Isabel [LC], (H) Dom Luiz [ME], (I) Dona Inés or Dona Júlia [PR], (J) Dona Inés or Dona Júlia [PR], (K) Dona Clara or Dona Isabel [LC], (L), Dona Júlia [PRc], and (M)

Dona Elizabete [PRc]. Images A, I, and J are stills from the Super-8 film *Santa do maracatu (1980), by Fernando Spencer*; images B, E, L, and M are stills drawn from the program "Bom Dia Pernambuco"; images F and H were taken by the author; and images C, D, G, and K were retrieved from the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation's "Villa Digital." Each of these photographs was taken by Katherine Royal Cate.

Although the link between maracatus and Afro-Pernambucan religions is subject to debate, it is worth noting the similarities between calungas, anthropomorphic dolls employed in the rites of Candomblé and Umbanda, and even Catholic saints that are fed and dressed.[19] Rather than attempting to assign stable meanings to the polysemic calunga, I offer a creative "reading" of the object-entity itself. Drawing on the same "sign systems" and "figurative codes" that facilitated our semiotic analysis of mamulengo puppets in chapter 3, I examine the calunga with an eye toward design, movement, and speech. This final domain is examined in greater depth in the next section.[20]

Our analysis relies on a comparatively small number of calungas that are on display at the Museum of the Northeastern Man (Museu do Homem do Nordeste) of the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation. This body of museological objects includes three females and one male. In addition to Dona Joventina, a calunga that belonged to Maracatu Estrala Brilhante, the objects examined here include three objects belonging to Maracatu Elefante, the nineteenth century agremiação that was disbanded in 1962 after the death of its queen. These dolls are Dona Emília (figs. 56-a and 57), Dona Leopoldina (figs. 56-f and 58), and Dom Luíz (figs. 56-h and 59). Where it enriches our discussion, I read calungas alongside still other kinds of spirited and performing objects—including mamulengo puppets—not to suggest that they are reducible to a kind of puppet but to ask questions of the larger ensembles of spirited objects that inhabit and actively intervene in the world of the povo.

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[19] Historians Isabel Guillen and Ivaldo Marciano de França Lima seek to unsettle the mythical links between maracatus and Xangô/Candomblé. Both show how negotiated aspects of legitimacy and authenticity have elevated the importance of Afro-Brazilian religious traditions since the 1990s, when a process of "re-Africanization" and "spectacularization" began. See Guillen, "Xangôs e maracatus: uma relação historicamente construída," *Ciências Humanas em Revista* 3, no. 2 (2005): 59-72; Lima, "Maracatus-nação e religiões afro-descendentes: uma relação muito além do carnaval," *Diálogos* 10, no. 3 (2006): 167-183; and Guillen and Lima, *Os maracatus-nação do Recife e a espetacularização da cultura popular (1960-1990)* (Recife: Edições Bagaço, 2007).

[20] Steve Tillis, *Toward an Aesthetics of the Puppet: Puppetry as a Theatrical Art* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1992). Izabela Costa Brochado dissertation. Wood article on movement. "Mamulengo Puppet Theatre in the Socio-Cultural Context of Twentieth-Century Brazil" (PhD diss., Trinity College Dublin, 2005).

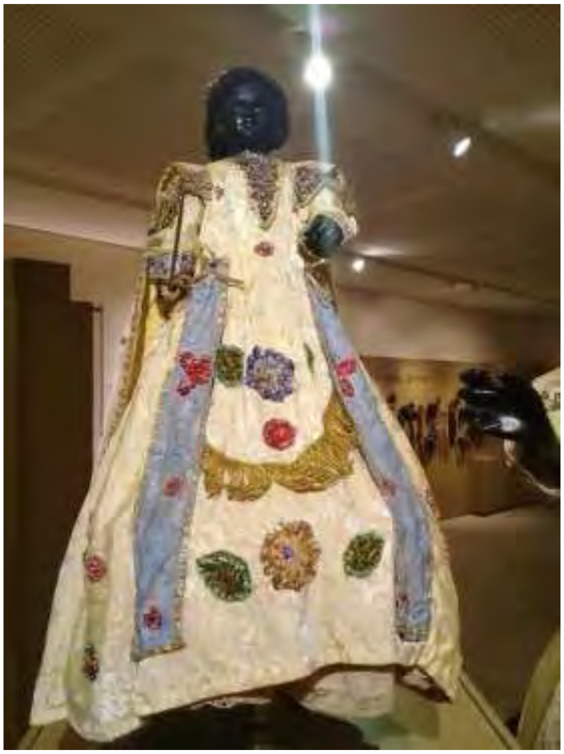

Figure 57: The calunga Dona Emília is 14.17" (0.36m) tall, has articulated arms, glass eyes, and wears a natural hairpiece like that of Maracatu Elefante's queen, Dona

Santa. Photograph by the author. For the complete catalog entry, see Raul Lody and Maria Regina Martins Batista., eds., *Coleção Maracatu Elefante e de objetos afro-brasileiros* (Recife: Rio de Janeiro: FUNARTE/Instituto Nacional do Folclore, 1987), 42-3.

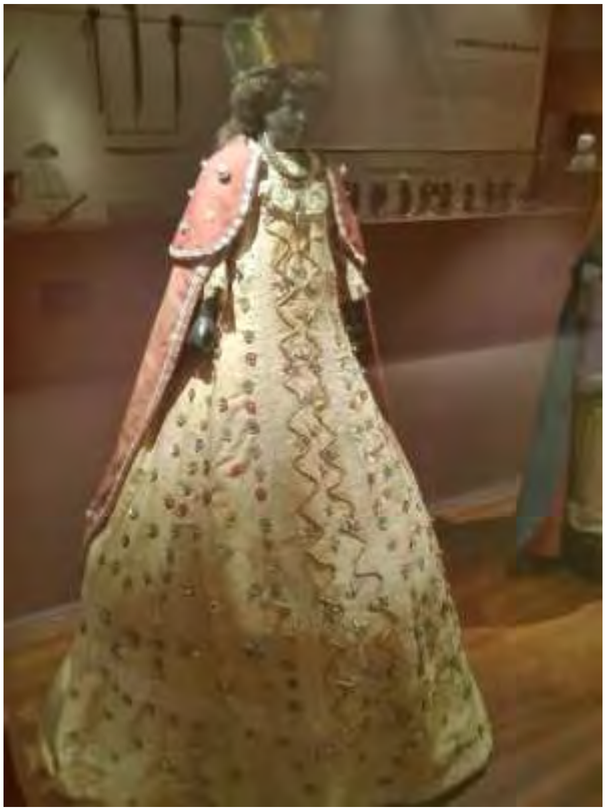

Figure 58: The calunga Dona Leopoldina is nearly 15" (0.38m) tall, has articulated arms, glass eyes, and wears a hairpiece made from "natural" hair. Raul Lody and Maria Regina Martins Batista noted that the rigidity of the doll reminded him of a baby Jesus (Menino Deus) without its clothing. Furthermore, they contended that the calunga Leopoldina could "faithfully represent a Catholic saint . . . if the paint was white, the hair blonde, and [if she] carried a globe in one of the hands and a flag in the other." See Lody and Martins, 44-5.

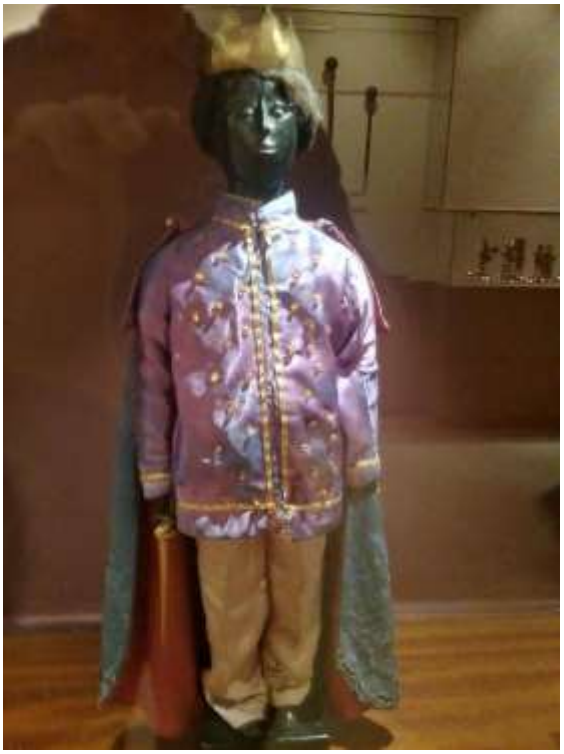

Figure 59: The calunga Dom Luiz is nearly 19" (0.48m) tall, has articulated arms and wears a hairpiece made from "natural" hair. His eyes are not glass but rather painted white, and his lips are painted pink. For a complete catalog description, see See Lody and Martins, 46.

The four calungas examined here are more unequivocally lifelike than the puppets examined in chapter 3. They are imitations of the human form rather than distortions of it. These dolls are not characterized by oversized heads and petite trunks but rather a significant degree of proportionality. It bears noting that I have yet to acquire photographs of calungas stripped of their clothing, meaning it is uncertain whether their unexposed frames mimic the human body. It is equally unclear whether their bodies are produced from single pieces of wood. We do know, however, that the dolls’ arms are articulated, meaning the trunks feature at least two joints. Raul Lody and Maria Regina Martins, who wrote the catalog descriptions of hundreds of Afro-Brazilian objects in Recife’s museum collections, do not specify what kind of wood might have been used to fashion the calungas. It seems plausible that their sculptors utilized durable but pliable species of trees—such as imburana and mulungu used by puppet artists—given that these objects move through crowded streets and could potentially be bumped or dropped.[21] Joventina, Leopoldina, Emília, and Luíz are all painted a uniform dark black that closely matches the skin tone of Baltazar and Benedito. As a result, there can be no doubt as to their Black—and specifically Afro-Recifense—characteristics. The calungas’ hair is made of human or perhaps even animal locks rather than being painted onto the objects. Indeed, each of the dolls sports a removable hairpiece (*peruca*), a practical necessity given that biological hair degrades over time.

While the clothing of mamulengo puppets is sometimes fixed—that is, painted on the bodies of the objects—calungas’ outfits are interchangeable, intricate, and abundant. Clothing plays an important role as a communicative system. Filed away in the technical reserves (*reserva técnica*) of the Museum of the Northeastern Man, Emília, Leopoldina, and Luíz have 67 pieces of clothing: 11 dresses, 33 capes, seven pairs of pants, and 16 tunics (*dolmãs*) (fig. 60**)**.[22] This number does not include untold sums of bangles, bracelets, earrings, scepters, swords, and crowns. Limitations of space preclude us from discussing at length the symbolism of the above accessories, but it is widely agreed that the array of colors, patterns, and symbols converse with identifying characteristics of individual orixás, as the entities of Candomblé and Umbanda are known.[23]

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[21] Calungas are typically white and made of cloth among “rural” maracatus (*baque solto*). For excellent photographs of Pernambuco’s rural manifestations, see Maria Alice Amorim, *Maracatu: baque virado e baque solto* (Recife: Folha de Pernambuco, 2011) and Pedro Ribeiro and Maria Lucia Montes, *Maracatu de baque solto* (São Paulo: Quatro Imagens, 1998). Marcus Wood astutely remarks that there are “no hard and fast rules governing the outward form of the calunga.” She can be a rag doll, a stick, or even a mass-produced plastic doll. Wood, 396. The anthropomorphic dolls of Candomblé and Umbanda night might take these forms. See Wood, *Imagining Slavery in the Visual Cultures of Brazil and America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 476-82. It should be noted that the (literal) plasticity of sacred objects has been observed elsewhere in the Black Atlantic. On Cuban spiritualism, see Diana Espírito Santo, “The Ontogeny of Dolls: Materiality, Affect, and Self in Afro-Cuban Espiritismo,” *Material Religion* 15, no. 3 (2019): 269-92.

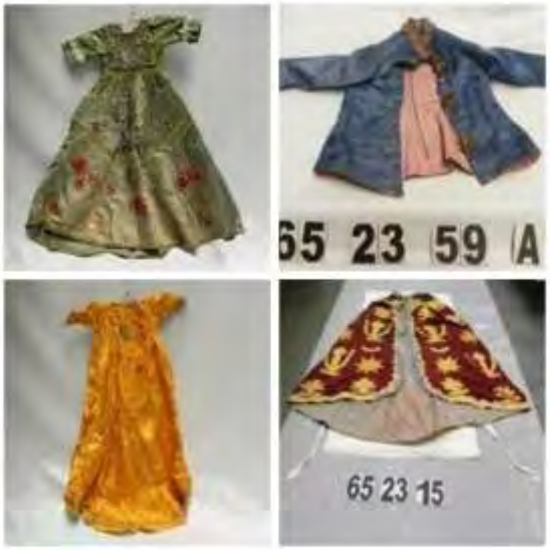

Figure 60: A small sampling of calungas' clothing stored in the technical reserves of the Museum of the Northeastern Man of the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation. Photograph by the author.

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[22] This number is the result of my own calculation. In 2017 and 2018, I was granted access to the museum's internal databases.

[23] See, for example, Lody and Batista.

The clothing of the female calungas is not only more ornate; the long, billowing gowns and capes make them appear taller. Without these items (and excluding their support bases), Donas Emília and Leopoldina are approximately 14 and 15 inches in height, respectively. Dom Luíz is around 18 inches (0.48 meters) tall. One might assume that the differences in height convey increasing to decreasing importance. However, Emília and Leopoldina appear more imposing alongside Luíz. Indeed, the notion that maracatus are matriarchies makes it more likely that that Dom Luíz's height is more a reflection of sex than his symbolic importance, which is presumed to be lesser than that of his female consorts.

One of the more striking characteristics of the calungas is quite subtle. Both Dona Joventina and Dom Luiz have rounded bellies. The North American anthropologist Catherine Royal Cate (1927-2006) initially thought Dona Joventina was pregnant, but she later concluded that the calunga merely exhibited what was "typical of an African woman" who was "strong and very well-nourished."[24] Lody and Martins suggested that Luiz's protruding stomach denoted his masculinity given that he did not possess male genitalia.[25] Royal's argument, while it misses the mark in some ways, gets us closer to a more proximate meaning: the calungas have distended bellies because they are well-fed; they are well-fed because they are royalty.

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[24] Handwritten address, delivered on behalf of Dona Joventina, March 5, 1996, fl. 2. Institutional archive of the Museu do Homem do Nordeste, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco.

[25] Lody and Batista, 46.

When examined from a distance, the calungas' facial features would be nearly indistinguishable. Even so, they reveal something about the objects' natures. Emília, Leopoldina, and Joventina each have glass eyes, which give the impression of a contemplative gaze. The women's expressions are serene but also penetrating. Luíz, on the other hand, appears transfixed given that his eyes are painted. Combined with his more unusual facial features (fig. 56-h) that "do not reveal the same care" as his female companions, Lody and Martins wondered whether Dom Luiz had been produced by a different sculptor and if his rougher features might accentuate his masculinity.[26] Variability in calungas' physiques are also evident across the four dolls that belong to Recife's Porto Rico do Oriente (fig. 56-b, e, l, and m), a maracatu that emerged in the early 1980s. Although each object is female, Dona Bela stands out for being a rag doll made of dyed cloth.[27]

Although calungas differ in their physical features, we find far less variety in their names. Each doll bears an honorific "dona" (for females) or "dom" (for males). These titles could be used to mean "madam" or "sir," respectively, but the calungas' proper names, combined with their court garb, establish that they are indeed royal figures. At the same time, names are duplicated across maracatus. For instance, two independent entities—one in Recife and the other, Palmares—both possessed female calungas named Dona Clara (Table 5). In this table, it is also likely that two dolls were named Isabel, as the "Dona Bela" belonging to Porto Rico of Recife is probably a truncated form of "Isabel," an invocation of the regent who emancipated Brazilian slaves in 1888.[28]

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[26] Lody and Martins, 46-7.

[27] One might also notice the difference in how these more contemporary calungas are dressed compared to those of the 1950s and 1960s. These dolls wear simple white clothing and head wraps instead of European court attire. This change, it would seem, is evidence of what has been termed the "re-Africanization" of Recife's maracatus since the 1990s. See Martha Rosa Figueira Queiroz, " Onde cultura é política: movimento negro, afoxés e maracatus no carnaval do Recife (1979-1995)" (Ph.D. diss., Universidade de Brasília, 2010).

Table 5: Translated Names, Locations, Classifications, and Calungas of Pernambucan Maracatus

Name and Translation	Location	Founded	Classification	Calungas
1. Elefante Elefant	Recife	1800	Maracatu-nação	1. Emília 2. Luiz 3. Leopoldina
2. Estrela Brilhante Bright Star	Igarassu	1910 (Recife)	Maracatu-nação	4. Joventina
3. Estrela Brilhante Bright Star			Maracatu-nação	5. Joventina
4. O Leão Coroado The Crowned Lion	Recife	1863	Maracatu-nação	6. Clara 7. Isabel
5. Cambinda Velha Old Cambinda	Palmares		Maracatu-nação	8. Clara[29]
6. Leão da Serra Old Cambinda	Recife	1959	"Rural"	9. Unnamed white female
7. Porto Rico do Oriente Rich Port of the East	Recife	19th c. in Palmares	Maracatu-nação	10. Inés 11. Júlia
8. Porto Rico do Oriente Rich Port of the East	Recife	1980	Maracatu-nação Maracatu-nação	12. Bela 13. Elizabete 14. Júlia 15. Inés

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[28] This probably holds true for the "Dona Bela" that belongs to Recife's Porto Rico do Oriente.

[29] The calunga Clara belonging to Leão Coroado previously belonged to Cambinda Velha. Guerra-Peixe, 92.

While the cultural practice that forms the basis of the present chapter also employs black spirited dolls, it sharply diverges from the male-centered game of violence and humiliation. If plantation slavery plays a central part in mamulengo's origin myths[30], Pernambuco's maracatus invoke the grandeur of a remote but regal African past. Like vast swathes of Afro-Atlantic religious traditions, these prolific assemblages are public statements of Black presence and Africanicity, where the elision of slavery is not so much a silence as a refusal to be reduced to enslavement.[31]

While mamulengo shows of the mid the twentieth century were crass, simple, and male-centered, the procession of a maracatu is a somber, lavish, and female oriented affair. Black investiture ceremonies, particularly those linked to brotherhoods of the rosary, were the historical precursors to the maracatu. The practice of electing monarchs to represent distinct African "nations" (*nações*) was first documented in Recife in 1674.[32] Although both kings and queens have led many kinds of folguedos in the nearly three and a half centuries of slavery in Pernambuco (1539-1888), maracatus are increasingly matriarchal and even matrilineal spaces. Although one might argue that this characterization has been an imposition of the intellectual imagination (one that has been readily adopted by *maracatuzeiros* who depend on official concessions), a seldom considered explanation is that black female dolls (*calungas*) are the symbols of "traditional" (read African-derived) maracatus.

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[30] See two accounts analyzed in chapter 3.

[31] In an earlier study of mythology and nostalgia among Recife's xangôs, José Jorge de Carvalho observed that adherents "never referred to the tribulations of the oppressed black but the glories of the free." See "A força da nostalgia: a concepção de tempo histórico dos cultos afro-brasileiros tradictionais," *Série Antropológica* 59 (1987): 23.

[32] Marina de Mello e Souza, *Reis negros no brasil escravista: história da Festa de Coração de Rei Congo* (Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2002), 205.

6.2 Plumbing the Secret: Concealment and Revelation in Toadas

In this section we examine a component of maracatus that has been neglected in the latest historical scholarship: the words that speak on behalf of, and about, the calunga. In the 1930s through the late fifties, the *toadas* (melodies) or *cânticos* (chants), as they have been called, interested intellectuals a great deal. Practically all the works on maracatu incorporated snippets of the call-and-response sort of dialogue between the queen and her *baianas* (women from Bahia). The works of poet Ascenso Ferreira (1951) and composer and instrumentalist César Guerra-Peixe (1955) stand out for including sheet music with their textual transcriptions.[33]

Here I analyze a corpus of approximately 75 toadas collected and transcribed between the early 1930s and the mid-1950s. Although words, music, and rhythms operate as a cohesive unit, the primary focus is on the lyrics.[34] We find that the words captured in this archive are compelling examples of what José Jorge de Carvalho terms the "aesthetics of opacity." Their meanings are hardly self-evident, and the delivery of these toadas undoubtedly compounded their opaqueness. Indeed, dancing and marching amid a sonic backdrop of drumming was such that audiences could not understand exactly what was being sung—nor were they meant to.[35] The toadas collected by outside observers share important similarities with examples of the *jongo* transcribed by historian Stanley Stein in rural Rio de Janeiro in the 1940s. Both lyrical practices incorporate riddles as a strategy of concealment, and a broader degree of deliberate ambiguity shrouds meaning through multiple interpretations and the use of African-based words.[36]

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[33] Borba (1951) and Guerra-Peixe, *Maracatus do Recife* (São Paulo: Ricordi, 1959). Katherine Royal did not cite examples of this vocal accompaniment in her much-cited 1967 monograph. See *O folclore no carnaval do Recife* (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério de Educação e Cultura, Campanha do Folclore Brasileiro, 1967).

[34] This archive draws on the following works: Andrade (1935), Ferreira (1951), Ramos (1954), and Guerra-Peixe (1959). Guerra-Peixe distinguishes between the text (*toada*), music (*música*), and rhythm or beat (*toque*). See ibid., 49.

This corpus of toadas encompasses multiple themes, but our interest lies in two areas. These are (1) references to calungas and (2) invocations of and appeals to authority. 16 toadas—approximately 21% of those analyzed here—feature calungas as primary subjects-objects. Most of such invocations (11 out of 16) mention the calunga by name (e.g., Donas Vitória, Emília, Leopoldina, and so on). Participants also refer to the spirited object as "Catita" or the diminutive "Catitinha," a kind of nickname first documented by Mário de Andrade in the 1930s.[37] It should be further noted that each of the calungas referenced in the transcriptions is female.

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[35] José Jorge de Carvalho, "Black Music of All Colors: The Construction of Black Ethnicity in Ritual and Popular Genres of Afro-Brazilian Music," in Gerard H. Behague, ed., *Music and Black Ethnicity: The Caribbean and South America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 190.

[36] Stanley J. Stein, *Vassouras: A Brazilian Coffee County, 1850-1900: The Roles of Planter and Slave in a Plantation Society*. Second edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 204-9. See also Silvia Hunold Lara and Gustavo Pacheco, eds., *Memória do jongo: as gravações históricas de Stanley J. Stein, Vassouras, 1949* (Rio de Janeiro: Folha Seca, 2007).

In several cases, the female participants (often termed “baianas”) speak on behalf of the calunga. Ascenso Ferreira documented an exchange between the “tirador” (literally “shooter”), perhaps the queen of Nação Cambinda Velha in Palmares, and the “chorus” (*coro*). The solo vocalist asked Dona Leopoldina, the calunga, where she was going. Performing the role of the calunga, the chorus explained that she was headed to Luanda to see her father, Dom João. The soloist then told the calunga that the group needed a “good steam ship” (*vapô bom*) to make the journey. Leopoldina responded that she would order a hot air balloon to come, specifically that of the Brazilian inventor and airman Santos Dumont (Santidumon):

Tirador: Hey Princess Leopoldina	Ou Princesa Leopoldina
Where are you going?	Pr’onde é que tu te vai?
Chorus: I am going to Luanda	Vou-me embora pra Luanda
To see Mr. Dom João, my father...	Vê Sinhô D. João, meu pai...
Tirador: To make our journey	Pra fazê nossa viage
We need a good steam ship!	Nós precisa vapô bom!
Chorus: I will order the balloon to come	Vou mandá vê o balão
The Santidumon (Santos Dumont) balloon	O balão Santidumon...[38]

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[37] Andrade wrote that Catita was a diminutive of Catarina. He held that Caterina was “the name of many blacks in Brazil, which became eternalized in important documents of our folklore.” In bumba-meu-boi, Andrade pointed out, one of the female characters is traditionally named Mother (Mãe) Caterina. Andrade, 43.

[38] Ferreira, 17-8.

César Guerra Peixe recorded a similar dialogue albeit one where the queen of Recife's Maracatu Elefante posed a question and sung the calunga's response without the involvement of the chorus. Dona Santa, the queen, asked the calunga where she was headed. The calunga indicated that she was going to Luanda where she intended to "quebrá saramuná," an expression specific to maracatus that most likely means to dance.[39]

Travel to Luanda is an important leitmotif in our body of toadas. These references perhaps seek to "close the geographic circuit" that skewed East to West for centuries by conjuring a "glorious an intact Africa from before the slave trade."[40] Two toadas captured independently by Andrade and Ferreira, both originating with Recife's Maracatu Porto Rico, conveyed that the calunga Dona Clara ordered the transatlantic journey while the Maracatu Sol Nascente affirmed that the calunga also "command[ed]" (*manda*) more generally.[41]

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[39] According to the online *Glossário Maracatu Lua Nova*, this expression has multiple potential meanings. First, it could be a synonym for the verb *requebrar* (to swing, sway, swaddle, walk with a swaying motion, or move with undulations). It could also refer to a prayer of protection through which one wards off evil. Finally, the expression might be a corruption of the word "saramunete," a kind of fish. Thus, invoking "saramuná" might refer to the act of fishing. See http://blocodepedra.maracatu.org.br/noticias/vocabulario-de-maracatu/. Accessed December 9, 2020.

[40] José Jorge de Carvalho, "A força da nostalgia: A concepção de tempo histórico dos cultos afro-brasileiros tradicionais," *Série Antropológica* 59 (1987): 28.

[41] The version collected by Mário de Andrade goes as follows: "Baiana bonita, / Vamos a Loanda, / Que dona Clara / Foi quem mandô! / Vamos a Loanda! / Êh-zô! Êh-zô!" It is unclear both who performed these verses as well as what the concluding onomatopoeic phrase alludes to. Andrade, 171. The toada transcribed by Ascenso Ferreira begins with the tirador telling the "beautiful baiana" that the group is going to Luanda because "it was Dona Clara who ordered it." The chorus, speaking as the "baiana," responds: "Let's go to Luanda / I'm going… I'm going…" Ferreira, 21. The untitled toada by Sol Nascente (Rising Sun) begins with the soloist invoking the queen and the chorus indicating that "A Calunga é quem manda!" Andrade, 156.

One of the more intriguing invocations of the calunga documented by Andrade featured a riddle. Someone asked why "Dona Catitinha" did not "appear in the world." An unspecified speaker (or speakers) answered that she "is beneath the water [where she] neither rises nor descends."[42] A connection with the ocean—more specifically, the seashore—is reiterated by the Maracatu Elefante. Guerra Peixe documented the queen and baianas of the Maracatu Elefante narrating Dona Emília's stroll on the shore. Beginning with interchanging enunciations of "Ô-lê-lê-ôu" and "Ô-lê-ru-á," which he claimed was an ode to the female orixá of the sea, Iemanjá, the queen and her baianas sung[43]:

Oh seashore	Ô beramá
Princess Dona Emília	Princesa Dona Emília
Went to stroll	Foi passeá
Went to stroll	Foi passeá
Along the seashore	Na bérama.[44]

An association with the sea was further accentuated when the queen of the Maracatu Elefante declared that the doll was "made of silk" (*a boneca é de seda*) and her female attendants clarified that the material was "whale silk" (*seda baleia*).[45] In a study of Black Brazilians' devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary (Nossa Senhora do Rosário) in Minas Gerais, the late historian Elizabeth Kiddy found that the ocean played an important role in mythos and practice. Devotees explained that their adherence began when enslaved actors found her bouncing in the waves. The whites were unsuccessful in their attempts to coax her to shore and different groups of blacks were only able to do so when they sung, drummed, and danced in unison.[46] Kiddy maintained that this origin myth, combined with the ubiquity of the sea in *congadeiros*' devotional songs, highlighted the blending of two concepts: the Catholic notion that the Virgin Mary is an intercessor between man and God and the belief that she traverses Kalunga, the boundary between the dead and living.[47]

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[42] "Êh cadê Dona Catitinha / Que no mundo num aparece? / Ela está debaixo d'água / Que num assobe nem desce." Transcription of a toada by Recife's Maracatu Cambinda Velha. Andrade, 163.
[43] César Guerra-Peixe, *Maracatus do Recife* (São Paulo: Ricordi, 1956), 56.
[44] Guerra-Peixe, 132.
[45] Guerra-Peixe, 130.

Blacks' devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary is not, of course, limited to Minas Gerais. The single toada (out of nearly 80) referencing Catholicism appeals to the Virgin of the Rosary (Virgem do Rosário). This piece, sung by the Maracatu Sol Nascente as it arrived at the seventeenth century Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men, described the smells of cloves, roses, and orange blossoms emanating from the virgin's "house."[48] As we saw earlier, the mystery of maracatus' links to Black churches pushed Ascenso Ferreira to learn more about a practice that was seldom understood and more often feared.

The notion that "kalunga" (or "calunga") is literally or metaphorically linked to the ocean is much cited in the scholarly literature. Yet this association exists alongside—

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[46] Elizabeth Kiddy, "*Congados*, *Calunga*, *Candombe*: Our Lady of the Rosary in Minas Gerais, Brazil," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 27, no. 1 (2000): 49.
[47] Kiddy, 54-5.
[48] Andrade, 161.

perhaps even in opposition to—a broad gamut of possible meanings. While Andrade and others used lengthy etymological tracts to map conceptual genealogies, Marcus Wood employs the device to illustrate what he calls an "etymological enigma."[49] Although we certainly risk immobilizing these phenomena through our desperate attempts to name them, some associations, it would seem, are more fruitful than others. Kalunga as a literal and figurative watershed—an association that is more evocative given that the calunga doll seems to "bob" in a sea baianas—merits closer examination. Yet teasing out these meanings, as César Guerra Peixe recognized over 60 years ago, requires scholars to work in tandem with practitioners over the long term.[50]

Though smaller in number (six) compared to instances in which the calunga is invoked (16), appeals to authority are worthy of mention as they elucidate outward deference while leaving open the possibility of tricks and cunning (*malícia*). Three selections explicitly communicated that their respective maracatus—Sol Nascente, Cambinda Nova, and Elefante permission to pass through the streets. Andrade recorded the first example as Sol Nascente approached the Palace of the "Guvernadô." Court singers announced that they paid tribute to the governor who "gave the liberty" (*deu a liberdade* of passage.[51] The Maracatu Leão do Norte (Lion of the North[52]) offered "vivas" to two lesser officials whose authority could be brought to bear on them in more direct ways: the mayor and police chief.[53]

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[49] Andrade, 140-7. Wood, 397-8.
[50] Guerra-Peixe, 39.
[51] Andrade, 161.

The remaining two—Cambinda Nova (Andrade) and Maracatu Elefante (Guerra Peixe)—stand out for their references to the barons of Suassuna and Caxangá. Brazil's nobility was formally abolished with the proclamation of the Republic in 1889. Guerra Peixe pushed members of the Maracatu Elefante to explain why they honored the Baron of Caxangá decades later. They told him that their maracatu could only take to the street thanks to the intercession of the nobleman. The same informant confessed that they were not sure whether this applied to all groups or merely the Elefante. Yet Cambina Nova's ode to the Baron of Suassuna suggests that all maracatuzeiros appealed to elite patrons for their protection.[54]

6.3 Destruction, Conservation, and Imitation: Long and Short Views

Today's maracatus are part of a complex genealogy of Black monarchs in the Afro-Ibero-Atlantic world. Scholars have found the "origins" of this *folguedo* in the institution of Black kings (*reis negros*) that spread throughout Portugal, Spain, Spanish

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[52] The state's coat of arms, adopted in 1895, features a lion atop the central shield, which represents Pernambucans' historic rebelliousness in the wake of oppression by outsiders, be they the Dutch (1630-1654), monarchy, Brazilian Empire, or he Republic.
[53] Ramos, 91.
[54] Guerra-Peixe, 55.

America, the Caribbean, North America, and Brazil.[55] In the latter case, where they were most important for reasons we will discuss shortly, the crowning of kings and queens was most closely associated with Black brotherhoods (*irmandades de homens pretos*). These lay associations consisted of free and enslaved members that clustered around a patron saint, such as Our Lady of the Rosary, Saint Benedict, or King Baltazar. In Brazil, sodalities served multiple functions including providing mutual aid and opportunities for socialization and leisure. These brotherhoods were most important in Brazil given the paltry support for the construction of churches and the insufficient number of priests.[56]

The first documented case of a ritual performance involving an African king occurred in Dutch Recife (1630-1654). In 1642, the ambassador of the King of Congo enacted a ritual drama in which he received embassies from other nations. The historian Elizabeth Kiddy argued that this display, documented by Gaspar Barlaeus, "closely resembled the rituals that would later be enacted by the brotherhoods of the rosary."[57] The Pernambucan historian Leonardo Dantas Silva holds that the crowning of Black kings can be traced as far back as 1666. He points us to the pioneering work of Francisco Augusto Pereira da Costa, a Recife born folklorist, who translated a Frenchman's account of a party that occurred on September 10 of that year. Urbain Souchu de

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[55] Mello e Souza, 179.
[56] Mello e Souza, 183.
[57] Kiddy, 159.

Rennefort wrote that a group of around 400 men and 100 women elected a king and queen, then "march[ing] through the streets singing and reciting improvised verses, accompanied by *atabaques* [a tall, Afro-Brazilian hand drum], trumpets, and tambourines."[58] The curious visitor watched as participants "dressed in the clothing of their masters and mistresses, wearing golden chains and gold earrings and pearls," sparing no expense on their regalia, and doing nothing for a week "besides gravely passing through the streets, with shields and daggers at the waist."[59] Rennefort's description speaks not only to the unusual pomp, ceremony, and richness of the celebration, but also the troubled acceptance of the ruling classes.[60]

In Pernambuco, Black festivities consisting of music and dancing drew the ire of Capuchin friars. In 1778, clerics belonging to the convent of Our Lady of the Rock, the basilica located beside what would become the São José Public Market, invaded the property of Black revelers, broke their instruments, and led to their arrests. However, the governor of Pernambuco sided with the blacks and ordered their release. He reminded the *ouvidor* in Olinda that he had authorized the brotherhoods to plan their celebrations. What is more, the governor pointed out that his predecessors had long sanctioned these festivities, reminding the archbishop of Lacemonia, Portugal that the

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[58] Leonardo Dantas Silva, "A instituição do rei de congo e sua presença nos maracatus," in *Estudos sobre a escravidão negra*, ed. Leonardo Dantas Silva (Recife: Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Editora Massanganda, 1988), 31.Citing F. A. Pereira da Costa, *Anais pernambucanos* 6. Second edition (Recife: 1983-1985), 381-3. My translation.

[59] Silva, "A instituição," 31.

[60] Mello e Souza, 206.

"Africans held in heavy captivity" would rise up if not for the Sunday "diversion" (*divertimento*).[61]

Coronation ceremonies continued unabated throughout Brazil, even as local governments and, eventually, Lisbon outlawed the institution in 1780.[62] The historical evidence reveals that these prohibitions were not always honored. Local power brokers certainly believed that it was squarely within their powers and prerogatives to decide *not* to enforce official edicts, be it because of custom, favors, or perhaps the recognition that squashing festivities would undermine productivity. To this list of justifications, we must add the perception that Black kings were not strictly ceremonial. As far back as early eighteenth-century Pernambuco, we have evidence that the king of Congo (rei de Congo) served a political purpose. We are unable to revisit the underlying reasons or processes through which Black kings became kings of Congo, which have been examined in greater depth elsewhere.[63] Suffice it to say, this "king of kings" was tasked with maintaining order among the monarchs elected by other associations.[64] Leonardo

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[61] Silva, "A instituição," 26.
[62] Silva, "A instituição," 28.
[63] The late historian Elizabeth Kiddy warned that black kings (*reis negros*) and Kings of Congo must not be conflated. She argued that black kingship based on ethnic group identification gave way to a "Central African derived Afro-Brazilian identity." See "Who Is the King of Congo? A New Look at African and Afro-Brazilian Kings in Brazil," in Linda M. Heywood, ed., *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 153-182.
[64] Mello e Souza provides the example of the 1706 compromisso of the Brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary of Igarassu revealed that members elected a king and queen with the support of ecclesiastical authorities. Mello e Souza, 205.

Dantas Silva has shown that the king of Congo continued to serve the "interest of the governor . . . and the public good" in the mid-nineteenth century.[65]

In the 1930s and forties, the Brazilian intelligentsia began to settle into a major reorientation vis-a-vis the "African" question. As we have already seen, *The Big House and the Slave Quarters* (1932) legitimized the study of African-derived contributions to Brazilian society. Two years later, the First Afro-Brazilian Congress recognized autonomous black cultural spaces that the elite ignored, or worse, assaulted, in previous decades although the landmark gathering was not a representative space in that Black Pernambucans were sidelined.[66] Afro-Pernambucan culture also found legitimacy in the visual and performing arts in the 1930s and 1940s. Visual artist Lula Cardoso Ayres (1910-1987) depicted scenes of Carnaval (fig. 64) and Capiba (1904-1997) incorporated the percussive and lyrical components of maracatu in his famed carnival marches. One composition, "Eh! Uá! Calunga," received a prize from the Pernambucan Carnival Federation and the *Diário de Pernambuco* in 1936 and was released on a Columbia record one year later.[67]

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[65] Silva, "A corte dos reis do Congo," 364.

[66] For this reason and others, Edison Carneiro organized a Second Afro-Brazilian Congress in Salvador, although the Bahian follow-up also left him discontented. See Anadelia A. Romo, "Rethinking Race and Culture in Brazil's First Afro-Brazilian Congress of 1934," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 39, no. 1 (2007): 31-54.

[67] The song can be heard in Luiz de Barros's 1937 film *Samba da vida*. See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5798tHduCM

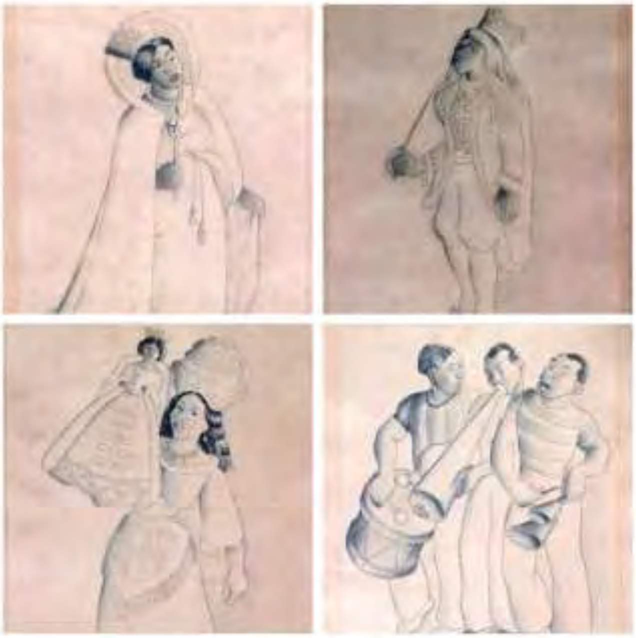

Figure 61: Series of drawings by the artist Lula Cardoso Ayres (1910-1987). “Rainha do Maracatu” (top left), “Rei do Maracatu” (top right), “Boneca do Maracatu” (bottom left), and “Tirador de loas e gonguê.” Ink, gouache, and graphite on paper. 1930. Museu de Moderna Aloisio Magalhães, Recife, Pernambuco.

Capiba's 1934 song is an elegiac take on what Wood calls an "embodying" concept.[68] In this sense, “calunga” is not a doll but rather a shorthand for Black desperation, sadness, and suffering. The vocalist—a female in the 1937 Columbia recording[69]—recounts being forcibly taken to Brazil from Luanda.[70] The composition was also featured in Luiz de Barros' (1893-1982) 1937 *chanchada*, or popular musical comedy, *Samba na vida*. The "seductive" star of the film, a performer named Helena (Heloísa Helena), performs the song on a movie set. Helena's love interest asks why he saw her crying. She attributes her tears to unrequited love, leading her male companion to deduce that her life must be a "great mystery." It is a "great pain," she corrects him. Helena sings Capiba's hit, wearing a bra and feathered cap, joined by slightly fewer than a dozen dancers who wear indigenized regal gowns, all of them white appearing.[71]

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[68] Wood, 397.

[69] The Recife born Afro-Brazilian singer and composer José Tobias (b. 1928) performed a cover of the song for his 1960 album *Estranha magia* (Strange Magic). See https://soundcloud.com/acervo-origens/sets/jose-tobias-estranha-magia-1960-album-completo. Accessed December 3, 2020.

[70] The song’s refrain goes as follows: “From Saint Paul of Luanda / they brought me here. / Eh, eh, eh calunga, calunga / they brought me here.” The first verse: “Blacks so suffer, calunga / It’s all my tears, calunga / Maracatu, maracatu / Eh! Uá! Calunga.” The second: “My mother cried calunga / I quietly sang calunga / Maracatu, maracatu / Eh! Uá! Calunga.”

The 1934 congress seems to have sent a powerful message to Recife's authorities. Older ways of dealing with African descended cultural practices could be held up to closer scrutiny by intellectuals. Yet "old" and "new" responses intermixed in striking ways. In 1940, the Pernambuco state art museum (Museu do Estado de Pernambuco, MEP) received a substantial "donation" of banners, calabashes, dolls, musical instruments, and handwritten documents that belonged to Recife's terreiros and spiritist centers. In the late thirties, officers of the state social police set fire to several of these temples and undoubtedly arrested their followers. Many objects were spared, however. Today, these purloined materials signify Afro contributions to a racially ambiguous kind of official Pernambucan culture. But inside the institution's technical reserves, period newspaper clippings and a drawer full of dolls' sooty and singed clothing (fig. 62) betray the violence endured by the objects and their human networks as part of official resignification.[72]

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[71] For a video clip of this scene, see https://youtu.be/7loWVxjKKuk?t=666. Accessed December 3, 2020.

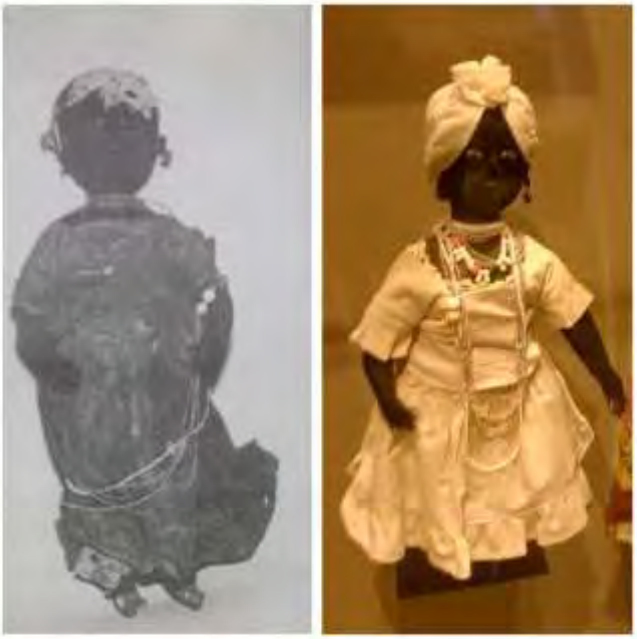

Figure 62: A cloth doll (*boneca de pano*) wearing clothing sooty and possibly singed clothing. Published in Raul Lody, ed., *Coleção Culto-Afro Brasileiro: um testemunho do Xangô pernambucano* (Recife: Museu do Estado de Pernambuco, 1983), 70-1. The same doll (right) as it appears at the Museu do Estado de Pernambuco in 2017. Note the new clothing and headwrap. The second photograph was taken by the author.

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[72] The Afro-Brazilian collection's 1983 catalog disclosed that incalculable numbers of objects were apprehended in the 1940s. Yet it does not acknowledge that many such materials were in turn donated to the Pernambuco State Museum. See Raul Lody introduction in Museu do Estado de Pernambuco, *Coleção culto afro-brasileiro: um testemunho do xangô pernambucano* (Recife, 1983), 15. In lieu of detailed acquisition records, the museum's technical reserves contain documentation indicating that the Secretariat of Public Security (Secretaria de Segurança Pública, SSP) made a "donation" in 1940. These files are joined by a small handful of period newspaper articles that name specific police raids on Afro-Brazilian religious houses. These include: "Baixa magia: uma diligência feliz da delegacia de costumes," *Jornal Pequeno* (October 17, 1939) and "Apurando uma denúncia: a polícia cercou uma casa à rua Lycra efetuando a prisão de várias pessoas," *Jornal Pequeno* (November 6, 1940).

Although legal codes enabled them to target a broad gamut of social "vices," police officers had a broad degree of latitude in their decisions to raid religious houses. Additionally, many were constrained even before Afro-Pernambucan culture seized the attention of the intelligentsia. Noted public men (*homens públicos*) counted clients among—and probably even sought the services of—Recife's celebrity *babalorixás* and *yalorixás*, fathers and mothers of the saints. Adeildo Paraíso da Silva, the son of Mãe Biu (Severina Paraíso da Silva, 1914-1993), sheds light on the protections offered by powerful letrados as well as the various kinds of obligations they asked of religious communities in return.[73]

In the early 1960s, he recalled René Ribeiro, an influential scholar of Afro-Pernambucan religions, as a constant presence in his mother's terreiro. Ribeiro urged the mãe-de-santo to host celebrations where he could bring guests. On one occasion, Mãe Biu told Ribeiro that she could not organize such an event because a local comissário named Pedro threatened to close the house if she hosted another *toque*. The researcher assured her that the police would not bother her terreiro. On the day of the celebration, the comissário appeared, and Ribeiro instructed Mãe Biu's relatives to invite him inside. The researcher then introduced Pedro to the important figures who gathered to take part in the festivities, including a colonel that Adeildo described as the governor's "right-hand man." Likely humiliated, the "uncultured" and "illiterate" policeman never returned to threaten Mãe Biu's toques.[74]

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[73] Costa, 161-2. Citing a February 19, 2005 interview with Adeildo Paraíso da Silva.

Although the likes of René Ribeiro, Gilberto Freyre, and Ascenço Ferreira were regular visitors at Recife's terreiros, some Europhilic intellectuals still held that African-descended cultural practices were embarrassing, valueless blights. Once it became clear that Albert Camus would visit Recife in July 1949, federal deputy Gilberto Freyre ordered local intellectuals to pull out all the stops for the famous existentialist. From Rio, he reportedly ordered them to "prepare a good maracatu . . . [and] a bumba-meu-boi," an improvised celebration that involves the death and resurrection of an ox. The intellectual was treated to bumba-meu-boi, a batuque (drumming session) of Xangô, and samba. In his diary, he recounted the former as a form of "grotesque ballet," whose "extraordinary" face masks delighted him.[75] In 1960, Anibal Fernandes (1894-1962), a scholar of Afro-Brazilian religions, would recall how Recife's "snobbish" Europhiles admonished him for accompanying such a famous intellectual to see "that crap" (*essas porcarias*) instead of taking him to the elite Clube Internacional.[76]

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[74] For Valéria Gomes Costa, this anecdote illustrates a historiographical "paradox." She is perceptive in her observation that the police served many different roles in Afro-Pernambucan religious ceremonies, be it as enforcers of the law (which could also entail upholding the "liberdade de culto" guaranteed by the constitution of 1946), spectators, or more active participants. Costa, 163-4. The Bahian novelist Jorge Amado explores this paradox somewhat differently in his 1969 novel *Tent of Miracles* (*Tenda dos milagres*). The Black henchman of the assistant chief of police, who wages war on Salvador's terreiros and *afoxés* in the early twentieth century, is revealed to be an initiate himself. See *Tent of Miracles*, trans. Barbara Shelby Merello (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 305-7.

[75] Albert Camus, *American Journals*, trans. Lugh Levick (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1987), 98-9.

[76] Aníbal Fernandes, "Camus e o Recife," *DP*, January 6, 1960.

Over the last decade and a half, the scholarly literature on maracatus has shifted away from understanding how the entities are constituted symbolically to investigating how they have been made dialogically through a half-century of authenticity struggles.[77] Two interrelated problems have accompanied this historiographical pivot. First, recent scholarship barely gives pause to the richly detailed studies of folklorists, musicologists, and writers who registered the visual, religious, and sonic qualities of maracatus in the first half of the twentieth century. Because the findings of their predecessors are presumed to be too misshapen or distant to offer any serious analytical value, scholars subordinate these letrados to the many-sided (and many-sited) "struggle for the sign."[78]

Relatedly, scholars are hesitant to contemplate objects and practices too closely for fear that they might assign stable meanings to maracatus and maracatuzeiros. In the most recent study of calungas, Marcus J. Wood vigorously resists defining the meaning of this powerful "spiritual conglomerate." Yet he adopts a much older conception of the object by insisting that calungas are essentially dead once they are "incarcerated" in the museum display case. Divorced from the communities and practices that sustain them, four calungas displayed at Recife's Joaquim Nabuco Foundation (Fundaj) are, in Wood's words, "essentially meaningless."[79] This simplified understanding of sacred ritual objects does not, however, consider the ways in which they "gain new life" as museum pieces. Anthropologist J. Lorand Matory responds that statues, calabashes, tureens, musical instruments, and weaponry do not "simply die" in institutional collections. Instead, they are reconsecrated as emblems of "bourgeois and national identity."[80]

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[77] This theoretical shift has been spearheaded by Recife-based researchers Isabel Guillen and Ivaldo de França Lima.

[78] Michael Parenti, *The Culture Struggle* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2006), 15-20.

[79] Wood, 383-403.

6.4 The Death of a Queen and a Calunga Takes Flight: A New Politics of Patronage

In September 1962, the octogenarian or nonagenarian queen of Recife's 162-year-old Maracatu Elefante died. No one was certain how old Maria Júlia do Nascimento (fig. 63), more commonly known as Dona Santa, had been at the time of her death, as her birth was not recorded in a civil registry. Although most agree that the queen was born in 1877—eleven years before emancipation—Dona Santa herself suggested that she was at least 18 years older. Indeed, she claimed to witness Emperor Dom Pedro II's 1859 trip to Recife.[81] Journalists claimed that Nascimento's parents, enslaved Africans born in Luanda or Mozambique, endured the middle passage.[82]

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[80] Matory, 184.

[81] "Morreu D. Santa; a filha Antônia é a nova "rainha"," *DP*, October 23, 1962.

[82] Paulo França, "O "Maracatu Elefante" fadado a desaparecer," *DP*, February 13, 1955.

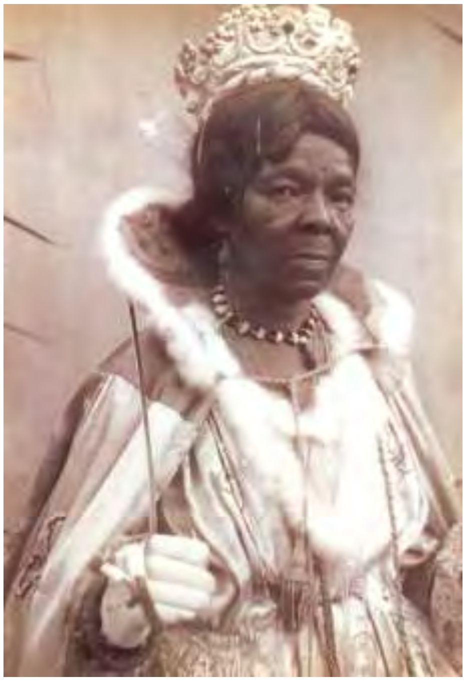

Figure 63: Dona Santa (Maria Júlia do Nascimento), queen of Maracatu Elefante. Photographer unknown, undated. Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife, Pernambuco.

Whatever her true age, Dona Santa had been an emblematic part of the city's annual carnival for over a half-century. As queen of Maracatu Elefante, she reportedly failed to make an appearance on only two occasions: the death of her husband, a bugler for the 49th Hunters' Regiment (Batalhão de Caçadores), and what many say was the death of her brother or disappearance of her son.[83] As a teenager, Nascimento was part of the royal court of Leão Coroado. She became queen of Maracatu Elefante at age 18, after having been queen of Leão Coroado.[84]

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[83] Afonso Ligorio, "Uma nação africana desapareceu no Recife," *DP*, February 28, 1965. A 1948 article said she failed to process on three occasions, the third being caused by a lack of resources. See Otávio Morais, "Encontro com dona Santa," *DP*, February 10, 1948. For general biographical details, see "Morreu D. Santa; a filha Antônia é a nova "rainha"," 3.

Dona Santa was what some might call a figure of great reverence (*figura de reverência*). A who's who of Recife's intellectual and political elite affirmed their loyalty to the "only reigning monarch" in Republican Brazil and paid visits to her humble "palace" in the suburbs.[85] The likes of Gilberto Freyre, Lula Cardoso Ayres, René Ribeiro, and Ascenso Ferreira (fig. 64) affectionately called Nascimento their "godmother" (*madrinha*). One journalist noted that although the queen maintained a certain "intimacy" with these letrados, Dona Santa maintained a "certain royal distance, protocoling," as she considered them simple "plebeians" (*plebeus*).[86] Although they differed in status, the queen seems to have freely reproached the "big people" (*gente grande*) and provided them with "maternal" advice such as marrying early, avoiding alcohol, and quickly baptizing children. She similarly forbade her maracatuzeiros from drinking, "receiving money" (*recebendo dinheiro*), and otherwise having an "irregular" lifestyle (*vida irregular*).[87]

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[84] França, "O Maracatu Elefante," 11 and "Morreu D. Santa; a filha Antônia," 3.
[85] Clodomir Morais, "Fala Dona Santa," *DP*, February 11, 1953.
[86] Afonso Ligorio, "Uma nação africana desapareceu," 9.
[87] Otávio Morais, "Dona Santa, uma Rainha (animada) dos velhos carnavais," *DP,* February 25, 1968. Otávio Morais, "Dona Santa: figura fascinante que o Carnaval do Recife não esquecerá," *DP*, February 16, 1969.

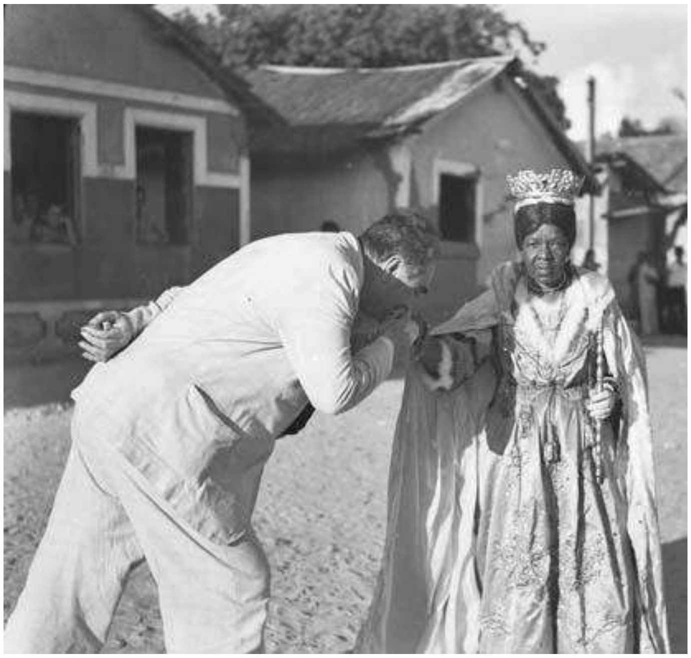

Figure 64: The Pernambucan poet and folklorist Ascenso Ferreira (1895-1965) kissing the hand of Dona Santa. 1940s. Photograph encountered on the Facebook page "Recife de Antigamente."

One of Dona Santa's most famous visitors was the Black North American dancer and choreographer Katherine Dunham (1909-1996). In 1950, Dunham and 28 dancers performed at the Teatro Santa Isabel to commemorate the theater's centennial. She presented a series of folkloric dances from Brazil, Mexico, Martinique, and Africa. Styles from Brazil included maracatu and samba. One journalist remarked that Dunham's performance recalled the xangôs of Recife's distant suburbs which had been "stupidly repressed by the political police of the Estado Novo."[88] Although the details of Dunham's meeting with the matriarch of Maracatu Elefante apparently were not covered in local newspapers, her visit is confirmed by a photograph of the large cart that carried a jaguar during processions (fig. 65**)**. This item was stored at the maracatu's headquarters. Local journalists also claimed that Dunham urged them to "show this [maracatu] to the world!" after one of her performances.[89]

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[88] "Katherine Dunham no Recife," *DP*, June 13, 1950.

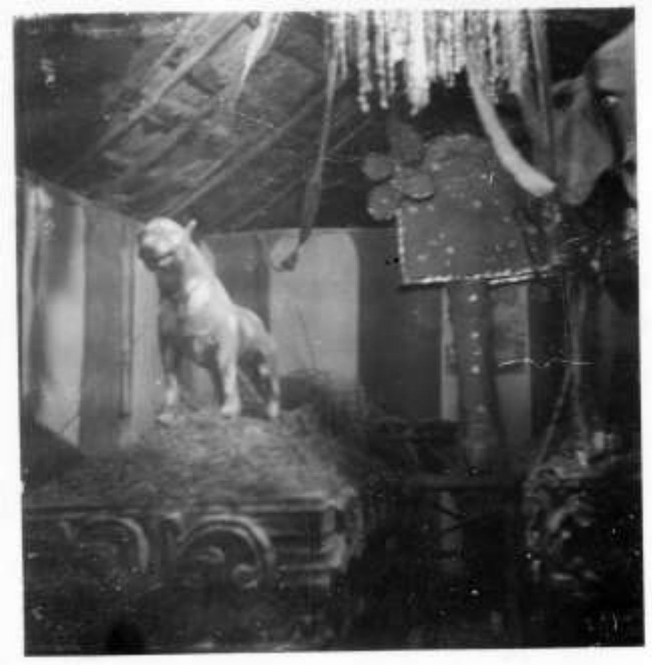

Figure 65: Katherine Dunham's 1950 visit to the headquarters of the Maracatu Elefante. A paper mâché jaguar rests atop a cart filled with straw or hay. Photograph by Katherine Dunham, 1950. Katherine Dunham photograph collection, Special Collections Research Center, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

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[89] "Maracatu," *DP*, January 9, 1965. In São Paulo, Katherine Dunham was denied a room at the Hotel Esplanada. The incident provoked outrage among Brazilian intellectuals and politicians. She threatened to sue the hotel and the Brazilian legislature passed an anti-discrimination bill. For a comparison between the 1950 case and a 2015 one in which a Black neuroscientist was denied a room at another São Paulo hotel, see Patrícia de Santa Pinho, *Mapping Diaspora: African American Roots Tourism in Brazil* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 106-7.

Given Dona Santa's time on the throne, one might expect to find an abundance of printed interviews. Although journalists hailed her as a "symbol, fetish, a sign of bravery, of dignity, of stubbornness" after her death, this author has found only two newspaper articles featuring the queen's own words.[90] One piece, published in 1953, subtly mocked Dona Santa. The journalist wrote that he and a photographer called on the queen, unannounced, and infiltrated the seat of the maracatu without being invited inside. The queen's unwillingness to be photographed without makeup and her regalia supposedly "accentuated [the] attitudes characteristic of blue blood."[91] Dona Santa's anger was also fueled in part by her awareness that she was merely another poor Black woman without her costumes and makeup, which the intruders were probably all too eager to depict. The unannounced interview did, however, yield valuable information about the challenges of leading a maracatu. Dona Santa used the occasion to highlight the lack of money. She showed the journalists a large paper mâché elephant that had not been painted and took them to the maracatu's calungas. The queen revealed that their dresses, which were remade each year, demanded over 200 *cruzeiros*' worth of adornments. Despite these material challenges, Dona Santa said that she would not "go out naked but with what [she had]."[92]

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[90] Otávio Morais, "Dona Santa: figura fascinante," 13.
[91] Clodomir Morais, "Fala Dona Santa."
[92] Clodomir Morais, "Fala Dona Santa."

Leading up to her death, Dona Santa had been a state of poor health for several years. During carnival of 1963, her last, Recife mayor Miguel Arraes provided the ailing monarch with a municipal vehicle so she could greet her subjects (fig. 66). This act of kindness would not be forgotten either by the queen or the maracatu's management (*diretoria*). After her death, the municipal government paid for Nascimento's burial at the Santo Amaro Cemetery. City councilmen even presented a plan to erect a mausoleum.[93] At the burial, Dona Santa's adopted daughter told reporters that she would succeed her mother, thus preventing the maracatu's banners, calungas, and other objects from becoming "patrimony" (*patrimônio*) of the state.[94] Nevertheless, Dona Santa's attorney (*procurador*), a member of the Carnival Federation of Pernambuco, revealed that the queen had filed a testament with the notary office (*cartório*) indicating that no would succeed her and that the maracatu would be disbanded.[95]

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[93] "Dona Santa," *DP*, November 10, 1964 and "Folia na Praçinha é uma tradição e não se pode mudar rumo da história," *DP*, January 22, 1965.
[94] "Morte de Dona Santa," *DP*, January 1, 1963.
[95] "Antônio Português desistiu de São Paulo e voltou para liderar folia," *DP*, February 7, 1965.

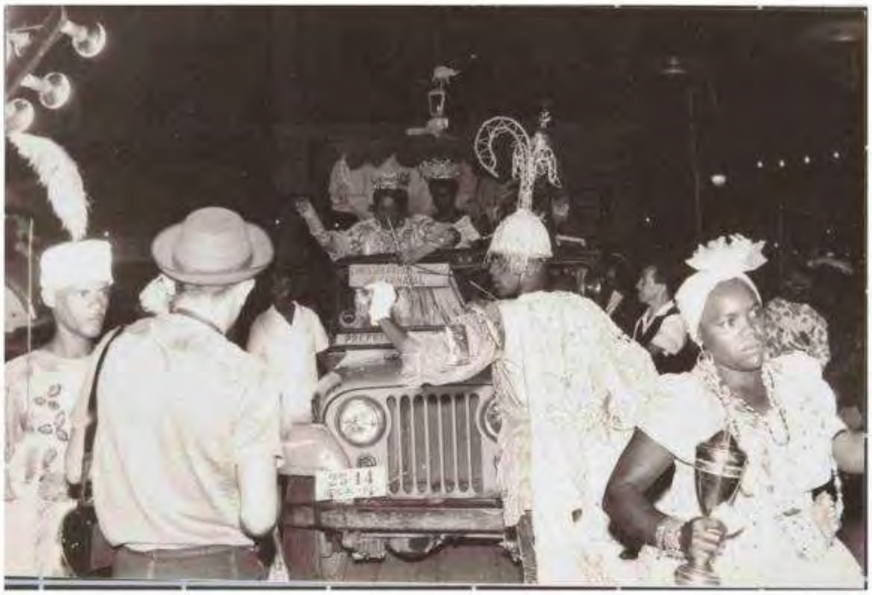

Figure 66: Dona Santa, queen of the Maracatu Elefante, greeting her subjects from a Jeep provided by city hall. Photograph by Katherine Royal Cate, 1961. Villa Digital, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife, Pernambuco. KR 0048.

In March 1963, approximately 189 objects belonging to the defunct entity—including Dona Santa's costumes, banners, calungas, and canopies—were transferred to the headquarters of the Popular Culture Movement (Movimento de Cultura Popular, MCP). Founded in the late 1950s by innovators in the worlds of popular education and the visual and performing arts, the MCP lessened the distance that separated the "lettered" from the traditionally "uncultured." Litterateurs of all political stripes—including reactionary and apolitical or opportunist elements—flocked to the povo and drew artistic inspiration from facets of the "people's culture."

Admittedly, Recifense intellectuals had "gone" to the povo since the 1930s. For instance, those belonging to the world of amateur theater staged productions for labor unions and distant suburbs under the auspices of the Popular Theater of the Northeast (Teatro Popular do Nordeste). What made the MCP fundamentally different, however, was its establishing of a more permanent presence in the spaces of the povo. The terreiros of Xangô and Umbanda, for example, doubled as classroom spaces for the MCP's literacy campaign.[96] One of the major feats of the movement was establishing municipal schools—over 200 of them in total—which did not exist prior to the first Arraes government.[97] Five public "squares of culture" (*praças de cultura*) were also erected as new points of encounter between intellectual and student volunteers and Recife's nonwhite, illiterate majority. Mobile libraries, theater presentations, film screenings, musical performances, literacy classes, games, and physical education activities all occurred in these spaces.[98]

Young women challenged notions of female respectability when they ventured to distant parts of the city. One woman who found community in an associated art collective attended Xangôs and participated in nocturnal batuques. She experienced significant blowback from her middle-class parents, who rebuked their daughter for wanting to become a professional artist and no doubt chastised her for dabbling in macumba (a derogatory term for Afro-Brazilian religious practices).[99] Scores of young people drew inspiration from Afro-Recifense culture during their excursions. An accomplished artist in his own right, Abelardo da Hora (1924-2014) trained a new generation of younger pupils and bedecked the city with murals and sculptures of maracatus and other "folkloric" celebrations.

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[96] Fernando Mendonça and Cristiane Tavares, eds., *Conversações com Arraes* (Belo Horizonte: Vega, 1979), 11.

[97] Germano de Vasconcelos Coelho, *MCP- História do Movimento de Cultura Popular* (Recife: editora do autor, 2012), 456-466.

[98] Túlio Velho Barreto and Laurindo Ferreira, eds. *Na trilha do golpe: 1964 revisitado* (Recife: Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Editora Massangana, 2004), 124.

Given the material and symbolic conquests spearheaded by the MCP, it is hardly surprising that Dona Santa decided to donate large sums of materials to the entity after her death. Only weeks after the March/April 1964 military coup that overthrew Arraes, now governor of Pernambuco, the Fourth Army invaded the MCP headquarters and declared the body illegal. Likely aware that the military had no interest in Afro-Pernambucan culture and would perhaps destroy the maracatu's archive, Freyre's Joaquim Nabuco Institute of Social Research (IJNPS) moved swiftly to acquire the materials. IJNPS and MCP leadership negotiated a transfer of the precious objects less than two months after the coup.[100] An exposition of the items belonging to Maracatu Elefante opened at IJNPS's new Museum of Anthropology in early February 1966. In his preface to the exhibit catalogue, Hermilo Borba Filho offered his tribute to the "strange black (*negra*) queen who directed her court with the dignity of a great lady from the royal families of Africa."[101]

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[99] See the testimony of Neble Rios in José Cláudio, *Memória do Atelier Coletivo: artistas de Pernambuco; tratos da arte de Pernambuco* (Recife: Cepe, 2012), 82.

[100] "Material do Maracatu de Dona Santa será entregue hoje ao museu do IJNPS," *DP*, May 27, 1964. It should be emphasized that the state's premier research institution, the Joaquim Nabuco Institute, and the State Museum of Pernambuco did not own materials pertaining to Recife's maracatus. Taking control of entire ensembles of objects no doubt enhanced the prestige of Freyre's brainchild and allowed the entity to recoup its status as the rightful guardian and interpreter of Pernambucan popular culture.

At the time of Dona Santa's death, the arrival of a Stanford educated woman marked the internationalization of Recife's folkloric manifestations, particularly those associated with the city's annual carnival. Catherine Royal Cate (1927-2006)—locally known as "Katarina Real" (fig. 67)—first met the city's calungas in the late 1950s and early sixties. She had earned a degree in Luso-Brazilian studies in 1949 and later hosted a Stanford radio program called "University of the Air," which transmitted cultural programming in Spanish and Portuguese.

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[101] Hermilo Borba Filho, "Dona Santa, rainha do maracatu," in *Exposição do Maracatu Elefante* (Recife: Instituto Joaquim Nabuco de Pesquisas Sociais, 1966). Institutional archive of Museu do Homem do Nordeste. Hanging file 38.

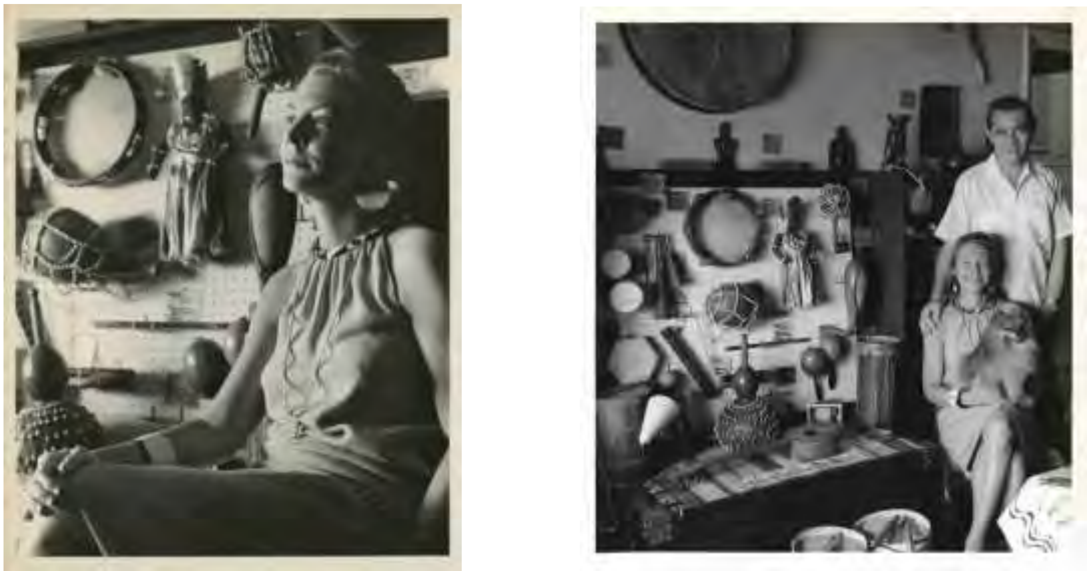

Figure 67: Katherine Royal at the "Brazilian Museum," as her Recife apartment was known. Photographer unknown, 1967. Villa Digital, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife, Pernambuco. KR 0620.

In interviews with the anthropologist Clarisse Kubrusly, Royal revealed that she developed a friendship with Luiz Beltrão (1918-1986), a journalist and researcher she met in San Francisco. Beltrão, who would later be integral to her entry into Recifense intellectual circles, sent her materials on folkloric manifestations that she could use on her radio show. Royal's husband, a soil analyst named Robert Cate (1924-2006), was hired by the Kaiser Aluminum Corporation, and accepted a job in Belém.[102] There, Royal took part in the Paraense Folklore Commission and the Second Brazilian Congress on

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[102] According to his obituary, Cate received a business degree from Dartmouth College after World War II interrupted his studies. During the war he joined the Office of Strategic Services and worked as a cryptographer in Burma and India. After graduating, Cate worked for the U.S. State Department and undertook assignments as vice-consul in Calcutta and Rio de Janeiro. Obituary of Robert Bancroft Cate, *Arizona Daily Star*, August 20, 2006.

Folklore. In the late 1950s, she made short visits to Recife and stayed with the Beltrão family in 1957.

In 1960, Royal earned a master's degree in anthropology and folklore from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and later received a grant from the Organization of American States to continue her research in Recife.[103] By 1967, what Kubrusly calls her "year of glory," the anthropologist was promoted to general secretary of the Pernambucan Folklore Commission (Comissão Pernambucana de Folclore, CPF). She also published her influential study of Carnaval, *O folclore no Carnaval do Recife*, and was named an honorary citizen of Recife (fig. 68).[104]

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[103] Her dissertation is entitled "The Brazilian Urban "Carnaval": A Discussion of its Origins, Nature, and Ethnological Significance." Royal's advisor was anthropologist John Gulick (1924-2012), who wrote one of the first and most influential studies of the Cherokee peoples.

[104] This biographical sketch draws on the excellent work of anthropologist Clarisse Kubrusly, who wrote a 2007 thesis on Royal. See chapter 1, "A experiência etnográfica de Katarina Real (1927-2006): colecionando maracatus em Recife" (master's thesis, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2007), 28-55.

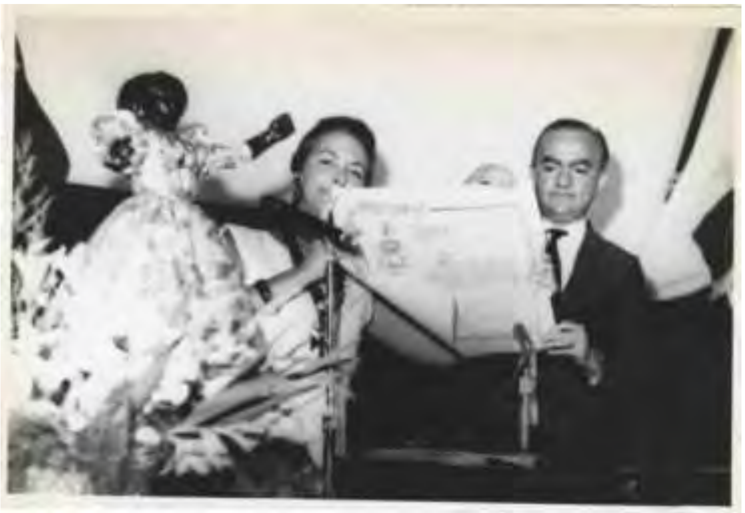

Figure 68: Joined by the calunga Dona Joventina, of Maracatu Estrela Brilhante, Katherine Royal receives the diploma of the Citizen of Recife from Aristófanes Andrade, President of the Recife City Council. Photographer unknown, 1967. Villa Digital, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife, Pernambuco. KR 0311.

Although Royal held positions that were denied to Brazilian women, her activities in Recife were facilitated by multiple male patrons. As we have already seen, Luis Beltrão introduced the North American to a handful of intellectual luminaries. Gilberto Freyre, whom she adulated in her 1967 monograph, and his Joaquim Institute of Social Research took Royal under their wings, contracting her to lead workshops on folklore. So strong was her relationship with the Freyre family that, in the early 1990s, she would donate her substantial collection of objects and fieldnotes—the result of some 30 years of research—to the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation, headed by Freyre's son Fernando from 1980 to 2003.

Royal's relationship with Borba was fraught, however. The dramaturg lent his name to her 1967 monograph, which was published by the Campaign in the Defense of Folklore in Rio de Janeiro. The North American was, for a time, his second in command. Borba had been named general secretary of Pernambuco's folklore commission, largely owing to his renown and work on *autos populares* such as bumba meu boi and mamulengo. Yet Royal, who served as the de facto leader in her role as the body's executive secretary, found herself constrained by the latter's behavior. Her exasperated letters to folklorist Renato Almeida (1895-1981) reveal that Borba was chronically absent, thus delaying the decision-making process.[105] In an interview with Kubrusly, Royal shared that she transferred CPF meetings from the State Public Archive building to the headquarters of the Popular Theater of the Northeast (TPN), both to force Borba's participation and to recruit students.[106]

Although Recife's enfant terrible rarely attended meetings, the anthropologist divulged that he drained the coffers of the CPF. She recalled Almeida giving the organization 500 *cruzeiros* so it could undertake its first activities. Borba, however, withdrew this exact to finance a book being published by the Federal University of Pernambuco, a small collection of suggestive poems written by an Argentine adventurer and litterateur.[107] Ultimately, Renato Almeida and Royal seemed to have arrived at a solution to the leadership crisis. Borba would renounce his position, making Royal the general secretary of the CPF.[108]

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[105] Katherine Royal Cate to Renato Almeida, March 24, 1966, CEp 1, doc. 7 and Royal to Almeida, July 4, 1968, CEp 1, doc. 8, Katarina Real Papers, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife.

[106] Kubrusly, 45.

Katherine Royal felt restricted by Borba's conduct and patterns of decorum more generally. Unwilling to lose momentum in Borba's absence, she took several measures to move the CPF forward. As we have already seen, Royal began holding meetings at the Popular Theater of the Northeast. Jordão Emerenciano, director of the archive and Royal's informal mentor, complained that the anthropologist had not consulted him before making this change.[109] On another occasion, she accepted the treasurer's resignation, who had clashed with Emerenciano. Royal's mentor rebuked her for accepting the subordinate's request. The correct course of action, she later determined, would have been to receive instructions from Emerenciano.[110]

Kubrusly finds that being a North American female played no minor part in Royal's deft handling of feuds and other enmities among Recife's intellectuals.[111] Yet the anthropologist was also a highly sought-after patron in her own right. From her apartment in Boa Vista, a space dubbed the "Tower of Frevo" (referring to the dance and musical style closely associated with Recife's Carnaval), Royal adjudicated conflicts among carnival groups and received visitors—many of them poor members of maracatus, bumba meu boi, and other allegorical bodies. She also received small gifts for inclusion in her "tower museum."

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[107] Royal indicated that she did not remember the title of the work, but the only monograph Borba published through the Editora Universitária was *Roteiro recifense*. See introduction and chapter 3.
[108] Kubrusly, 48-9.
[109] Kubrusly, 46.
[110] In 1997, she conceded that in Brazil "when someone wants to resign you tell them they cannot [do so]. I should have gone to Jordão and said, 'Look, Césio wants to resign because he doesn't want to attend the meetings,' and Jordão [would fix] this issue." Kubrusly, 49.
[111] Kubrusly, 50.

By 1968, Royal was exasperated. Plans to develop a Museum of Carnaval (Museu do Carnaval) never materialized. Governor Nilo Coelho and mayor Augusto Lucena promised their support, but the North American grew irritated by the length of time it would take the institution to come to fruition.[112] After the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., Royal and her husband Robert returned to the United States. She handed over the reins to the CPF to Recife anthropologist Waldemar Valente, who never called a meeting of the commission. Instead, the body was dormant for more than a decade.[113]

Katherine did not return to the United States with her husband alone. In addition to hundreds of objects that she proudly displayed in the "Tower of Frevo," she transported one of the most important symbols of the defunct Maracatu Estrela Brilhante: the calunga Dona Joventina. In 1996, she recalled an encounter that had occurred 30 years earlier. Dona Assunção, the queen and matriarch of the maracatu, arrived at Royal's apartment in the Duarte Coelho Building carrying an object swaddled in a towel. Assunção revealed it to be Dona Joventa. She held that, during a seance, an entity told Assunção that she no longer needed to "put the maracatu in the street" (*botar o maracatu na rua*). Further, she was free to sell all effects of the maracatu with the exception of the calunga, which was to be entrusted to Royal. In return for the doll, Katherine agreed to pay for the secondary schooling of Dona Assunção's daughter, Lenira, who danced with Joventina as a "lady of the palace" (fig. 69).[114]

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[112] Kubrusly, 50-1.
[113] Kubrusly, 52.

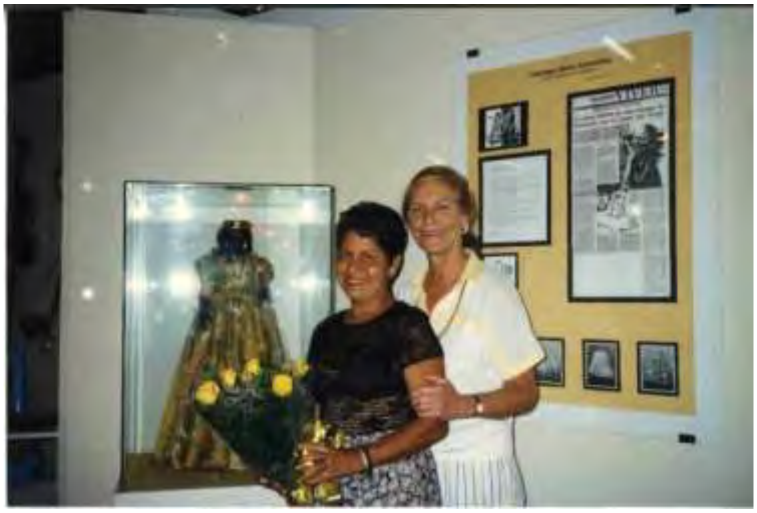

Figure 69: Lenira dos Anjos, who carried Dona Joventina as a young *dama de paço*, joined by Katherine Royal after the calunga was donated to the Museum of the Northeastern Man. Photographer unknown, 1996. Villa Digital, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife, Pernambuco. KR 0272.

After spending over 30 years in a New Mexico home, the 86-year-old *preta retinta* (dark black) Dona Joventa decided it was time to return to her native Recife. She sensed that the city's carnival associations had entered a new period of growth and prosperity and longed to "pay tribute" and "thank" these revelers. She advised her then-69-year-old North American guardian of her plans. In early March of 1996, she presided over a public event attended by representatives of the Pernambucan Carnaval Federation (FCP), queens, and ladies-in-waiting. After addressing her *povo* (and undoubtedly being photographed), she entered her new home: a glass case at the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation's Museum of the Northeastern Man, where she remains 25 years later.[115]

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[114] Handwritten manuscript from the reserva técnica, 4. Museu do Homem do Nordeste, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco. See also "A curiosa história de uma calunga de Maracatu que foi parar nos States," *DP*, May 14, 1989.

6.5 Africa, Women, and the Ongoing Opacity of Blackness

In 1981, Super-8 pioneer Fernando Spencer (1927-2014) submitted an audiovisual tribute to Recife's maracatus and Dona Santa to the IX Festival of National Cinema in Sergipe.[116] The 16-millimeter film, entitled "Santa do maracatu," won awards in the categories of best film and best montage. Much of the 11-minute film centered on the Maracatu Elefante's objects displayed at the Museum of the Northeastern Man (muHNE), the successor to three of IJNP's museums, including the older Museum of Anthropology.[117] The handheld camera approached multiple objects, including three calungas, as if trying to access their hidden meanings (fig. 70**)**. In an especially poetic scene, the camera walked toward a black mannequin dressed in Dona Santa's white gown. The model held a ceremonial sword in one hand and wore the queen's hairpiece and crown. The camera tightened its focus on the mannequin's head, where eyes and a nose and mouth belonged. It tried to see through the shiny black surface, but it was impenetrable; the material simultaneously absorbed and reflected the light emanating from the camera and production lights.

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[115] Katherine Royal Cate handwritten manuscript, "Dona Joventina, Calunga de Maracatu Nação," March 5, 1996, fls. 1-8. Reserva técnica (technical reserve) of the Museu do Homem do Nordeste, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife.

[116] The film is available online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmjp4PKzM4A. Accessed December 7, 2020.

[117] IJNPS became the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation (Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Fundaj) in 1979.

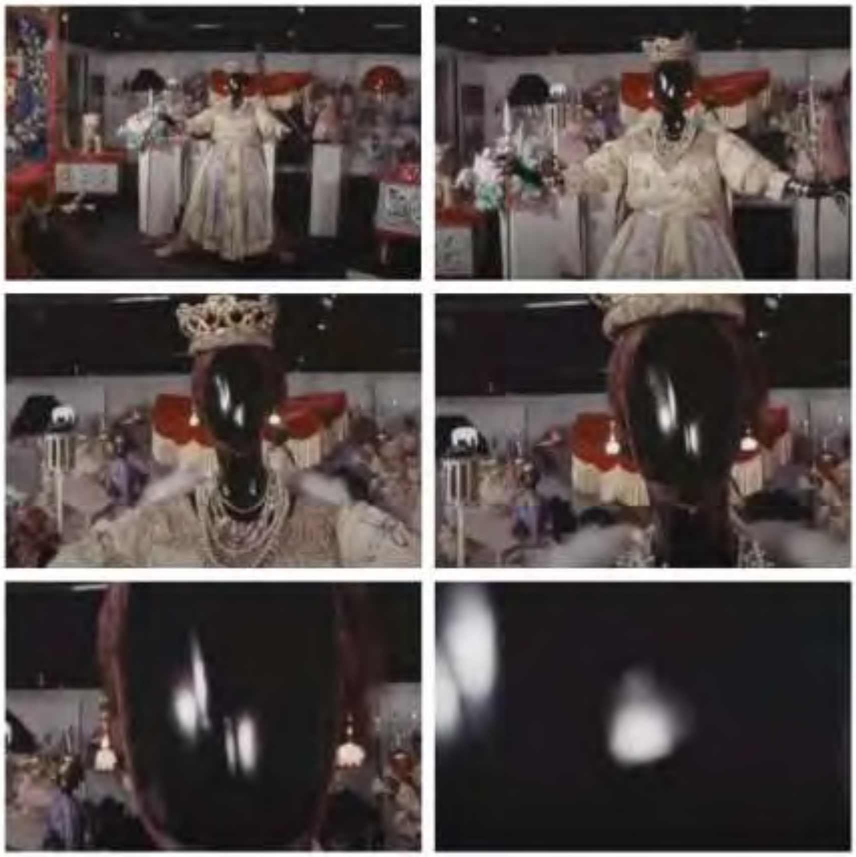

Figure 70: A super-8 camera contemplates the regalia of Maracatu Elefante's deceased queen, Dona Santa, displayed at the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation's Museum of the Northeastern Man (muHNE). Stills from *Santa do maracatu* (1980), by Fernando Spencer.

Recife’s maracatus are important examples of what Daphne A. Brooks terms “spectacular opacity.” Rather than being the result of some intrinsic cultural impenetrability, spectacular opacity refers to the tactics through which “marginalized cultural figures … confound and disrupt conventional constructions” of blackness.[118] Maracatus made bold pronouncements of autonomy and integrity each time they took to the streets, an act viewed as hostile by many elite Pernambucans at the turn of the last century. By donning the ceremonial furs, crowns, bangles, hairpieces, and rituals of royal courts, maracatuzeiros avowed their historicity and a regal African past.

Maracatus are complex amalgams of the familiar and distant. Calungas might recall the dressing and parading of Catholic saints on feast days while maracatuzeiros’ clothing choices would seem entirely European, and thus incongruent with contemporary understandings of Africanicity.[119] And yet the indecipherability of toadas combined with a general lack of understanding surrounding a series of interconnected “whys”—such as maracatus’ obligatory visits to historical Black churches—perhaps lead casual observers to throw up their hands in resignation. Marginalized groups, Brooks posits, are adept at “outsiz[ing[the narrow representational frames bestowed on them."[120] Much head-scratching, if not outright exasperation, might be avoided by choosing to read maracatus simply as unusual components of merrymaking.

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[118] Brooks, 8.

[119] It is well-known that royal courts of the Kingdom of Kongo (present-day northern Angola, the western part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo,the Republic of the Congo, and southern Gabon) adopted European dress for centuries. Thus, the crowns and capes of Recife’s maracatus were perhaps considered “African” rather than “European.”

Recife's regal corteges forcefully deny the "requirement for transparency" that undergird virtually all attempts to "understand" people and ideas.[121] While this chapter affirms the "right to opacity," as the Martinican poet Édouard Glissant called it, it also heeds Chloe Hunt's call for revamping aesthetic and historical analysis. Interrogating what she terms the "opaque residues of Blackness" must approach notions of polysemy, ambivalence, and speculation as springboards for further analysis rather than obstructions.[122]

We must also bear in mind that objects and practices maintain numerous meanings, many of them contradictory. This chapter has argued that we might approach calungas and maracatus as fetishes not as a claim of pathology, but rather to understand the "contrary models of society and the contrary personal expectations" of parties who have "rival relationships with that material thing."[123] In the 1930s, Mário de Andrade admitted that calungas could simultaneously be idols, charms, "excitement objects," and political symbols.[124] Although the paulistano tried to show the different ways in which

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[120] Brooks, 8.
[121] Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*. Translated by Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 189-90.
[122] Chloe Hunt, "The Blackness We Leave Behind …": Speculative Approaches to Time and Space in Black Critical Theory," *American Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (2020): 508. See also See Zach Blas, "Opacities: An Introduction," *Camera Obscura* 92, no. 3 (2016): 149-153.
[123] Matory, xix-xx.
[124] Andrade, 46.

African descended people related to the inscrutable object, he laid out what the calunga meant to highbrow intellectuals, as well. While foreign and Brazilian thinkers assigned value in ways that differed from maracatuzeiros, their quests to assess, categorize, protect, and exhibit the spirited thing rendered it more powerful and even threatening.[125]

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[125] Matory, xx.

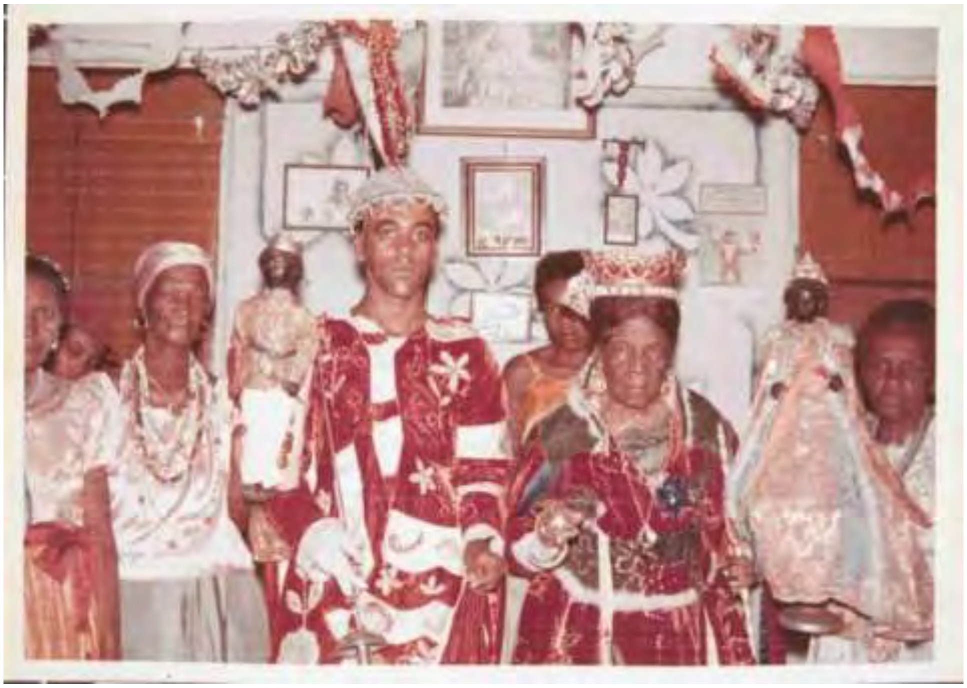

Figure 71. The royal court of the Maracatu Elefante at its headquarters. Damas de paço display two calungas: Dom Luiz (left) and Dona Leopoldina (right). Photograph by Catherine Royal Cate, 1961. Villa Digital, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife, Pernambuco. KR 0103.

Conclusion

Over his many years with mamulengo's master of ceremonies, Benedito had long nursed an impertinent question about the attitudes of Captain Round One and his fellow landowners. In 1970, an unprecedented interview in the *Jornal da Noite* finally gave the Black man his opportunity to do so during an interview with Hermilo Borba Filho, the dramaturg who was the first to document the plays in which Benedito figured so prominently. With an unusual frankness, Benedito directly asked this son of a local Captain Round One whether he personally had "anything against" blacks. The puppet added a degree of concreteness to the question posed to his bohemian friend. Would Borba marry his Black sister?

Borba responded in a crass but revealing fashion by explaining that he shared the same "craziness" for Black women as his planter father. Elaborating, the 52-year-old went on to offer a vulgar racist "tribute" to Black women by praising their strong "flesh, their burning winds, the grace of their walk, their hips, and *bodum*," an animalesque odor associated with draught animals and Black Brazilians. If Benedito's sister fit the stereotype, the married Borba assured his Black interviewer that he would indeed bed her, albeit as a bigamist under the false pretenses of marriage.[1]

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[1] Renato Carneiro Campos, a friend and fellow litterateur, spoke through the puppet, using his superordinate position to broach the delicate issue. Hermilo Borba Filho, interview with Renato Carneiro Campos, "Assim fala um escritor maldito," *Jornal da Noite* (March 1970). Published in Juareiz Correya and Leda Alves, eds., *A palavra de Hermilo* (Recife: Cepe, 2007), 75. On bodum (alternatively spelled *budum*) or *catinga*, see Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil*, 175. Freyre held that the aphrodisiac-like properties of bodum also

True to their crude and direct characters, Benedito and Borba—who posed the question to himself through the puppet—mischievously put their fingers in the wound by unmasking the public secret of racism. Without explicitly denouncing it, the playwright imparted an historical truth about Brazil's substratum of antiblackness. His reply was equally direct in revealing the hypocrisy and double standards that oversaw interracial sexual norms. While Baltazars and Beneditos were forbidden from relating to white women because of their allegedly dangerous appetites, white men like Captain Round One and Borba flexed their customary racial and class entitlement to freely engage in sexually predatory behavior with Black women.

Like his unrelentingly explicit tetralogy, Borba's short exchange with Benedito punctured the enduring myths of Brazilian sociability proffered in the 1930s by Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987). On April 9, 1964, the "Master of Apipucos" would address a massive "March of the Family for Freedom with God" in Recife, the capital of Pernambuco. He zealously assailed "traitors to Brazil" while celebrating the military seizure of power eight days earlier in which three local students were killed. The 64-year-old native-born Recifense called for a purge of those aligned with the state's ousted leftist governor,

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excited white men in the South of Brazil. He cites a case in which a newly married man from a slave-holding family needed to "excite himself for his white bride" by "tak[ing] with him to the bedroom the sweaty nightgown . . . of the Negro slave girl with whom he had been having an affair." Ibid., *The Mansion and the Shanties*, 256.

Miguel Arraes de Alencar (1916-2005) and the reformist Brazilian President overthrown by the military João Goulart (1918-1976).[2]

Perhaps not surprisingly, Freyre's speech invoked the spirit of Recife's renowned street carnival by hailing the easy mixing in the crowd between social classes and "browns, blondes, and blacks."[3] The notion of racial and social "democracy" had, after all, stood at the core of his influential *Big House and the Slave Quarters* (*Casa-grande e senzala*, 1932) which argued that a uniquely Brazilian sociability—derived from interpersonal relations including sex—alleviated conflict between the "big house" (*casa-grande*) and slave quarters (*senzala*) and between the urban dwelling residents of the "town houses" (*sobrados*) and "shantytowns" (*mocambos*), the title of his 1936 companion volume. Recognizing differences between black and white, poor and rich, Freyre nonetheless held than an essentially harmonious society had emerged in the port city entrepôt that grew out of three and a half centuries of sugar and plantation slavery.

Freyre credited the times of slavery with gestating what he viewed as the unique suppleness and lubricity of Brazilian social relations. He infamously evoked the horrors of Brazilian slavery yet insisted that the institution was more "relaxed" than its North

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[2] The press reported that upwards of 200,000 attended the rally, the "March of the Family for Freedom with God," which would be nearly one-quarter of the population of Recife; even if cut in half, this was an unprecedented public outpouring in the streets.

[3] Freyre, 9 April 1964 speech. Freyre speech quoted in *Diário de Pernambuco*. 10 April 1964. It was Arraes and Goulart who epitomized the 'corruption' and 'subversion' leading Freyre to champion a military "Revolution" to prevent his country from becoming "another Cuba, another Hungary, another abject colony of a totalitarian empire."

American counterpart while pointing to the accommodating virtues of language, foodways, religion, and, most notably, sex.[4] Ironically, Freyre could not reconcile his wistful vision of Brazil's slaveholding past with the intuitions of the abolitionist luminary he had stopped just short of anointing Pernambuco's patron saint. On the eve of abolition, Joaquim Nabuco (1849-1910)—the namesake of Freyre's research institute—prophesized that slavery would cast a long and ominous pall over Brazilians' worldviews for many generations to come.[5]

Less than a century after abolition (1888), the sociocultural contours of a slave society could be felt in this violently unequal city. In this dissertation, we saw that an indefatigable antiblackness was reflected in the comportment of letrados, the traditionally "cultured," including even the cultural entrepreneurs open to Afro-Pernambucan culture. More troublingly, we saw how virulent racist attitudes permeated the "people's culture" more generally. Besides illustrating the depth and reach of the racist "truths" about Black Brazilians, the two chapters on mamulengo puppet play revealed that, as late as the 1950s, even the presumably innocuous realm of play was crosshatched by racial submission, domination, and violence.

This dissertation has looked at how an inherited etiquette of conviviality (*convivência*) oversaw inter- and intragroup sociability in the context of a multiracial and multicolor class society characterized by a vast degree of poverty. It has shown that this invisible baggage was shaped by relationships not only of class and money but also the symbolic politics of race and color, both of which were inherited from slavery. Although in Portuguese, convivência denotes a general situation of "coexistence," this dissertation firmly rejects a reading of conviviality as "tipsy jolliness" given the centrality of racism, sexism, and violent logics of domination and submission. To be sure, one of its decisive contributions has been looking at how convivência and inequality are in fact "co-constitutive" in a city and region indelibly scared by nearly 350 years of slavery.[6]

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[4] As Freyre put it, the "shadow of the Negro slave" cast a pall over Brazilians' sexual and family lives. Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves (Casa-grande & senzala): A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), 256.

[5] Joaquim Nabuco, *O abolicionismo*.

The Vicious and Enduring Racist Substratum of Brazilian Culture

This dissertation has also unsettled the erroneous assumption that those historically linked to the big house held a monopoly on racist and sexist attitudes. A legacy of Brazil's slaveholding past, this unifying cultural system had long been propped up by a shared conviction that, while one might be humiliated and abused by the more powerful, there was always someone more vulnerable and stigmatized beneath you. In her preface to Liêdo Maranhão's 1980 book about sex around the São José Public Market, *O povo, o sexo e a miséria, ou o homem é sacana* (*The People, Sex, and Misery, Or Men*

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[6] First invoked by Latin Americanist Ivan Illich (1926-2002), a Croatian philosopher, priest, and cultural critic made famous by his 1971 work *Deschooling Society*, few scholars have heeded Illich's warning that conviviality does not always entail cooperation. For a conceptual genealogy of conviviality in addition to its relevance to specific disciplines, see ibid. "Practices of Conviviality and the Social and Political Theory of Convivialism," *Novos estudos* 38, no. 1 (2019): 27. Marcos Nobre and Sérgio Costa, "Introduction: Conviviality in Unequal Societies," 11.

Are Fuckers), the feminist sociologist Rose Marie Muraro (1930-2014) would write that the "people are not *bonzinho* (kind, sweet, well behaved." As she saw it, petty despotism was replicated on such a broad scale—and rehashed through seemingly infinite chains of aggressors and victims—that class consciousness would be a "difficult conquest" given that it was not "natural."[7] At the same time, the all-encompassing nature of anti-blackness, at least at mid-century, is found in the fact that, in mamulengo and the antiracist axioms enumerated above, we saw no formulation of "Black *and*." Far more common are the attempts of the African-descended to flee the "stain" of their color or to transmute negative stereotyping—such as the purportedly violent or predacious inclinations of blacks—into positive attributes.

In his response to Benedito, Hermilo Borba Filho mobilized deep-rooted stereotypes about Black female sexuality. Several are encapsulated by two everyday expressions quoted by Gilberto Freyre himself:

> A black woman is pepper, and everyone eats [fucks] her.
>
> A white woman is for marrying, a mulatta for fucking, and a black woman for working.

These contemptible remarks lead us to an astounding array of racist aphorisms that are familiar to most Brazilians.[8] Three generations of scholars, both Brazilian and foreign, took stock of a remarkably consistent body of words that assault and wound. Guided by a vision of Brazilians as a peaceful people (*povo pacífico*), early compilers Donald Pierson (1900-1995), a North American sociologist, and Mário Souto Maior (1920-2001), a Recifense folklorist, refused to acknowledge that these sayings were proof of racist attitudes.

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[7] Liêdo Maranhão de Souza, *O povo, o sexo e a miséria, ou o homem é sacana* (Recife: Editora Guararapes, 1980), xiv.

[8] See the dissertation's Appendix which compiles 182 such expressions, each grouped in accordance with their broader syntactical structure.

Pierson, for instance, regarded 41 such expressions as "interesting anecdotes of a former time." He did, however, accept the probability that at least 12 of the maxims consigned to the end of his groundbreaking study of race relations in 1930s Salvador "arose as a form of protest from the Negro group itself."[9] Nevertheless, his belief that these expressions were supposedly "uttered with a smile" led him to conclude that they were lighthearted and as common, as he put it, as American jokes about Ford automobiles or "humorous comments on the Irish, Scotch, or Swedes."[10]

Souto Maior also appended a modest list of sayings at the end of a small booklet on Black folklore published by the Joaquim Nabuco Institute of Social Research. Like Pierson, Souto Maior listed 18 examples in which the "black man retaliated against the *proverbial* aggression of whites." Moving to dispel any whiff of racial antagonism, the folklorist contended that the Black/white "rivalry" captured in his list of expressions was demonstrably "more folkloric than racial."[11] Although they were likely unaware of the other's work, Souto Maior came to a comfortable conclusion like that of Pierson, alleging that the common sayings were mainly "proverbial … joking, [even] philosophical."[12]

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[9] Pierson, 362. See also Appendix B ("Common Sayings Regarding the Negro") in ibid., 362-5.

[10] Pierson, 362.

[11] Italics added for emphasis. Maio Souto Maior, 1-4.

Spanning multiple states over a nearly 100-year period, the maxims collected by Francisco Augusto Pereira da Costa (1908), Pierson (1944), José Pérez (1969), Paulo de Carvalho Neto (1973; 1978), and Souto Maior (1976) are explicit in their denial of Black subjectivity and dignity.[13] For instance:

> A black man does not eat; he devours.
>
> A black man does not take a bath; he wets himself.
>
> When a black man does not make a mess when arriving, he makes a mess while leaving.
>
> Blacks don't marry; they just live together.
>
> A black man who doesn't know his place takes a beating.[14]

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[12] "A face mais popular dessa rivalidade, entretanto, é a proverbial, adagiária, riquíssima, jocose, filosófica …" Souto Maior, 3.

[13] Their works include (in the order indicated above): *Folk-lore pernambucano: subsídios para a história da poesia popular em Pernambuco* (Recife: Cepe, 2004); *Negroes in Brazil: A Study of Race Contact at Bahia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944); *Provérbios brasileiros* (Rio de Janeiro: Edições de Ouro, 1969); *El folklore de las luchas sociales: un ensayo de folklore y marxismo* (México, DF: Siglo XXI, 1973); "Folklore of the Black Struggle in Latin America," *Latin American Perspectives* 5, no. 2 (1978): 53-88; "O folclore do negro," *Folclore* no. 5 (1976): 1-4. Regrettably, scholars did not always specify where they encountered these statements, meaning we have little understanding of the circumstances, interlocutors involved, and setting. Nevertheless, we can assume that they were wrested from oral exchanges such as children's games, nursery rhymes, popular ditties, and improvised verbal duels (desafios or pelejas).

[14] "Negro não come; engole." Souto Maior, Carvalho Neto, and Pierson. "Negro não toma banho; se lava." Pierson and Carvalho Neto. "Negra é a pimenta e todos comem dela." Pierson and Carvalho Neto. "Branca para casar, mulata para foder e negra para trabalhar." Pierson. "Negro quando não suja na entrada, suja na saída." Pierson and Carvalho Neto. "Negro não casa; se junta." Pierson, Souto Maior, and Carvalho Neto. "Negro que não conhece seu lugar acaba no pau." Souto Maior.

No small number of sayings address racial hierarchies. Often appearing as unrhyming, boilerplate quatrains, these constructions emphasize the privileged place of whites and the miserable lot of blacks. For instance, a much-cited expression holds that

> The white man is a son of God,
> The mulatto is a foster-child,
> The *cabra* [a *mestiço* of white, indigenous, and black descent] has no relatives,
> The Negro is a son of Satan.[15]

Another examines racial hierarchies according to the libations consumed by each group. In this case, note how the cabra figure represented in the previous example is replaced by the *caboclo*, a person of white and indigenous ancestry:

> The white man drinks champagne,
> The mulatto Port wine,
> The *caboclo* beer,
> The Negro pig's excrement.[16]

Perhaps the most striking quatrain locates racial groups' places of repose in the big house:

> The white man sleeps in a bed,
> Mulattoes in the kitchen,
> Caboclos in the yard,
> Blacks under the hen roost.[17]

For Paulo de Carvalho Neto (1923-2003), the kinds of expressions collected by Pierson and Souto Maior were no joking matter. In the 1970s, the Sergipano anthropologist and folklorist politicized the field of folklore by publishing a significant but neglected study of racist and racialized expressions.[18] Salient were his critiques of Pierson, who he accused of overlooking the inequalities served by racist aphorisms as well as the racial and ethnic struggles embedded in these supposed cultural "survivals." Carvalho Neto was particularly interested in the adages that captured subordinate groups' responses to racism. In doing so, he culled examples from Spanish America, which also included sayings pertaining to indigenous Americans, in his effort to explore the question in greater depth.

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[15] Pierson, 364. "O branco é filho de Deus, / o mulato é enteado, / o cabra não tem parente, / o negro é filho do Diabo." Carvalho Neto, 36.
[16] Pierson, 365.
[17] Pierson, 364 and Carvalho Neto, 36, 85.

This body of racist maxims does contain an undercurrent of resistance, if small, that takes aim at the purported "truths" about Black Brazilians. In his interview with Benedito, Hermilo Borba Filho invoked the belief that African descended persons—especially women—emitted a foul odor.[19] However, sayings independently captured by Souto Maior and José Pérez contended that the flesh, armpits, and sweat of white people also stunk.[20] The topic of moral hypocrisy is another major target. The following kinds of expressions documented by Souto Maior, Pierson, Peŕez, and Carvalho Neto pointed out that blacks and whites were held to two radically different social standards:

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[18] Paulo de Carvalho Neto, *El folklore de las luchas sociales: un ensayo de folklore y marxismo* (Ciudad de México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1973), 35-9.

[19] In a 1960 study of racial stereotypes held by students in Florianopolis, capital of the predominantly white southern state of Santa Catarina, 73% of 552 respondents indicated that blacks (negros) were "bad smelling, dirty, non-hygienic" while only 27% associated these attributes with mulattoes. 69% and 31% of respondents associated blacks and mulattoes with being ugly, respectively. See Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Octavio Ianni, *Cor e mobilidade social em Florianópolis* (São Paulo, 1960). Cited in Carl N. Degler, 128.

[20] "Carne de branco também fede." Pérez, 30. "Sovaco de branco também fede." Souto Maior, 4. "Suor de branco também fede." Souto Maior, 4.

> When the black man steals, he is a thief; the white man is a baron.
>
> An insane white man is said to be only nervous, but an insane Negro is called a "drunk."
>
> A white man's bad manners is nervousness.[21]

It is not so clear, however, that these sorts of quatrains are always indicative of a white perspective. Indeed, they could also serve as statements of Black exasperation with the prevailing social and racial order.

Some declarations mobilize stereotypes concerning Black violence. Transcriptions of *lambe-sujo*, what has been likened to a game of Christians and Moors (or perhaps "cowboys and Indians" in the United States), quote "runaway slaves," covered from head to toe in grease, taunting "whites":

> Samba, black man (*nêgo*)
> White man, do not come here.
> If you do,
> You will take a beating.[22]

Francisco da Pereira Costa explained that runaway slaves sometimes issued a stern warning to their masters and overseers: "If you are not brave, do not tie up a black man!"[23]

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[21] "Negro quando furta é ladrão; branco é barão." Souto Maior, 4; Carvalho Neto, 89; and Pérez, 86. "Branco maluco é só nervoso e negro maluco é cachaceiro." Carvalho Neto, 37 and Pierson, 364. "Falta de educação no branco é nervosa." Souto Maior, 4.

[22] "Samba nêgo / branco não vem cá; si vinhê / pau há de levar." Carvalho Neto, 107. Lambe-sujo, a popular folguedo celebrated in Laranjeiras, Sergipe, reenacts the destruction of maroon settlements (*quilombos*) by slave catchers (*capitães do mato*) with the assistance of Indians. See Jan Hoffman French, *Legalizing Identities: Becoming Black or Indian in Brazil's Northeast* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 151-2, 154.

[23] "Quem não tem coragem, não amarra negro!" Pereira Costa, 249 and Pérez, 123.

Challenging the Living Legacies of Slavery

The mid-century world captured in this dissertation is hardly an unchanging one, however. Although the sociocultural contours of a slave society were strongly felt in this violently unequal city less than a full century after abolition, an upsurge of mass struggles had energized the reformist projects of Arraes, the Popular Culture Movement (MCP), and progressive Catholics, which sought to overcome the violent inequality that separated the "nobles" and the "poor" (*nobres e pobres*). Creative intellectuals, students, teachers, and politicians who adhered to these initiatives were sometimes driven by what Ronald Chilcote has called "enlightened romanticism," and nonwhite plebeians did not come to occupy the leadership by any means.[24] Yet an excessive focus on issues of white ventriloquism and letrado paternalism would cause us to lose sight of the fact that these projects represented new and unprecedented kinds of interclass and interracial relationships; and it was these deepening ties—over the decades after 1964—that would dramatically change the course of politics in Recife, Pernambuco, and Brazil as a whole after the end of the twenty-one year military regime in 1985.

In the case of the MCP, middle-class young people cast doubt on their parents' and grandparents' ways of engaging with the *povo* (common people). When they ventured out to the zona da mata to teach sugarcane workers how to read and write (figs. 72 and 73), or to stage education plays in which they cast residents of Recife's improvised mudflat dwellings (fig. 74), university and secondary school students were breaking with established assumptions that poor Pernambucans lacked the requisite creativity, talent, reflexivity, or a capacity to learn. Additionally, the children of "doutores" and public functionaries now publicly avowed that plebeians had something to teach them by visiting their homes and places of leisure, work, and worship on different terms (figs. 75 and 76). The notion of mutuality embedded in mid-century reformist projects can rightly be said to have facilitated, in Arraes' words, the emergence of "the povo as an historical category."[25] Hardly the unthinking, taciturn victims of nearly four centuries of oppression, educated Pernambucans came to recognize that plebeians *had* a culture—a popular culture—as part of a revolution that combined a widening of opportunity, a recognition of their human dignity, and concrete steps to ameliorate their economic abjection and exploitation.

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[24] Ronald H. Chilcote, *Intellectuals and the Search for National Identity in Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

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[25] Miguel Arraes, *Miguel Arraes: pensamento político* (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 1997), 17-34.

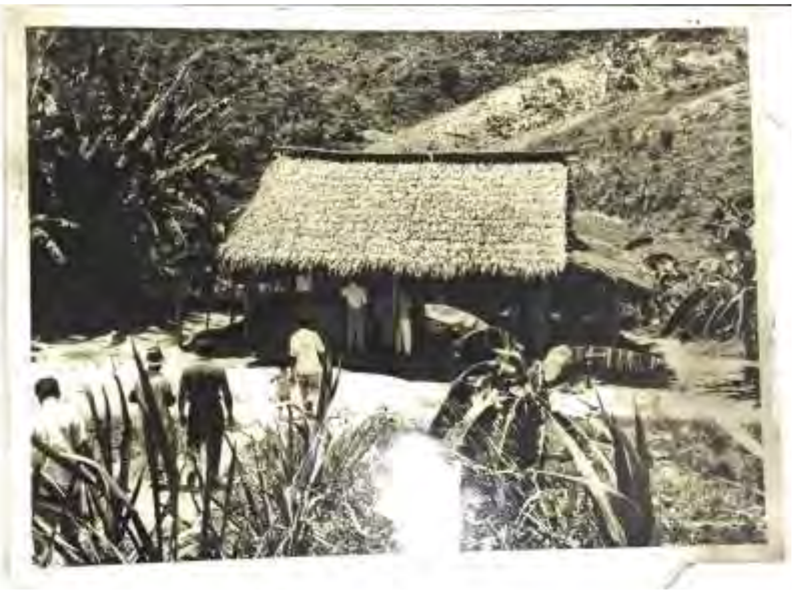

Figure 72: Meeting on an unspecified sítio in rural Pernambuco. Photographer unknown, undated. Arquivo Público Estadual de Pernambuco. Prontuário 7.105.

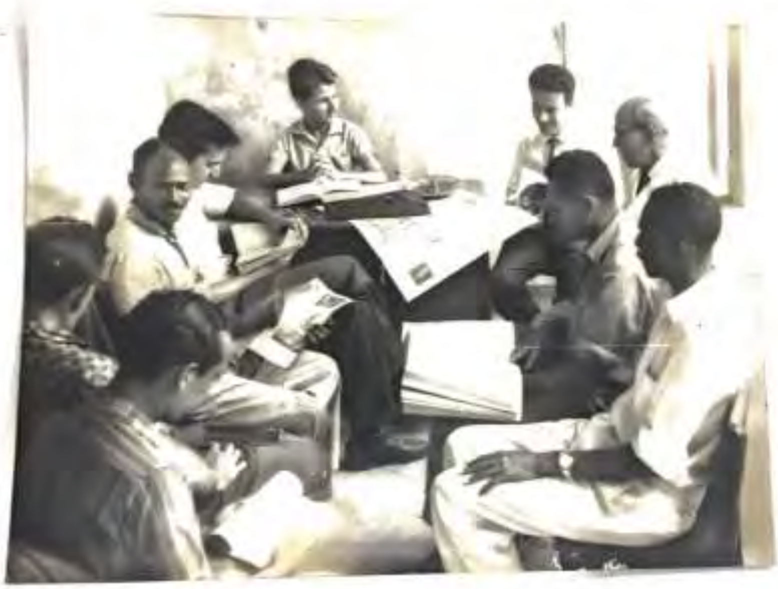

Figure 73: White secondary or university students leading a literacy class with Black and brown rural laborers. Photographer unknown, undated. Arquivo Público Estadual de Pernambuco. Prontuário 7.105.

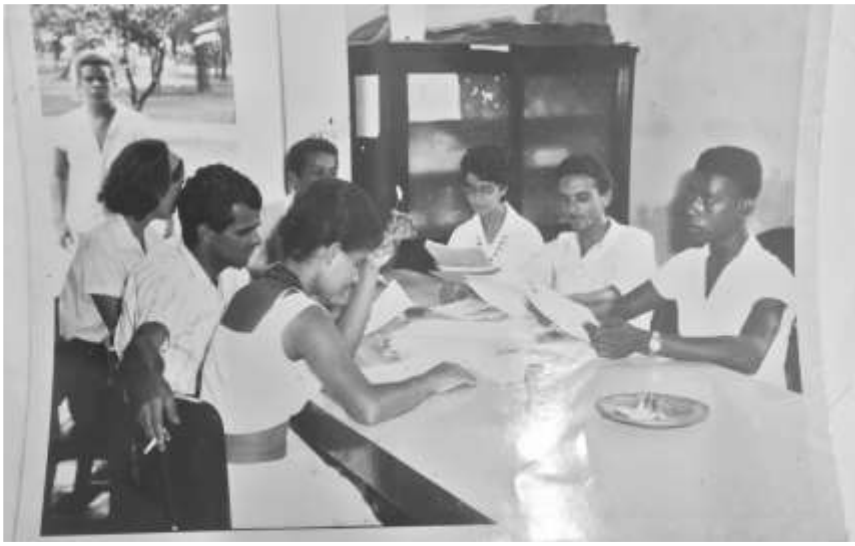

Figure 74: Meeting of Theater Directors of the Popular Culture Movement (MCP). Photographer unknown, February 1962. Arquivo Público Estadual de Pernambuco. Prontuário 7.105.

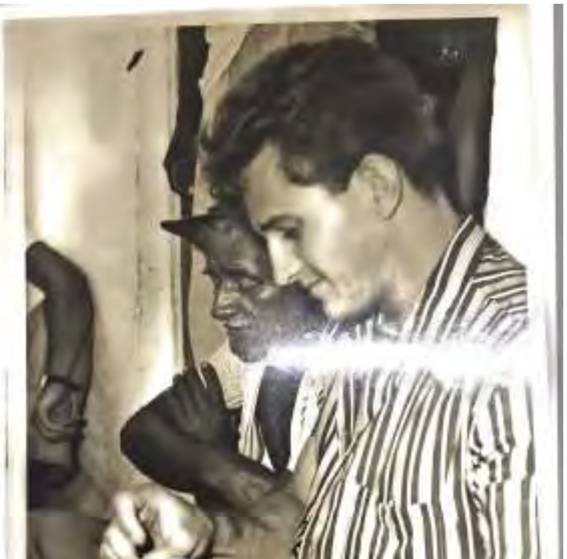

Figure 75: A smartly dressed young man, perhaps a university student, meeting with who appears to be a rural laborer.Photographer unknown, undated. Arquivo Público Estadual de Pernambuco. Prontuário 7.105.

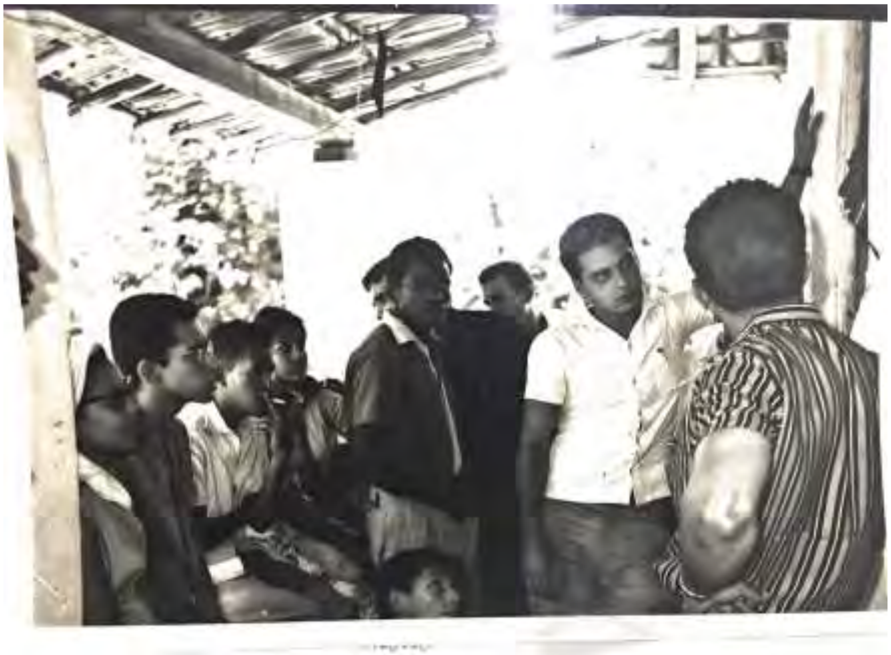

Figure 76: The same young man conversing with people of color. Photographer unknown, undated. Arquivo Público Estadual de Pernambuco. Prontuário 7.105.

For all its focus on virility and misogyny, the final volume Hermilo Borba Filho's tetralogy is inevitably crosscut by the ferment of the late 1950s and early 1960s. While the narrator-protagonist goes through the motions of referencing this collective effervescence, he experiences discomfort and melancholia as the world of his forebears—also his own—appears to lose centrality and slides into its undertow.[26] In an elegiac scene, Hermilo nurses a drink with an acquaintance who details his most recent escapades in the *zona*. His friend is despondent that legions of Arraes' social workers have arrived to "indoctrinate the whores." Although he scoffs at the absurdity of teaching sex workers to become "maids, cashiers, and even typists," the municipal project of dignification (*dignificação*) seems to resonate with some women.[27] One of them, nicknamed Ofélia Gold Mouth (Ofélia-Boca-de-Ouro), flatly refuses to perform oral sex on Hermilo's friend, citing the importance of "moralizing" her profession through "mommy and daddy" (*mamãe e papai*) sex alone. The denial of what he felt was an entitlement undoubtedly humiliated—even angered—the man, confirming his conviction that the certainties of his world was slipping away.[28]

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[26] Hermilo Borba Filho, *Um cavalheiro da segunda decadência*, vol. 4, *Deus no pasto* (Recife: Bagaço, 2010), 27.

The crusade to affirm sex workers' humanity continued with a renewed vigor in the 1970s and eighties through the outreach of radical priests and nuns like Ivone Gebara (b. 1944). Teaching at the Theological Institute of Recife (Instituto Teológico do Recife, ITER) for 17 years alongside Dom Hélder Câmara brought her into contact with representatives of the povo, including *mulheres-da-vida*.[29] The feminist theologian used her preface to Liêdo's 1980 work to condemn the exploits of *doutores*, Borba types who wielded the power to "create prostitutes, create marginals, to increase the lines of the malnourished, to father children and ignore them, to deprive them of the right to a human life." Perhaps most damning was that these women were denied what Gebara called the "conquest of humanity": learning how to read and write.[30] Muraro approached the topic from a different angle, emphasizing the profundity of misogyny. Regardless of social class, men saw women as a something to be enjoyed "as an object of unloading thie rdesire, or as a reproducer and domestic servant."[31]

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[27] Parenthetically, he reports that sex workers managed to "indoctrinate" at least one social worker.
[28] Borba, 27.
[29] "Ivone Gebara," in *Notable Twentieth-Century Latin American Women: A Biographical Dictionary*, ed. Cynthia Margarita Tompkins and David William Foster (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 110-11.
[30] Maranhão, xxiii.

The pervasiveness of this machista ethos make men like Liêdo Maranhão even more remarkable. The collector and wanderer recognized that it was important to transcribe the phrases and stories told to him by the women of the market and square. Although Muraro initially chided him for failing to incorporate female voices in the initial draft of his 1980 book, he reinforced the work's denunciatory thrust by inserting the accounts of women, most of them sex workers.[32]

By the end of the century, racial and gendered violence now increasingly face questioning in the ludic realm as practitioners of mamulengo have faced closer scrutiny. Zildalte Ramos de Macêdo has examined a "politically correct" and "modernized" form of play put on by Heraldo Lins (b. 1962), a university educated puppeteer in Rio Grande do Norte.[33] Although Lins uses a dark black Benedito doll in his "traditional" performances, the star of his "contemporary" shows is light brown (pardo). Lins explained that he uses the nonblack puppet to protect himself from charges of racism while simultaneously allaying his sponsors' fears—many of them government agencies—that certain jokes would be offensive.[34] Lins further explained that the representative of a state-owned water company worried that cajoling a Black Benedito to take a bath would upset predominantly nonwhite audiences. Rather than rewriting the script, however, the artist used his lighter, more racially ambiguous puppet, thus avoiding the allegation that he was associating Blacks with uncleanliness.[35]

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[31] Maranhão, xiv.

[32] Maranhão, xiii.

[33] Zildalte Ramos de Macêdo, ""Show de Mamulengos" de Heraldo Lins: construções e transformações de um espectáculo na cultura popular" (master's thesis, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, 2014).

These changes would also be reflected in the world of Carnaval where the calunga increasingly commanded. Amid a maracatu revival in the 1990s, there were some who mourned what they called the "spectacularization" of maracatu. While these scholars recognize that Black presence has always been shaped by competing praxes and interests, they are discomfited by maracatu's insertion into broader circuits for mass consumption which they believe cheapens the "tradition." One cannot, however, take seriously the idea that poor maracatuzeiros would reject transformation in the name of a stagnant kind of "tradition," especially given that their very survival depends on innovation and renewal not to mention financial support. Moreover, the very fact that maracatus are now dubbed integral to Recife's twenty-first century carnival is an historical triumph of the African-descended, especially given that they were reviled and feared less than a century ago. Finally, and by no means least important, maracatus and terreiros of Xangô have come to imbue regionalist conceptions of Pernambucanness with a language of Africanicity, marking a recognition that—if initially symbolic—the "people's" and Afro-Pernambucan culture are tightly intertwined and indissoluble.[36]

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[34] Macêdo, 103.
[35] Macêdo, 104-5. 104-5.

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Arriving a mere two weeks after the coup of March 31-April 1, 1964, Olinda and Recife's new archbishop Dom Hélder Pessoa Câmara, born in Ceará in 1909, settled into the simple Igreja das Fronteiras rather than the ornate seat of the archdiocese. He preferred the centrally located church because it brought him closer to the *gentinha* (little people). Although Câmara would become Brazil's most famous (and well-traveled) opponent of the 21-year military regime, this paragon of liberation theology never missed the opportunity to receive and chat with the most desperately poor.

At 6 A.M. every Monday through Saturday, the archbishop addressed his flock over the airwaves. From 1974 to 1983, his five-minute radio program dubbed "A Look at the City" (*Um olhar sobre a cidade*) raised topics of concern for the *povão* (the "really common" people).[37] The prelate spoke simply and lyrically, and his characteristic sonority left his listeners—bus, taxi, and freighter drivers; chauffeurs, domestic servants, and construction workers, among others—hanging on every word. While Dom Hélder offered his reflections on big-picture issues such as socioeconomic inequality, he also expounded on popular music, sports, celebrations, poetry, film, and television to discuss matters of faith and virtue.

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[36] Ari Lima, "From African Survivals to a Working-Class Afro-Brazilian Culture," *Latin American Perspectives* 41, no. 5 (2014): 157-166.

[37] Lucy Pina Neta and Joyce Conceição Mesquita, "O olhar do bispo sobre a cidade: Dom Hélder Câmara e suas crônicas na Rádio Olinda," in *Proc. XIII Colóquio de História da Unicap, II Colóquio de História do PPGH: Cidades, história, cultura e memórias municipais*, 803-816.

Never one to shy away from controversial issues, Dom Hélder Câmara was unusual in his willingness to discuss matters of race and racism with candor and sensitivity. In one show, he asked his listeners how Brazil could claim to be a "racial democracy" when one could count on one hand its black teachers, engineers, doctors, lawyers, bishops, generals, and ambassadors, or when parents conspired to end the engagement of their white daughters to black men.[38] The archbishop also delivered a public repudiation of the "deep and subtle" prejudice reflected in the fact that Brazil was the last country in the Western Hemisphere to abolish slavery; the 13th of May (the anniversary of abolition), he suggested, should not be a day for commemoration by Brazilians but rather of "contrition and repentance."[39]

Dubbed the "red" archbishop by his enemies, Dom Hélder's unvarnished discussion of racism—a word he explicitly used—gave a name to the everyday forms of humiliation endured by countless Recifenses. Additionally, his remarks on race also challenged listeners of all colors—including whites or light-skinned actors—to reflect on the seemingly innocuous ways they advanced anti-Black attitudes through standards of beauty and dress, by courting and marrying those of a certain color, and through employing expressions such as those examined earlier in this section.

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[38] Typescripts of radio program "Um olhar sobre a cidade" by Dom Hélder Pessoa Câmara, November 10, 1976, episode 817, and June 23, 1978, episode 1323. Centro de Documentação Dom Hélder Câmara, Instituto Dom Hélder Câmara, Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil.

[39] Typescripts of radio program "Um olhar sobre a cidade" by Dom Hélder Pessoa Câmara, May 13, 1981, episode 2181 and May 30, 1981, episode 2196. Centro de Documentação Dom Hélder Câmara, Instituto Dom Hélder Câmara, Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil.

Perhaps most importantly, Dom Hélder Câmara used his public position to declare that racism, one of the seven sins of the twentieth century, was irreconcilable with Catholicism.[40] In speaking publicly, Dom Hélder spoke for a generation of educated young—many of them nuns and priests—who had begun in the 1950s to chart a new path towards a more democratic Brazil after 2002 where Blacks, women, workers, and the poor would have a voice in the country's affairs and the living legacies of slavery would be challenged through new antiracist and feminist languages, identities, practices, and government policies aimed at creating a Brazil for all.

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[40] Dom Hélder Câmara, *Ano 2000, 500 anos do Brasil: uma visão de fé, esperança e amor nas mensagens fraternas de Hom Hélder Câmara* (São Paulo: Paulinas, 1999).

Appendix: Compilation of Racist and Antiracist Maxims

Key:
P: Pierson (1944)
B: Borba (1966)
G: Gomes (1975)
GR: Gurgel (2008)
CN: Carvalho Neto (1973)
SO: Souto Maior (c. 1970s)
PC: Pereira Costa (1908)

A. Denying the Humanity of Blacks

1. Negroes aren't born; they just appear. (P 362; CN 93)
2. Negro não nasce; vem a furo. *Negroes aren't born; they come through a hole/opening.* (CN 93; PE 86)
3. Negro não morre; se acaba. (SO 3; CN 93; PE 86)
4. Negroes don't sleep; they just take naps. (P 362; PE 86)
5. Negroes don't eat; they bolt their food. (P 362)
6. Negroes don't look at you; they only glance at you out of the corners of their eyes. (P 362)
7. Negroes don't take a bath; they just wet themselves. (P 362; CN 37; GR 75)
8. Negroes don't comb their hair; they curry it. (P 362; CN 37)
9. A Negro woman doesn't give birth to a child; she just "pops it out." (P 362)
10. The negro was born to be a dog / And to spend his life barking. (P 364)
11. Nego deitado é um porco. (GR 75; SO 3; PC 249; PE 85)
12. Negro não sorri; mostra os dentes. (SO 3)
13. Negro não fuma, pita. *The black doesn't smoke, he puffs.* (SO 3)
14. Negro não tem cabeça; tem é quengo. (SO 3)
15. Negro quando não suja, tisna. (SO 3; PC 249)
16. Negro não aniversaria; inteira tempo. (SO 3)
17. Negro não come; engole. (SO 3, CN 78; CN 92; PE 86)
18. Prato de negro é gamela. (SO 3)
19. Negro não mastiga; remoi. (SO 3)
20. Negro não dorme; se deita. (SO 4)
21. Negro não nasce; aparece. (SO 4)
22. Negro não tem nariz; tem focinho. *The black doesn't have a nose; he has a muzzle or snout.* (SO 4)
23. Negro não se enxuga, escorre. (CN 37)
24. Negro é rei dos bichos, / Imperador dos macacos. (PC 250)
25. Negro não grita, berra. *The black doesn't shout, he bleats or howls.* (CN 93)

26. Negro não ri, faz careta. *The black doesn't smile, he makes a grimace.* (CN 93)
27. Preto não dança, cisca. *The black doesn't dance, he weeds or rakes.* (CN 93)
28. Preto não conversa, resmunga. *The black doesn't converse, he mutters or grumbles.* (CN 93)
29. Preto não tem pernas, tem gambitos. (CN 98; PE 86)
30. Preto não tem mão, tem pá. *The black doesn't have hands, he has shovels or spades.* (CN 98)
31. Preto não tem tedo, tem gadanho. (CN 98)
32. Preto não tem pé, tem chuço. (CN 98)
33. Preto não tem cabelo, tem morrão. (CN 98)
34. Preto não tem olho, tem bogalho. (CN 98)
35. Preto não tem dente, tem enxada. (CN 98)
36. Preto não tem orelha, tem abano. (CN 98)
37. Preto não tem nariz, tem fornalha. *The black doesn't have a nose, he has a firebox or furnace.* (CN 98)
38. Preto não tem boca, tem solapa. (CN 98)
39. Nego nem toma banho, se lameia. (P 362; CN 37; GR 75)
40. Negroes don't marry; they just live together. (P 362; SO 4; CN 92)
41. Nego num dança, sapateia. (GR 75)
42. Negro não se penteia; alias o pixaim. (SO 3)
43. Negro não namora; embirra. (SO 4; PE 86)
44. Negro não tem estômago; tem é bucho. (SO 4)
45. Negro não defeca; dá-de-corpo. (SO 4)
46. Negro não casa, ajunta. (PE 86)
47. Negroes don't dance; they "samba." (P 362)
48. Negro não é homem. Em menino é negrinho, moço é molecote, e grande é negro. (PE 86)

B. Blacks and Whites

49. If the priest is white, he says Mass; / But if he is a Negro, he only pretends to be saying it. (P 363; CN 37)
50. Branco dá alma a Deus / e nêgo dá a alma ao Diabo. (CN 34)
51. Negro não acompanha a procissão; corre atrás dela. (CN 92; PE 86)
52. Negro não entra na igreja, espia do patamar. (CN 93; PE 86)
53. Negro que come com branco, o branco come e o negro paga. (CN 113; PE 87)
54. Branca que casa com negro é preta por dentro. (CN 102; PE 25)
55. Negra, mas no seu corpo, quanto beiço de branco! (CN 73; PE 85)
56. Branco compra passagem, nego é vai e vem, quando vai no trem. (GR 75)

57. Todo branco quando morre / Jesus Cristo é quem levou, / mas negro quando morre, / foi cachaça que matou. (CN 90)
58. Onde falta branco sobra negro. (SO 3)
59. Negro só tem de branco os dentes. (SO 3)
60. Nem branco mente, nem negro sustenta o que diz. (SO 4)
61. Negro é carvão, e o branco seu dinheiro. (PC 249; PE 85)
62. The Negro was born just to be a lacket of the whites. (P 364; CN 37)
63. In the white's fishing, it's the Negro who pulls the net. (P 364; CN 39)
64. If the Negro doesn't want gruel, they give him gruel. (P 364; CN 93; PC 249; PE 86)
65. If the Negro doesn't want beans, they give him means. (P 364)
66. An insane white man is said to be only nervous; but an insane Negro is called a "drunk." (P 364; CN 37)
67. Negro em festa de branco é o primeiro que apanha e o ultimo que come. (SO 4; PC 249; CN 113; PE 85)
68. Negro quando furta é ladrão; branco é barão. (SO 4; CN 89; PE 86)
69. Suor de branco também fede. (SO 4)
70. Na seda branca é que a mancha pega. (SO 4)
71. Quando o cabelo do branco fica branco pela idade, ele tinge de preto. (SO 4)
72. Falta de educação no branco é nervosa. (SO 4)
73. Sovaco de branco também catinga. (SO 4)
74. Café é preto e todo mundo gosta. (SO 4)
75. Raro é o branco com pinta de negro. (SO 4)
76. A sujeira do branco sai no dinheiro. (SO 4)
77. Galinha preta só bota ovo branco. (SO 4)
78. Papel é branco mas aceita tudo que se escreve nele. (SO 4)
79. Branco não faz festa sem negro. (SO 4)
80. Papel higiênico também é branco. (SO 4)
81. Branco rico nunca á feio. (SO 4)
82. Branco se enterra em caixão todo preto. (SO 4)
83. A má ação do branco também pesa. (SO 4)
84. É branco o jasmim de cachorro. (SO 4)
85. Penico também é branco. (SO 4)
86. Negro furta e branco aproveita. (CN 89; PE 86)
87. Negro só trabalha pra branco levar. (CN 89)
88. Branco dançando, negro tocando. (PE 25)
89. Branco é quem bem procede. (PE 25)
90. Branco vem de Adão, e negro não? (PE 25)
91. Carne de branco, também fede. (PE 30)
92. Carne de negro sustenta a fazenda. (PE 30)

93. Em briga de branco, negro não se mete. (PE 49)
94. Galinha preta põe ovo branco. (PE 59)
95. Judas era branco e vendeu a Cristo. (PE 67)
96. Negro é gente como os outros; também não é filho de Deus? (PE 85)
97. Negro só trabalha pra branco carregar (levar). (PE 87)
98. Papel é branco e limpa-se tudo com ele. (PE 102)
99. Pinico também é branco. (PE 106)
100. São brancos, lá se entendam. (PE 133)
101. Sangue de negro é vermelho como o de branco. (PE 133)
102. Suor de negro dá dinheiro. (PE 138)
103. Em negócio de branco negro não se mete. (SO 3)
104. Quando se dá o pé o negro quer a mão. (SO 3)
105. Filho de branco é menino; filho de negro é moleque. (SO 3)
106. Negro em festa de branco é o primeiro que apanha e o ultimo que come. (SO 4; PE 85)
107. Branco brinca na sala / E o negro na cozinha. (CN 31)
108. Xiquexique é pau de espinho, / Emburana é pau de abéia… / Hê! Hê! Hê! / Café, ceia de branco, / Paletó de negro é peia. (GR 145)

C. Racial Hierarchies

109. Negro que não conhece seu lugar acaba no pau. (SO 4)
110. The white man is a son of God, / The mulatto is a foster-child, / The *cabra* has no relatives, / The Negro is a son of Satan. (P 364; CN 36; CN 85)
111. Every white man comes from God, / Every mulatto is a *pimpão*, / Every caboclo is a thief, / Every Negro a *feiticeiro*. (P 364; CN 36; CN 83)
112. The white man goes to heaven, / The mulatto stays on earth, / The *caboclo* goes to purgatory, / The Negro goes to hell. (P 364; CN 36)
113. The white man eats off a plate, the mulatto where he likes, the *cabra* from a *caia*, the Negro out of an *aribe*. (P 365; CN 38)
114. The white man drinks champagne, / The mulatto Port wine, / The *caboclo* beer, / The Negro pig's urine. (P 365; CN 90)
115. Branco bebe champagna, / mulato, vinho do Porto, / caboclo bebe aguardente, / e negro, bosta de porco. (CN 90)
116. The mulatto, the *cabrinha*, and the Negro / Used to be able to drink; / But today only whites and mulattoes / Can swill it down all day. (P 365)
117. Branca para casar, mulata para foder e negra para trabalhar. (PE 25)
118. I have a pain in my chest / That goes to my heart / When I see a Negro with shoes on / And a mulatto barefoot. (P 364; CN 37)

119. The white man is a gold chain, the mulatto fine silver, / The *cabra* is a *relicario*, the Negro a leather cord. (P 364; CN 38)
120. Negro é criá-los, depois vendê-los; mulatos, é criá-los, depois matá-los. (PE 85)
121. The white man sleeps in a bed, / The mulatto in the hall, / The *caboclo* in the parlor, / The Negro in the "privy." (P 365)
122. Whites sleep in beds, / Mulattoes in the kitchen, / *Caboclos* on the terreiro, / Negroes under the henroost. (P 365)
123. The mulatto, the *cabrinha*, and the Negro / Used to be able to drink; / But today only whites and mulattoes / Can swill it down all day. (P 365)
124. The white man sleeps in a bed, / The mulatto in the hall, / The *caboclo* in the parlor, / The Negro in the "privy." (P 365)

D. Comparisons (Similes and Metaphors)

125. A Negro dressed in white is a fly in milk. (P 362; CN 37)
126. The Negro dressed in black is a black vulture with a cape. (P 363; CN 37)
127. Negra é a pimenta e todos comem dela. (CN 73; PE 85)
128. A Negro is a *pau de fumo.* (P 363; CN 37)
129. Nego em pé é um toco. (GR 75; SO 3; PC 249; PE 85)
130. Pendante como negro de pince-pez. (CN 82)
131. Preto que só funda de panela. (LM 173)
132. Bacalhau é comer de negro e negro é comer de onça. (SO 4; PE 23)
133. You call me ugly; / I am ugly, but I am also affectionate. / The seasoning is ugly too, / But it makes a dish taste good. (P 365; CN 39)
134. Neguinho é ruim feito uma tapioca. (GR 34)
135. Negro, *onça*'s food. (P 363; PE 85)

E. Pithy Sayings

136. The odor of a Negro woman / Comes from two places: / The armpit / And the heel. (P 363; CN 38)
137. Negro ensaboado, tempo perdido, sabão esperdiçado. (SO 4; PE 85)
138. Negro preto cor da noite, / Tem catinga de xexéu, / Tomara Nossa Senhora, / Que negro não vá ao céu. *Black like the black of night, / has a bad underarm smell, / hopefully Our Lady, / won't allow the black into heaven.* (PC 248)
139. Negro sujo / negro sujo / negro do Piaui / pega este menino / que não quer dormir. (CN 77)
140. Na beira do Paraiba / uma preta se banhou, / distancia de meia legua, / os peixes se embebedou. (CN 100)
141. Negro mais se ensaboa, mais preto fica. (PE 86)

142. Quem quer branquear um preto, perde o seu sabão. (PE 125)
143. Negro na festa, pau na testa. (CN 113; PE 86)
144. A Negro with gloves on is a sign of rain. (P 362; SO 4; CN 37; PC 249; CN 79; PE 85)
145. Negro sabido negro atrevido. (PE 87)
146. Negro no salão, no bolso patacão. (CN 78; PE 86)
147. Negro Jurado, negro apanhado. (PC 249; PE 86)
148. Negro chorando, negro mangando. (CN 82; PE 85)
149. Negro em função, rebenque na mão. (PE 85)
150. Negro espiou, negro manjou. (PE 86)
151. Negro só é valente atrás do pau. (PE 87)
152. Negro tem três sentidos: dois não prestam e um é perdido. (PE 87)
153. The *chique-chique* is a thorny wood, / The *umburana* a bee's tree, / The oxen's necktie is a yoke, / The Negro's coat a beating. (P 365)
154. The Negro will not go to heaven, / Even though he prays, / Because his hair is kinky, / And it might stick our Lord. (P 364),
155. Negro só entre no céu por descuido de São Pedro. *A black only enters heaven because of Saint Peter's neglect.* (SO 4; PE 87)
156. São Benedito / Olho de aratanha, / Come o caju / E também a castanha. (PC 250)
157. Nêgo só tem alguma coisa quando Deus não sabe. (CN 86)
158. Negro preto cor da noite, / Tem catinga de xexéu, / Tomara Nossa Senhora, / Que negro não vá ao céu. *Black like the black of night, / has a bad underarm smell, / hopefully Our Lady, / won't allow the black into heaven.* (PC 248)
159. Se Negro fosse coisa de se gostar, todo mundo andava com um urubu debaixo do braço. (SO 4)
160. Preto não fuma charuto, / porque charuto ele é, / preto não anda calçado, / porque tem bicho no pé.
161. Negro não vai no céu / embora rezador / porque tem o cabelo duro / espeta Nosso Senhor. (CN 38)
162. Esta noite escrevi ao céu, / pedindo a Deus um favô, / de preto não andar calçado, / nem também de palitót. (CN 71)
163. Pobre preto só é gente / quando vem a noite escura; / todos dizem: "lá vem homem", / somente pela figura. (CN 31; PC 249)
164. The Negro has hair / Which lard will not flatten; / The more he combs it, / The more it kinks (P 363; CN 38)
165. An old Negro when he dies / Smells like a skunk; / Our Lady, don't let / That Negro into Heaven! (P 363; CN 38)
166. A Nagô Negro when he dies / Is carried off in a banguê; / His relatives say, / "The vultures have to eat." (P 363; CN 37)

167. The Negro will not go to heaven, / Even though he prays, / Because his hair is kinky, / And it might stick our Lord. (P 364)
168. Juízo de negro é na sola dos pés. (SO 4)
169. Negro que não gosta de mel é ladrão de cortiço. (SO 4; PE 87)
170. Negro só tem de gente os olhos. (SO 4; PC 249; PE 87)
171. Negro quando não caga na entrada, caga na saída. (SO 4)
172. Negro quando não faz das duas na entrada, na saída é certo. (PE 86)
173. Negro quando não suja na entrada, suja na saída. (CN 82; PE 86)
174. Negro quando não suja, tisna. (PE 86)
175. Quando mais fala, mais mente, / Quando mais mente, mais jura! (CN 34)
176. Negro só acha o que ninguém perdeu. (CN 89; PE 87)
177. Bebida de negro é cachaça. (SO 3)
178. Negro quando pinta tem três vezes trinta. (SO 3; PC 249; PE 87)
179. Negro quando pinta… tem cento e trinta. (PE 87)
180. Negro só dá o que tem. (SO 3)
181. Negro só é gente quando está no banheiro. Quando batem na porta ele diz: “Tem gente”! (SO 4)
182. Do Recife pr’a Goiana, / Os vales já se *acabou*; / Carreira de velho é choto, / Negro *cresceu,* apanhou. (PC 248; PE 85)

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Biography

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