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MAMULENGO PUPPET THEATRE

IN THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF

TWENTIETH-CENTURY

BRAZIL

IZABELA COSTA BROCHADO

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD)

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SUPERVISOR: PROF. DR. JOHN McCORMICK

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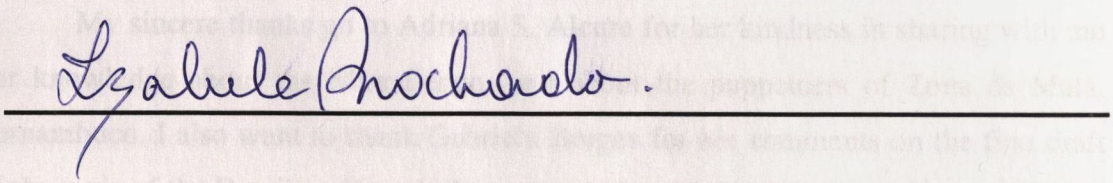

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SUMMARY

Mamulengo is a popular form of puppet theatre in Pernambuco, a state located in the Northeast region of Brazil. It seems to have originated about two centuries ago, and even today, it remains a significant form of entertainment for the people of the Northeast region.

In this thesis, Mamulengo is approached as a popular puppet theatre tradition formed by a complex system of codes - the 'Mamulengo language' - amidst the socio-cultural context of Pernambuco from the late nineteenth century until the beginning of the twenty-first century. Mamulengo both informs and is shaped by the context of its production, expressed through both the texts (plots and linguistic style) and characters (general and specific typologies). This thesis demonstrates that the plots and characters reflect a society resulting from an intense process of miscegenation (of races and cultures), in which hierarchical divisions have been based on race, gender and class distinctions, and consequently, convey the prejudices, tensions and contradictions arising from these distinctions. Mamulengo to some degree encapsulates the diversity of the popular Northeastern traditions, which are the result of centuries of social and cultural exchange between white, Indian and black populations. The puppet theatre, as part of this entire cultural context, is in permanent interchange with these traditional manifestations and thus, their strong influence on the constitution of Mamulengo can be observed.

In examining the diverse sources that form the basis of this puppet theatre this thesis points to another possible approach to the history of Mamulengo. Firstly, it questions the hypothesis of the medieval crib as its primarily source by considering two aspects: the lack of precise evidence, and the similarities between Mamulengo and traditional European glove-puppetry. There is a striking correspondence between many Mamulengo scenes and those of traditional European puppetry; we have strong evidence of close contact, which probably occurred during the early years of Colonial Brazil.

Secondly, this thesis demonstrates the close links between Mamulengo and some African puppetry traditions. Their connection is especially observed with regard

to sexual content, which is expressed in the puppets' visual representations (exposure of genitals), movements (parodies of sexual intercourse) and in textual references; the presence of scenes depicting working activities and everyday life, mostly expressed by mechanical puppets; the significant number of rod puppets made entirely of wood, which, as far as research has shown, do not appear in puppet traditions other than Mamulengo and those in Africa; and finally, the function of the music.

Through detailed examination of the figures present in the collections of *Museu do Mamulengo* (The Mamulengo Museum) and *Museu do Homem do Nordeste* (The Museum of the Man of the Northeast) and research done with three traditional Mamulengo puppeteers of Zona da Mata, Pernambuco (Zé de Vina, Zé Lopes and Joao Galego), this thesis demonstrates that Mamulengo puppet theatre is formed by a set of elements and governing rules, a complex system of signs that communicate and make audience responses possible. Through this analysis, this study describes a "grammar" for the production of the shows and therefore, reveals the knowledge that the master puppeteers (and other artists) bring to their practice (the "know-how" of their profession). This thesis also examines the outstanding role of improvisation in the construction of Mamulengo texts, which are expressed in the puppet's (or puppeteer's) and the intermediary's extensive use of word-play, and shows the connections with the carnivalesque genres.

Finally, this thesis recognizes the fundamental role of literate audiences in the construction of the theatrical event. In such a context, individual audience members are acquainted with the diverse elements (auditory and visual) that shape this puppet theatre, and have already been initiated into the conventions of participation in the shows. Therefore, individuals feel free to participate actively in the ongoing performances and consequently, the Mamulengo show is the result of a co-creation process between puppeteers and their audiences. Where there is a high degree of homogeneity in the audience and between the audience and the artist in terms of social class, the puppeteers shape their performances according to clear-cut values and assumptions, expressing the ideas, events and points of view that integrate reality and the imagination of the group.

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[1] Abbreviations: puppet pertained to *Museu do Mamulengo* collection (MM). Puppet pertained to *Museu do Homem do Nordeste* collection (MH).
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[2] Drawings made by Clodagh McCormick and Izabela Costa Brochado.

INTRODUCTION

The Object

This thesis is about Mamulengo, a popular puppet theatre of Pernambuco, a state located in the Northeast region of Brazil. Although there is no precise information on the matter, the Mamulengo seems to have originated about two centuries ago, and even today it remains a significant form of entertainment for the people of the Northeast region, and an affirmation of their vision of the world, and of their cultural identity.

From Pernambuco, this form of puppet theatre spread to some of the northeastern states acquiring particular features and different names. It is called Babau and João Redondo in the state of Paraiba; João Redondo in Rio Grande do Norte and Cassimiro Côco in Ceará. João Minhoca was another puppet tradition developed in the south-eastern states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo,[1] but, unlike the north-eastern puppet theatre, João Minhoca disappeared in the twentieth century.

Despite the similarities between the various Northeast puppet traditions, their differences are not only a matter of nomenclature, but also of structure. In order to clarify, and delimit the field of this study, before proceeding on my adventure in the world of Mamulengo, I shall briefly discuss the northeast puppet theatre traditions. The range of similarities and distinctions between them deserves close examination. Previous studies on popular puppet theatre in the Northeast region, including text registers, analysis of the performances and critical studies, are very few, which make this discussion a difficult task. With regard to João Redondo and Babau puppet theatre (research has shown they are the same puppet theatre bearing different names) there are only three books: Pimentel (1971), Gurgel (1986), and Jasiello (2003). Unfortunately, there is no study of Cassimiro Côco puppet theatre, and for that reason, it is not cited in this study.

As already mentioned, the focus of this study is the puppet theatre practised in Pernambuco, that is, Mamulengo. But even within Pernambuco, we find variations in the structure, subjects and technical procedures of this puppet theatre depending on the area of the state in which it is practised. Hence, a second delimitation must be made.

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[1] Hermilo Borba Filho, *Fisionomia e Espírito do Mamulengo*, 2nd ed. (Rio de Janeiro: INACEN, 1987), 64

In my study, I shall devote special attention to the Mamulengo practised in the Zona da Mata, a coastal area of Pernambuco. I shall proceed to discuss what seems to be the most significant similarities and distinctions of the Mamulengo of Zona da Mata, and the João Redondo puppet theatres.

The most evident characteristic that unites all the Northeast puppet traditions is that the puppets are manipulated from below, with the audience's view of the operators blocked by a stretched cloth or a booth.

As distinct from most European glove puppet traditions, which have one hero (protagonist) who always lends his name to their puppet theatre (e.g., Punch, Pulcinella, Roberto, Petrushka, etc.), in Mamulengo, there is more than one hero. They differ in name, visual attributes and personality. As with the João Redondo puppet theatre, the Mamulengo practised in some areas of Pernambuco, mostly in the inland areas, features the most popular protagonist, Benedito.[2] But in Zona da Mata, the most popular protagonist is Simão.[3] Benedito is a black character and always a simple glove puppet of about 30 centimetres in height. Simão, in contrast, is white and much bigger, measuring about 60 centimetres. Benedito, like Punch, Pulcinella, Robertos, Petrushka, is an excellent fighter, always beating and frequently killing his opponents. Simão, however, makes less use of physical strength revealing a different strategy through his tricks and clever ways to confront oppression. Instead of beating, he betrays his master in many different ways. In this way, Simão is closer to the *zanni* of Commedia dell'Arte, including Pulcinella, Brighella, Arlecchino.

Differences in the dramatic structure of the texts; types of puppets; duration of the show; and finally, group composition can also be observed.

João Redondo

In João Redondo puppet theatre, the text often presents one single storyline with a beginning, middle and end. The most common plot depicts the adventures of the protagonist Benedito (a cowboy employed on a farm of a rich landowner), who meets various opponents, fighting and often killing them. The conflict generally orbits around the fact that the black cowboy wants to dance at the party of his boss, with the

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[2] Sometimes the character has the name of Baltazar.

[3] In some shows other characters such as Goiaba and Joaquim Bozó may be included in the category of "heroes".

boss's daughter, no less.[4] In this context, many opponents come onto the stage mostly to hinder the hero realizing such an "absurdity". The most common are the Colonel João Redondo (the landowner), from whom the puppet theatre borrowed its name, the policemen, the lawyer, and the devil. The play generally finishes with the hero dominating the party and dating the colonel's daughter. In some versions, the "encounter scenes" are interspersed with small passages, without apparent connection with the story line.[5] The most common are the scene where the hero appears dancing with his most precious animal, the Ox. Considering the text's dramatic structure (the sequence of encounters followed by fights and death) we may say it resembles many European puppet traditions.

Glove puppets comprise the majority of figures appearing in João Redondo puppet theatres. However, a few rod puppets, and puppets made out of cloth also appear. The number of puppets used in the shows varies depending on the puppeteers and the context of the performance. However, the average number is ten, it being rare to use more than fifteen figures in the same show.[6] The duration of the show may vary according to the performance context, but generally, it lasts from forty minutes to two hours.

The João Redondo puppet theatre can be presented by just one puppeteer. In this case, most of the time he uses mechanical sounds in his performance. However, the show can be performed by more artists, including the puppeteer's helper and musicians. In some groups there is also the presence of the intermediary known as Arriliquim,[7] who stays out of the booth and acts as a link between the puppets and the audience. Often, one of the musicians functions as the intermediary.[8]

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4 Altimar de A. Pimentel, *O Mundo Mágico de João Redondo*, 2nd.ed. (Rio de Janeiro: MINC-INACEN, 1988), 10.

[5] We may compare these small scenes to the *intermezzo* of the Commedia del'Arte The *intermezzi* were short scenes performed between the main scenes that develop the story line.

[6] This information is based on the shows of Chico Daniel and Francisquinho, two puppeteers from Rio Grande do Norte, and on the transcriptions of João Redondo puppet theatre made by Pimentel.

[7] Pimentel, *O Mundo Mágico,* 08. By the name *Arriliquim* , it can be observed that it is a clear reference to *Arlecchino* of the *Commedia dell'Arte.*

[8] The same characteristic is observed in Petrushka puppet theatre, in which "an 'otvetchik', or 'responder' (= feed)" was "often knows as 'the Musician', because he normally turned the handle of the barrel-organ. Catriona Kelly, *Petrushka: The Russian Carnival Puppet Theatre.* (Cambridge University Press: 1990), 62.

The Mamulengo of Zona da Mata

The Mamulengo of Zona da Mata has a different dramatic structure. The show is a combination of independent scenes that are selected and ordered depending on the performance context. Some of the scenarios have a completely developed story, while others are small scenes composed of one single action. The plots range from everyday life subjects, such as festivities and working life, to social satires combined with Brazilian myths, superstitions and religious references. Some passages incorporate subjects present in the João Redondo puppet theatre, such as the arrival of a black character at the party of the landowner, followed by the seduction of his daughter and consequent fighting and beatings. However, in the Mamulengo show, the number of his opponents is restricted to just a few, since this is just one of the many self-contained scenes that form the performance.

Like João Redondo, the duration of a Mamulengo show depends on the performance context, but it is much longer and can last from two up to six hours, with the majority of the shows occurring at night. The figures appearing in the Mamulengo present a greater variety in the technical aspects of control, size and articulation. The average number of the puppets used in a single show is 40, and seldom fewer than 30. The puppeteers have from 50 to 100 puppets, but they are never presented all together in the same show.

The Mamulengo group is composed by the master puppeteer (the 'creator' of the show, the owner of the puppets and the main puppeteer), a *contra-mestre* (the master puppeteer's main helper), one or more helpers, musicians and the intermediary, known as Mateus. The three former stay inside the booth and are responsible for the manipulation of the figures, whilst the musicians and the intermediary stay outside. The music, beyond its basic functions as a joining element between the scenes and as a support to the quarrel and dance scenes (the same functions presented in João Redondo), is a very important element in the characterisation of the main personages. These characters are introduced on the stage with specific songs called *baianos*, in which information about the characters are revealed. Due to the range of functions served by the *contra-mestre*, musicians and the intermediary in the Mamulengo puppet theatre, these artists have to be carefully selected. This is why, generally speaking, the relationship between puppeteers and the other artists is maintained on a long-term basis.

Given the features described here, it is clear that, although these puppet theatres have similarities, they also present specificities that make them distinct from one another.

With regard to the etymology of the term "mamulengo", some hypotheses have been presented by scholars in their search to understand their probable meanings. Borba Filho presents two hypotheses. First, it could be a corruption of "Mané Gostoso", a type of mechanical puppet very common as a children's toy and also, a character of the *Bumba-meu Boi*, a northeast popular dance drama. Alternately it could be a derivation from the word "molengo" (loose, flaccid): "molengo-mamolengo-mamulengo".[9] This hypothesis had generated another one: "mamu" as a derivation of "mão" (hand) and "lengo" as a derivation of "molengo" (loose), thus, "mamulengo" meaning "loose-hand".[10] In this case, the name would be a reference to an important quality of the glove-puppeteers' hands. Nei Lopes argues that the term "mamulengo" is derived from the Kikongo[11] term "mi-lengo", which means "maravilha, milagre" (marvel, miracle).[12] To the field of these hypotheses I will add another one that is also related to African terminology, that is, the Bantu[13] word "malungo" which means, "companheiro, camarada" (companion, mate), or "irmão de criação" (step-brother).[14] In addition to the phonetic similarity of the terms "mamulengo" and "malungo", we might take into account the parallel between the meaning of the Bantu word, and the symbolic meaning of the puppets to their creators. The majority of Northeast puppeteers refer to their puppets as "my mates", "my brothers", and "my sons".[15]

The Mamulengo puppeteers, known as mamulengueiros, pertain to the lower socio-economic section of society,[16] and seldom have the Mamulengo as their

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[9] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 69-70.

[10] Francisco Simões and Alipio C. Neto, "Mamulengo: O Teatro de Bonecos no Nordeste Brasileiro," *Adagio*, 20 (1999), 1.

[11] A similar Bantu language spoken in Angola,, in the Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire) and adjacent areas.

[12] Nei Lopes, *Novo Dicionário Banto do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Pallas, 2003), 135.

[13] The group of Niger -Congo languages spoken by these peoples.

[14] Lopes, *Novo Dicionário,* 135.

[15] Some examples are: Januário de Oliveira (Ginu) referred to his puppets as his "family"; Zé de Vina says there are "my faithful mates".

[16] From the middle of 1980, we can observe an increasing of mamulengueiros from the middle class, such as artists and actors who opted to do Mamulengo.

exclusive occupation. They are peasants, small traders, employees in the cane-sugar industry, artisans, and so forth, living in the interior and urban areas. For the great majority of mamulengueiros, the puppet theatre represents a form of supplementary income. In this way, they could possibly be considered as "semi-professionals."[17] Nevertheless, for the puppeteers (and their audience) the notion of a "professional" mamulengueiro is above all linked with the puppeteer's knowledge and expertise of the traditional elements that form the Mamulengo as a particular form of puppet theatre (e.g., the scenarios; the characters' physiognomic and psychological features; their roles and stereotyped speeches; the music; etc).

The process of Mamulengo transmission is mostly based on direct communication from one puppeteer to another, and often is the result of a long term relationship between master and apprentice.

Previous Studies on Northeast Popular Puppetry

Despite of the richness of the north-east puppet theatre, very little has been written on this subject. Unlike the other traditional manifestations of the region, the puppet theatre has not attracted the attention that might have been expected. Brazilian folklorists, such as Silvio Romero, Câmara Cascudo, Mario de Andrade, Pereira da Costa, among others, who have studied and written about the Northeast cultural traditions in the first half of the twentieth century, do not make any reference to the puppet theatre.

The first attempt to approach the subject was carried out by a politician from Rio Grande do Norte, José Bezerra Gomes, who, in the 40's described a performance of the João Redondo puppet theatre made by the puppeteer Sebastião Severino Dantas. The work was published only in 1975.[18] The first and most significant study on the northeast popular puppet theatre was Borba Filho's book *Fisionomia e Espírito do Mamulengo* (1966). Borba Filho, a theatre director and playwright, carried out significant research on the puppet theatre of Pernambuco from the end of the 40's and the 50's, in which he interviewed a considerable number of puppeteers and registered some of their shows. As a man of theatre, and a great intellectual, Borba Filho locates

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[17] As Burke defines, semi-professionals popular artists are "part-time specialists who had another occupation but might derive a supplementary income". Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London: Temple Smith, 1978), 102.

[18] José Bezerra Gomes, *O Teatro de João Redondo,* (Natal: Fund. José Augusto, 1975).

the Mamulengo within the European puppet traditions pointing out possible links between them. Borba Filho' study on Mamulengo is, until today, an outstanding source for any study on Northeast Brazilian traditional puppet theatre.

Altimar de Alencar Pimentel's book on the puppet theatre of Paraiba, *O Mundo Mágico de João Redondo* (1971), is the result of research realised by the author during the 60's and the 70's. The book is especially significant for the large volume of transcriptions of performances, including audience interventions. Also, Pimentel situates the plots and characters present in the João Redondo puppet theatre within the north-east historical context and makes relevant interpretations of their connections.

Fernando Augusto dos Santos, a sculptor, puppeteer, and puppet theatre director, coordinated a research project done by the members of his puppet group "Mamulengo Só-Riso", from which resulted his book, *Mamulengo: um povo em forma de bonecos* (1979). The book provides valuable information particularly about the Mamulengo of rural areas of Pernambuco. Also, Santos is the first to give attention to the technical aspects of construction of the puppets. Other books on the Northeast popular puppetry are Deifilo Gurgel, *João Redondo: Teatro de Bonecos do Nordeste* (1986), and Franco Maria Jasiello, *Mamulengo - o teatro mais antigo do mundo* (2003).

Another publication is the puppet journal "Mamulengo" that was published from 1973 to 1984. Nevertheless, with very few exceptions, the articles on Northeast puppetry do not bring new information, or discussions, that were not already in the books mentioned above.

Study of Mamulengo has suffered from a certain lack of direction, with a tendency for it to be more of a descriptive rather than an analytical character. Three more recent academic studies have pointed to a more clearly methodological approach. Two of them are the Master's theses of Patricia Angelica Dutra, "Trajetórias de Criação do Mamulengo do Professor Benedito em Chão de Estrelas e mais além: Ato, Ritual e Cultura Popular" (1998), and Adriana Schneider Alcure, "Mamulengo do Mestre Zé Lopes e Zé de Vina: etnografia e estudo de personagens" (2001). Dutra's study is about one puppeteer from Recife (José Justino, known as "Mestre Dengoso") and has a strong anthropological approach. Her thesis is an analysis of the significance of the puppeteer within his community and the correlation of his puppet theatre with the everyday life of the community, and includes a valuable analysis of the characters and plots of Mestre Dengoso's puppet

theatre. Alcure's work is a meticulous ethnographic study resulting from long field-work on the Mamulengo of Zona da Mata, with special attention to the puppet theatre of Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes. Her detailed description and analysis of the characters appearing in their shows was especially relevant for my study, since Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes, together with João Galego/Marlene' performances are the core of my study on the Mamulengo theatrical language. Both studies of Dutra and Alcure were important sources for this thesis. The third study is a PhD thesis by Marco Camarotti developed in the University of Warwick, England. Camarotti's thesis "The Nature, roots and relevance of the folk theatre of the northeast of Brazil" (1995) is a comparative work examining the English Mummers' plays and the Northeast "folk theatre", in which he include the Mamulengo. Camarotti's study is especially valuable since it is the first attempt to give a comprehensive and consistent coverage of the "folk theatre" of North-East Brazil available in the English language. Nevertheless, since Mamulengo is one of four types of "folk theatre" analysed, the attention it receives is somewhat diluted. Nevertheless, the connection Camarotti establishes between the traditional forms of cultural expressions in the Northeast contributes significantly to understand their common ground.

Other Master's theses on Mamulengo are as follows: Angela Belford de Araujo, "A Brincadeira Besta do Mato: O Mamulengo no Contexto Sociocultural da Mata Norte de Pernambuco" (2001); Marcondes G, "A Arte do Brincante no Mamulengo e no Bumba-Meu-Boi" (2003); Oswaldo Pereira da Silva, "O Mamulengo como Fator de Educação Informal no Contexto de Quatro Municipios da Zona da Mata de Pernambuco" (1998); Izabela C. Brochado, "Distrito Federal: o Mamulengo que mora nas cidades - 1990-2001" (2001).

In the course of my study I became aware to the fact that, as far as research has shown, there is no mention to Mamulengo in any puppetry book or survey in the English language. The only exception is Dina Sherzer and Joel Sherzer's small reference in their article "Verbal Humor in The Puppet Theatre".[19] In conclusion: despite Mamulengo's cultural and aesthetic relevance, which places it in the domain of world puppetry traditions, it simply does not exist for English speakers/ readers.

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[19] Diana Sherzer and Joel Sherzer, "Verbal Humor in The Puppet Theatre," in *Humor and Comedy in Puppetry*, ed. D. Sherzer and J. Sherzer (Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1987), 53.

This thesis is the first study of the Mamulengo puppet theatre available in English. In this way, it is an attempt to add one more colour and one more voice to the multicultural diversity of the worldwide puppet theatre traditions and therefore, to add to the comprehension of the constants and variables to be found throughout their diversity.

Methodological Approach

In the book, *Popular puppet theatre in Europe – 1800-1914*, John McCormick and Bennie Pratasik quoting Gerd Taube note that "the study of the puppet theatre is not primarily a branch of literary studies or art history, but rather of social and cultural history."[20] It was with similar objectives in mind that I have done this study. The Mamulengo is approached here as a popular puppet theatre tradition formed by a complex system of codes – the "Mamulengo language" - , situated in a socio-cultural context, that is, Pernambuco, north-east of Brazil from the late nineteenth century until the beginning of the twenty-first century. As a cultural - historical phenomenon, Mamulengo has suffered many changes that both reflect and inform the transformations operating in Northeast society. As a dynamic tradition, Mamulengo is capable of transformation and adaptation, and of absorbing new information and materials.

Given that, some questions arise: what does today a *popular* puppet theatre mean within the field of cultural *traditions*? Can Mamulengo be labeled as a *folk* theatre? How much are concepts of *tradition, folklore* and *popular culture* valuable when looking at Mamulengo? Hence, I must explain how they are applied (or not) in this thesis.

The concept of tradition is generally allied to notions of purity, antiquity, and geographical location. Something considered "traditional" is presumed to exist with almost the same characteristics for a long time (and, quite often, with its origins lost in myth) in a delimited geographical space (country, region, city, community). The ideas related to the antiquity, the frontiers and the purity of traditional customs/beliefs/expressions so in vogue in the nineteenth century, have been called into question in the late twentieth century.

In his book *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, Peter Burke points out three "misleading" ideas from intellectuals of the nineteenth century (mainly from

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[20] John McCormick and Bennie Pratasik, *Popular Puppet Theatre in Europe, 1800-1914* (Cambridge: University Press, 1998), 10

Herder, the Grimms and their followers) – the "discoverers of popular culture"- that influenced the view of popular culture: "primitivism", "communalism", and "purism". The first is related to the age of the songs and stories and festivals and beliefs which they had "discovered" and were inclined to locate in an "undefined primitive period." As Burke notes, some of these traditions were in fact very old, but this concealed more recent incorporations. The second is the notion of communal creation (especially introduced by the Grimms) in which they emphasise that the role of the individual was less than the role of tradition (the past of the community) in popular culture than it was in the learned culture of that period. On the one hand, Burke recognizes the value of this theory, since it stresses the difference between "low" and "high" culture. On the other hand, Burkes argues that studies of popular singers and storytellers have shown that passing on oral tradition does not inhibit the development of an individual style. With regard to the notion of purism Burke notes that for the "discoverers", the producers of popular culture (the 'people') were the peasants, who lived close to nature, less tainted by foreign ways and had preserved primitive customs. This view, he argues, ignores the cultural and social changes, the interaction between town and country, learned and popular - the "two-way traffic." [21]

For instance, in his book *The Invention of the Tradition*,[22] Hobsbawm has shows the political use of some supposed "traditional" European cultural practises. According to Hobsbawm, the major objective of "invented traditions," is to "inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past." For Hobsbawm, the "invention of traditions" was a form of response to the constant innovation of the modern world and an effort to structure "at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant."[23] It was also an important ideological tool used to demarcate and to reinforce, even if artificially, histories and symbols of the new nation-states created in the nineteenth century.[24]

Hobsbawm makes a distinction between "invented traditions", and the traditional customs. Unlike the former, the latter bring the past not as a copy, an

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[21] Burke, *Popular Culture* , 4 - 22

[22] Eric J. Hobsbawn, and Terence O Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition,* (Cambridge: University Press, 1983).

[23] Ibid, 2

[24] Ibid,12

artificial construction, but the past reconfigured by the present. These traditions, he argues, survive due to their strength and adaptability to the present, which demonstrate that it is not necessary "to rescue" or "to invent" traditions when their meanings are still operating in the present time.[25]

Although the concept of "tradition" needs to be treated with caution in an epoch in which speech and availability of information is the trade mark, nevertheless, it is used in this thesis to refer to the common body experience that throughout time has shaped Mamulengo as a particular form of puppetry. Also, it is used to stress Mamulengo's fundamental feature, the fact that, most of its elements are present in the community's long memory, which does not mean they appear in the scene as mere repetition of old forms, where the producers would just pass on their knowledge without any individual or substantial contribution. Here, "tradition" is understood as having historicity. Many times in this study I will refer to the Mamulengo "traditional" elements, and doing so, I am making a distinction from those that are more recent incorporations, such as the ones coming from the mass media.

Given that, the next step is to make clear the preference of the term "popular culture" over the term "folklore" to refer to Mamulengo. In fact, Mamulengo has been mostly referred to by scholars and researchers as a "popular theatre". The only exception is Camarotti who includes it within the category of "folk theatre". Nevertheless, apart from Camarotti, who developed a well based discussion in order to support his choice, the others authors simply regard the Mamulengo as "popular", without any further consideration. Hence, I start from Camarotti's considerations. Due to the limited space, the discussion carried out below is a reductive form considering the length of Camarotti's arguments.

Following folk scholars (Abrahams, Bogatyrev; Green, among others) Camarotti traces the general characteristics of the folk theatre. According to the author, the folk theatre "seems to be located somewhere between ritual and theatre, principally if we take into account that its audience is constantly led to participate more than simply observe."[26] It is transmitted traditionally and produced by and for a small group of people, "belonging to the same community, be it in a rural village or in

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[25] Ibid., 10-11

[26] Camarotti, *The Nature, roots and relevance,* 34

urban area."[27] The performers are members of the community and therefore known to most of the audience. Folk theatre occurs particularly on special occasions, mostly at seasonal festivals. The actors are always able "to leave the characters, easily reassuming their own personality, and afterwards, reassume it in the same manner, without any damage to the performance or to its relationship with the audience." [28] The spectators far from being bored by repetition consent and even encourage it. It is performed on the ground and it is full of improvisation and humour, and finally, it is non-naturalistic and even non-sensical.[29]

In fact, many aspects described above can be applied to the Mamulengo, but not to *all* Mamulengo shows. The only two aspects referred to by Camarotti that seem to be applicable as a general rule are: the Mamulengo is transmitted traditionally (here understood as passed down directly from one generation of puppeteers to another); and it is a non-naturalistic theatre. All the others may or may not be valid, simply because they vary depending on the performance context, which again reinforces the notion of Mamulengo as a historical phenomenon. What is problematic in Camarotti's assumptions of Mamulengo as a folk theatre is not exactly what is included, but what is excluded from this notion.

The first problem is that in considering Mamulengo as a folk theatre there is a clear emphasis on its "remote origins", which conceals the Mamulengo's relation to its immediate context and historical facts. As observed above, there are many traditional elements in the Mamulengo, but how much does such a notion of distant past help us to understand their historicity? One problem arising from this idea of "remote past" in terms of the Brazilian context is its relation to rural society. Mamulengo and the other Northeast puppet theatre are frequently related solely to the rural context, and frequently with a hint of nostalgia.

Altimar Pimentel referring to João Redondo puppet theatre writes: "this puppet theatre, of ingenuous lyricism and tellurian force, primitive, irreverent and malicious is one of the most authentic popular creations of the region, not just because of the typology of the rural society it depicts, but also, by the subjects it represents."[30]

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[27] Ibid, 35

[28] Ibid, 36

[29] Ibid, 37

[30] Pimentel, *O Mundo Mágico*, 8

Pimentel's description is imbued with the idea that "the typology of the rural society" is the only one depicted in the puppet theatre. As I shall demonstrate, Mamulengo is closely linked with its rural context, which is expressed in the plots, in the characters' typologies, and so forth. Nevertheless, some plays transcribed by Borba Filho relating to the puppeteers from Recife, the capital of Pernambuco, and also some of the plays transcribed by Altimar in his book, do not depict exclusively the "typology of rural society". Even if the hero is mostly represented as a cowboy and the antagonist as a landowner, the plays also depict plots, conflicts and characters that express the urban context. Many of the puppeteers Pimentel mentions in his book are from urban areas, such as João Pessoa, the capital of the state of Paraiba, or Cabedelo, a city close to the capital's metropolitan area. Hence, Pimentel conceals the fact that these puppeteers take into account their own life and experiences as a source for their shows, and also, the expectations of the audience to whom the shows are directed. Finally, I ask whether the idea of "ingenuous lyricism" is appropriated to refer to a puppet tradition in which the main plot depicts a hero that beats up (and often kills) all his opponents. Certainly some scenes do have a more "lyric" atmosphere, such as the one where the protagonist Benedito plays with his ox and in verse pays homage to his animal, an "essentially poetic scene", as Pimentel remarks.[31] But, it seems that such designation ("ingenuous lyricism") is closely related to the notion of innocence that often comes with the folk expressions.

The second problem is the view of the audience as "small group of people belonging to the same community." Although Camarotti recognises that performances occurring within small and homogenous reference groups can also take place in urban areas, which is an advance over the concept that it is only possible in the rural context, by emphasizing the unity feature of the audience, he nevertheless excludes the shows performed for an audience composed of people belonging to diverse social strata, and therefore, do not take into account the tensions that may arise in such context. Catriona Kelly in her discussion of *Petrushka,* makes a very important point referring to the term 'folklore', and argues: "folklore suggests a classless society. (. . .) It is not impossible to agree with Carlo Ginszburg that a concept of class structure, however generally conceived, is still a big advance over classlessness."[32] This is especially

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[31] Ibid, 11

[32] Kelly, *Petrushka,* 11

relevant to a country like Brazil in which class distinction is one of the major features (and fissures) of its society. As I shall demonstrate, in some Mamulengo shows, conflicts arise from that distinction.

The third problem is the link of theatrical events with seasonal festivals and special occasions. In research to date, there appears to be no allusion to such links, not even in the first references to Mamulengo, which led me to surmise that, this may not be a significant factor. Even if Mamulengo shows are more frequent in certain periods than others, this is directly linked with economic reasons (there are more contracts during Christmas, for example), or with climate conditions (during the rains period there is a reduction in the number of performances, since they mostly occur outside).

Finally, the notion of the non-sensical is largely contested in this thesis, particularly regarding the Mamulengo texts. Guinzburg in the introduction of his seminal work *The Cheese and the Worms* writes: "if only verbally we have now gone beyond . . . the attitude which saw in the ideas, beliefs and world views of the lower classes nothing but an incoherent fragmentary mass of theories that had been originally worked out by the dominant classes perhaps many centuries before."[33] By counter-pointing the idea of non-sense with Guinzburg's sharp comment on the elite's view of the people's concepts and culture, I do not suggest that this is Camarotti's attitude to the Mamulengo and the other forms of North-east traditional cultural expressions he has studied. Camarotti's work, on the contrary, is a clear recognition that these forms of "folk theatre" deserve specialised studies, such as his thesis has proved to be.

For all the considerations outlined above, I opt to describe Mamulengo as popular culture rather than folklore. Nevertheless, the term popular culture, too, can be dangerous. As noted by Burke, the term "popular culture" can be too narrow and also too wide. Burke writes: "The definition is too narrow because it omits the upper-class participation in the popular culture";[34] and it is too wide because, "speaking of it in a singular" conceals its variety.[35] With the advent of mass culture, the broadness of the term "popular culture" became even more complex.

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[33] Carlo Guinzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*, trans. J. and A: Tedeschi (London 1980), p. xiv.

[34] Burke, *Popular Culture*, 25

[35] Ibid, 29

Beti Rabetti, referring particularly to theatrical expressions, includes in the gamut of "popular theatre" operating in the present time, the "political theatre (engaged)"; the "commercial and light theatre"; and those "coming from the folk theatre that incorporates elements from the mass media."[36] In regard to the latter, Rabetti's argument is based on José Jorge de Carvalho's considerations regarding the place of the cultural traditions in modern society. In his article "O Lugar da cultura tradicional na sociedade moderna", the author argues that popular culture is midway between cultural traditions and the mass culture arising from the cultural industry. For Carvalho, popular culture carries elements rooted in long-term memory, and as such they bring with them more durable collective symbols and expressive resources, with those more recent and therefore, more "amnesic" coming from the mass media.[37] Although Mamulengo (at least the one practiced by the traditional mamulengueiros) can not be placed in the middle between cultural traditions and the mass media, since the traditional elements are much more numerous than those coming from the mass media, the notion of popular culture as a hybrid form, is more appropriate than the notion of purism that comes with "folklore".

Moreover, as remarked by Kelly, by using "popular culture" an opposing concept emerges, that is "high culture", and, although they are not "opposed in a clear-cut" and mutual way they show up divisions within the cultural system.[38] To ignore this division is to ignore the unequal treatment and different views "popular culture" and "high culture" have been accorded. One frequent and common attitude is the tendency to treat the material of popular culture uncritically, as if it spoke for itself. With regard to popular puppet theatre, this is specially observed in the aesthetic field. McCormick and Pratasik, referring to popular puppetry note: "Within theatre studies, leaving aside very few exceptions, puppetry does not receive major attention. Many books are (still) written by journalists, local historians and amateurs. In many attractive books, the performance aspect is forgotten and there is an undue emphasis on the figures as decontextualised artefacts."[39] In this thesis I shall take a different

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[36] Beti Rabetti, "Memória e culturas do popular no teatro: o típico e as técnicas," *O Percevejo* 8 (2000): 3

[37] José Jorge de Carvalho, "O Lugar da cultura tradicional na sociedade moderna," *O Percevejo* 8 (2000): 35-7

[38] Kelly, *Petrushka*, 8.

[39] McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppet, 10*

route and, more than merely identify the components of Mamulengo, I shall discuss the puppet theatre as an aesthetic object within the popular cultural traditions.

The analysis of the creative process involved in the production of popular cultures is problematic, and also unequally treated, when related to the dominant culture. The products of popular culture, unlike the products of the high culture, are seen as repetition of old forms. This led to a perception of popular culture as a chain, where the producers would just pass on their knowledge without substantial individual contribution. This often results in the non-distinction between the production of one artist and other, as if they were an anonymous mass without individuality. Nevertheless, we have to make a distinction between the concepts of creativity that emerged in twentieth century puppetry, and creativity as found in earlier popular puppetry traditions.

In the twentieth century, a new perception of puppet theatre as an art form began to emerge. As noted by McCormick and Pratasik, the notion of stylised rather than realist theatre engendered by the symbolists influenced the perception of the puppets as a "metaphor for man rather than imitation". With this perception, which had already absorbed Kleist and the Romantics, puppetry was brought into the theatrical avant-garde, with the plays of Maurice Materlink, and the experiments of the Dadaists, Futurists and the Bauhaus. In such a milieu, puppetry acquired the status of "art", which completely changed critical perceptions of it:

> Art puppetry introduced a different set of social, cultural, ideological and aesthetic values. The puppeteer began to be perceived as an artist rather than a show-man, and the puppet for what it was, and not exclusively for what it might represent. (. . .) Once the puppet was perceived as an art object in its own right, the craft aspect, in terms of carving and design, and the technical aspects of jointing and controls, all received fresh attention as artists, painters, sculptors, musicians and writers became associated with the puppet stage.[40]

Unlike the traditional puppeteers, who had simply grown up in the business (often a family business), or who have learned on the job, and therefore had skill (know-how) as the core of their métier, the people involved in "artistic" puppetry had a background or education in the arts, and therefore, their approaches were diverse. Apart from the degree of specialization that came with the involvement of artists from different fields, innovation became a great concern, and following that, many ruptures

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[40] Ibid, 208

of the means of expression, the "atomization of the puppet theatre", as Jurkowski termed it, were brought to the puppet stage. As Jurkowski notes, "the booth and the screen were demolished to enable the operators of puppets and objects to perform in unlimited scenic space"; "the changes of the puppet's body to represent the characters", introduced different techniques of operation, among others.[41] "Any" object brought to the stage could acquire an expressive feature, and following that came the concern of how "any" object could become expressive. With the emphasis on the metaphor, thus metonym became incredibly important, and everything in the scene (the material used in the figures or the choice of a specific object; the figures' movements; lighting; etc) had a concept behind it, and therefore, was selected and created accordingly.

Generally speaking, the concepts behind the choices of traditional puppeteers were (and still are) completely diverse. According to McCormick and Pratasik, in the nineteenth century, the puppet family "often made and dressed the figures, painted the scenery, provided the music, wrote the script, manipulated, set up the stage and marketed the show."[42] This is very close to the mamulengueiros's practice. Until today, often the wife and daughters provide the puppets' dresses and ornaments, and may help in the puppet's manipulation. The sons may operate the puppets and/or play the role of the intermediary, or play one of the instruments. Needless to say these practices lead also to specialization and the division may be related to individual talent. Moreover, popular puppeteers can see themselves as artists, but this does not necessarily mean the same idea of artistic quality that came with the concept of innovation. As mentioned above, it is more closely related to the mastery and expertise of traditional elements, though this does not mean they do not bring innovation to their shows. Here again, there is another distinction that must be highlighted. The innovations brought to the scene are closely connected to what the puppeteers think will please the audience, which might be different from the notion of some artistic puppet groups. McCormick and Pratasik note that, "where state subsidy covered the operating costs of a company, commercial concerns ceased to be an

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[41] Henryk Jurkowski, *Aspects of Puppet Theatre – A Colletion of Essays.* (London: Puppet Centre Trust, 1988), 80-81.

[42] McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppet*, 209

overriding issue. There was less a sense of giving the public what it wanted than of presenting what was considered to be a high artistic standard."[43]

Therefore, criteria of quality and intentionality, among others, cannot be applied as absolute categories, but rather, should be understood within the group analysed. In order to accomplish this, one has to go back and ask what are the puppeteers' intentions? What are they trying to say? In this study I have started from these questions and as far as possible, from the puppeteers' answers attempted to understand the codes (and the changes) operating in Mamulengo. In this way, the researcher cannot be seduced by nostalgia when examining the transformations, but rather, these have to be looked at as clues to understanding the puppeteers' ideas behind their choices.

Topics and Tools

There is no precise information on how and when Mamulengo developed. The most current hypothesis is that it originated primarily from the European medieval cribs, which were taken to Pernambuco by the Franciscan religious order in the sixteenth century,[44] and through a secularization process, acquired its present profane form. Scholars have pointed out the possible influence of the European popular puppet traditions coming from the *Commedia dell'Arte*, such as Punch, Pulcinella and Guignol. Nevertheless, for the puppeteers, the Mamulengo's primary source lies with the African slaves, who were taken to Brazil between the sixteenth century and nineteenth century. In the puppeteers' view, the Mamulengo emerged either as a form of reaction to the cruelties of slavery, or as a way of conciliation between the two races: black and white.

One significant part of this thesis is addressed to the discussion of the sources of Mamulengo. Previous studies on this subject are almost non-existent. Borba Filho's book mentioned above is the first, and in my opinion the only attempt to trace a possible history of the puppet theatre in Pernambuco. Following Borba Filho's assumptions other researchers have published small articles relating to this subject, contributing (even if modestly) new data. In order to accomplish such an enterprise, I have examined some of the ground covered by scholars so far, but at the same time I

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Pereira da Costa, *Folk-Lore Pernambucano,* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1908), 189.

shall present new data and interpretations that I hope can illuminate further studies. In this thesis I debate the idea of the Medieval crib as the primary source of Mamulengo, and I shall try to demonstrate that religious, secular and profane puppet theatre were current sources of the Mamulengo, since its first configurations.

One of the main gaps in source material related to Mamulengo applies to the African influence. Although the Africans' fundamental role in the constitution of Brazilian culture is widely recognised, there is no reference to possible links between Mamulengo and African puppetry in any of the studies on popular puppetry traditions of the northeast. In this thesis I hope to fill in, even if partially, this gap. I shall try to demonstrate some close links between African puppetry and Mamulengo. For that, I have drawn on studies on African puppetry carried out by researches and scholars (Nidsgorski, Scheinberg, Proschan, Arnoldi; Witte, Den Otter).

Mamulengo to some degree encapsulates the diversity of the Northeastern popular traditions, which are the result of centuries of social and cultural exchange between white, Indian and black populations. The puppet theatre, as part of this entire cultural context, is in permanent interchange with these traditional manifestations, thus, their strong influence on the constitution of Mamulengo can be observed. They are the second branch of the Mamulengo's sources analysed in this thesis. Therefore, studies of Northeast culture and Folklore, mainly those of Mário de Andrade (1959), Luiz da Câmara Cascudo (1952; 1962) and Gilberto Freyre (1963) were fundamental to completing this goal. Earlier studies on the influence of the north-east traditional manifestations on Mamulengo were done by Santos (1977), and by Alcure (2001). Both were significant for my own discussions.

As mentioned earlier, Mamulengo is in a permanent state of transformation. Although its text might be considered as an oral genre, we can observe influences from written sources and also, from the mass media. In fact, the *mamulengueiros* are not particularly concerned with notions of 'purity', which seems to be a concern of the elite intellectuals and artists who continue to reiterate ideas inherited from the nineteenth century Romantics. As Borba Filho notes, the *mamulengueiros* "feel free to use everything that is attractive to their imagination and that provokes an audience response."[45] Nevertheless, the research has shown that this "everything" has its limits, since the changes occur within a traditional framework, consequently, the dynamic

[45] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 82

process of Mamulengo expresses the tensions in the passage from tradition to innovation, from permanence to rupture.

To locate the changes occurring in the structure, subjects, characters and technical procedure of the performance, I have turned to the existing studies of Mamulengo mentioned above, to articles published in journals and newspapers, to the few previous audio-visual registers of performances, and finally, to interviews done by other researchers, and by myself. With regard to the latter, the information given by Zé de Vina was of special significance. Zé de Vina, together with João Galego, is the only living mamulengueiro (from Zona da Mata, Pernambuco) from the old generation. Unlike João Galego who started doing Mamulengo later in his life, Zé de Vina has been in contact with Mamulengo since he was a child. His step brother, Samuel Feira Nova, was a well known puppeteer with whom Zé de Vina gained most of his knowledge. Moreover, Zé de Vina has worked with great mamulengueiros, such as Luiz da Serra, João Nazaro, Antonio Biló, all of them now dead. Therefore, he might be considered the last "bearer" of the tradition of Mamulengo's old practices. Thus, he was a fundamental source to assist me with the task of locating the permanence and ruptures operating in the Mamulengo shows.

The permanence and/or ruptures operating in Mamulengo are strongly related to its audience. The puppeteers' utmost concern is to please their audience, and therefore, their choices are made accordingly. One significant part of this thesis is addressed to analysing the Mamulengo audience, and its impact on the shows. As I shall demonstrate, a literate audience (an audience with previous knowledge of the Mamulengo elements and conventions) may reject the changes that have gone beyond acceptable boundaries, and therefore may act as a type of control to the transformations. My analysis regarding the audience's role is not limited to this aspect, but also aimed at appreciating its fundamental role in the construction of the performance itself. As I shall discuss, in specific contexts, the Mamulengo show is the result of a co-creation process between puppeteers and their audience. Susan Bennett's work (1999) on (the theatre) audience reception; the theories of the Prague Circle, particularly by Bogatyrev (1980)[46], and those of Frank Proschan (1987), Joan Gross (1987), and Pasqualino (1983) regarding the audience's role in traditional puppetry

[46] Bogatyrev studies began in 1915. See Frank Proschan, "The Semiotic study of puppets, masks, and performing objects," *Semiotica 47* (1983), 11.

were my theoretical basis, and therefore fundamental tools for constructing my own approach to understanding the complex process involving audience interpretation and participation in the Mamulengo shows.

In looking at Mamulengo as an aesthetic object, I shall examine the elements associated with Mamulengo that make possible the response of the audience. Such a study may be said to be the study of the semiotics of the puppet theatre, a study of the signs by which this particular form of theatre communicates. To accomplish this goal, I turned to various studies on the semiotics of puppets in search of a way to build my own methodological approach. Steve Tillis' work (1992) (on the aesthetic of puppets) was a good starting point for the understanding of the general sign system of the puppet theatre. The author develops a method of analysis of the puppets set in the context of theatre, "where it serves primarily to entertain", through its diverse means of performance. As Tillis remarks, his methodology is not addressed to any particular form of puppetry, but is concerned with "the extensive range of puppet activity across all boundaries of time and space." In justifying his synchronic approach as opposed to diachronic one, Tillis argues:

> A diachronic approach, the study of a subject through its historic and geographic development with due consideration to the detail of its technical practises, presupposes that a methodology for such study exists. But as we will see, no satisfactory theory, and no satisfactory vocabulary have yet been created for the theatrical puppet. A synchronic approach, the study of underlying principles of a subject, attempts to develop the necessary theory and vocabulary through painstaking observation and analysis, isolating and exploring the fundamental constant and variable of puppets in all of its theatrical manifestations.[47]

Tillis's proposal was very helpful in setting an organizational vocabulary to address more comparative terms of popular puppetry, but many of his considerations were taken with caution, since his work is mostly concerned with twentieth century puppetry. As discussed above, some of the concepts developed for twentieth century puppetry are not helpful in analysing Mamulengo. This being the case, I focused my study of the semiotics of puppet theatre more directly (but not exclusively) on works on traditional puppetry. Pasqualino's semiotic analysis of the Italian *opera dei pupi*

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[47] Steve Tillis, *Toward an Aesthetics of the Puppet: Puppetry as a Theatrical Art* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 08-9.

and *guaratelle* glove puppets was fundamental to my study, particularly regarding to the codes of movements and voice operating in the Mamulengo performances. Pasqualino segments the puppet's movement and voice into a syntactic system linked to a corresponding semantic system, assisting us to understand the connection between the forms (the way these elements are brought to the scene by the puppeteers) and the meanings conveyed by them (the way they are perceived by the audience). Also, especially important was also McCormick and Pratasik's remarkable book on European puppetry cited above. The study provides a detailed description and analysis of a great range of European puppet traditions, and situates puppetry in a well-balanced socio-cultural context. This approach facilitates the comprehension of the elements and technical procedures developed within the various puppet traditions and the connection with the context of their production.

Finally, in this thesis Mamulengo is placed within the range of worldwide traditional puppetry, and I shall point out their pertinent common features.

The Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into four Chapters.

Chapter One, "Brazilian Historical Context and Mamulengo" examines the development of Mamulengo through the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of twenty- first century, and its relation with its Northeast social-cultural context, and is divided into three sections. Section one discusses the formation of Brazilian Colonial Society resulting from the intermingling of Portuguese, indigenous Indians and Africans. Section two examines the process of colonisation in the Northeast and the cultural practices developed within it, and their connection with Mamulengo. This section includes the sugar plantation context, the relationship between the Catholic Church and Northeastern cultural practices, the development of the cities, the Mamulengo in Recife at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, and finally, the development of the Northeast inland areas and its influence on the Mamulengo. Section three looks at the most significant events of the Northeast (and Brazilian) history from the middle of twentieth century until the present time, and their impact on the Mamulengo. This includes the progressive period (1950-1964), the military coup and the dictatorship in Brazil (1964-1985), the industrial expansion and rural exodus, the expansion of mass media, and finally, the re-democratisation of Brazil.

Chapter Two, "The Mamulengo Sources" is divided into two parts. Part I "The European, African and Indian Influence on Mamulengo", examines the development of Mamulengo in Northeast Brazil and its possible links with European and African traditional puppetry, and the Indian influence, and is divided into four sections. Section one comprises a brief discussion about the first references to the puppet theatre in Brazil. Section two examines the European influence, including the crib tradition in Brazil, the European religious puppet theatre in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, the profane puppet traditions; and finally, a discussion pointing out new considerations in approaching the subject. Section three looks at the African Influence and starts from the puppeteers' hypotheses, in which they conceive the Africans slaves as the primarily source of the Mamulengo. Following that, the areas it examines include sexual matters and their representation by the puppets figures, the presence of work activities and everyday life scenes, the extensive presence of rod puppets made entirely of wood, and the function of the music. This section ends with a brief discussion of some mamulengueiros' assumptions regarding their spiritual beliefs and the connection with African puppeteers' beliefs. Section four briefly discusses the Indian influence.

Part II, "The Influence of the Northeast Traditional and Popular Expressions", looks at the interconnections between the Mamulengo and the Northeast cultural traditions, and discusses how they appear in the puppet theatre. First, it examines the major influences coming from four expressions that present in their structure elements of music, dance and themes. They are *Bumba-meu-Boi/Cavalo Marinho*, *Pastoril*, *Caboclinhos* and *Maracatu*. After this, it analyses the influence of the Popular Circus followed by the *Cordel* and the *Desafio*. Finally, it assesses the influence coming from two types of dance, that is, *Ciranda*, and *Forró*.

Chapter Three, "The Language of Mamulengo: Study and Analysis of Elements" is also divided into two parts. Part I, "The Theatrical Language of Mamulengo" comprises four sections. Section one examines the scenic space, including the various types of booths, scenery and lighting. Section two deals with the puppets as figures, and describes the materials and techniques used in their construction, their size, technical aspects of control and articulation. Section three looks at the puppets as characters and how the various codes are combined to form the characters' typologies. This comprises the figurative codes; the codes of movement;

and the codes of voice quality. Section four describes the types and function of the music, and the sound effects.

Part II, "Mamulengo Text" is divided into two sections. Section one describes the structure and content of the many scenarios, and how they are selected, ordered, and handled by the puppeteers in order to set their shows. Section two deals particularly with the word-play present in the puppets (puppeteer) and the intermediary's speeches and examines its most recurrent topics.

Chapter Four, "The Audience" comprises two sections. Section one deals with the role of the audience in traditional puppetry. Section two discusses the Mamulengo audience and presents two analyses: the first examines the co-creation process with literate audiences. The second analyses the strategies used by the puppeteers to adapt their show to younger audiences.

The Research

The very first project of this thesis was a comparative study between Mamulengo and European popular puppet theatre. In the first two years of the Doctoral Program, I visited some European puppet collections, I attended puppet shows and researched in libraries, particularly in Italy, Spain and Portugal. This research was fundamental in my understanding of European puppetry traditions.

The turning point of this project occurred during my fieldwork in Northeast Brazil. In the five months I spent there I was struck by the richness and force of the puppet theatre practised by the popular artists within their region. I have been involved with popular puppet theatre for about ten years, working as a musician-compère, and sometimes taking the risk of operating some puppets, with the group *Mamulengo Presepada*, created and directed by Chico Simões, a *mamulengueiro* of the new generation from Brasilia – DF. During that time, I had the opportunity to attend some shows of traditional puppeteers from the Northeast region in puppetry festivals that took place in the south, and southeast Brazilian cities. Nevertheless, none of them could be compared to the shows I attended in the Northeast region, particularly those of Zona da Mata, Pernambuco. The 'artificiality' that often accompanies the traditional puppetry performances in festivals contrasts with the sincerity and vitality of the shows performed within the cities, villages, and small farms of the region; the audience attachment to the stories and characters, among other elements, and its intensive and

constant participation in the shows, function as a nutrient to the puppeteers, who give back the best they can give. This truly makes the difference!

Also, the contact I had with the puppets in the collections of *Museu do Mamulengo* (Olinda) and *Museu do Homem* (Recife) reinforced the idea that the Mamulengo deserved a study entirely dedicated to it. I hope this academic work can also express the aesthetic experience I went through in my contact with these Mamulengo shows, and figures. The images inserted in the thesis (an extensive number) are here considered as a visual "text", in dialogue with the linguistic one. I hope their "intertextuality" can assist in the accomplishment of the many goals I set in this study.

The study and analysis of the Mamulengo language, carried on in Chapters III and IV is specially focused in the Mamulengo of Zona da Mata. It is important to stress that the choice does not signify any judgement related to the importance or aesthetic quality of the other north-east puppet theatre. It is simply the result of my experience and, depended on the data collected during my fieldwork in Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Norte and Paraiba.

In the five months I spent in these three states, I had much more contact with the puppeteers, musicians and puppet-makers of Pernambuco. There, I was able to attend and record four shows of Zé de Vina (José Severino dos Santos), *Mamulengo Alegria do Povo*; five shows of Zé Lopes (José Lopes da Silva Filho), *Mamulengo Riso do Povo* and two shows of João Galego (João José da Silva) and Marlene Silva (Maria Candida da Silva), *Mamulengo Nova Geração.* Besides attending the shows, I visited their houses and workshops; I got to know their families; I saw them making and repairing puppets; I travelled with some of them on some of their tours. This time we spent together was essential for my understanding of their practices, and consequently of the Mamulengo practised in the Zona da Mata, Pernambuco.

Besides the puppeteers, I interviewed the musicians, the helpers and members of the public. Also, I was able to visit the workshops and interview three puppet-makers of Pernambuco: Mestre Sauba (Antonio Elias da Silva), Bibiu (Antonio Elias da Silva Filho) and Miro (Emilio José da Silva).

In terms of appreciating the puppet figures themselves, the puppeteers' sets of figures, the collections of *Museu do Mamulengo* (Olinda) and *Museu do Homem* (Recife) were fundamental to my understanding of the puppets' technical aspects of construction, size, features and control mechanisms used in Mamulengo puppet theatre.

Unfortunately, the research in Rio Grande do Norte, and particularly in Paraiba, was more limited. In Rio Grande do Norte, I attended just two shows of Chico Daniel (Francisco Angelo da Costa) and one of Francisquinho (Francisco Ferreira Sobrinho), and interviewed Raul do Mamulengo (Raul Francisco Gomes), a puppeteer from the new generation, and Chiquinho (Francisco Cardoso), a sculptor and puppet-maker. In Paraiba State I did not attend any show, since I could not find any puppeteers. The only data collected in that state was from some articles and the analysis of a set of seven puppets belonging to Antonio do Babau (Antonio Alves Pequeno), a Paraiban puppeteer.[48]

The analysis of Mamulengo performances is mostly based on the data collected from the performances attended and recorded. The recorded material allowed for more detailed analysis, bringing to light many aspects of the shows that otherwise, would pass unperceived. Pasqualino, referring to the staging of *opera dei pupi* remarks that:

> The production of the *opera dei pupi* shows may be described as a series of choices, each one of which partly conditions those that follow. The puppeteers divided up the events into acts and scenes, adhering more or less faithfully to the spare suggestions in the handwritten outlines handed down to him by tradition. He improvises the dialogue, taking in account the rules for setting the scene, the mood of the audience, and his own mood: the show is therefore an unstable entity that can only be nailed by recording it.[49]

As I shall demonstrate, a Mamulengo show, like the *opera dei pupi*, is an "unstable entity". Taking into account Pasqualino's remarks, I would add that the analysis of the recorded performances alone is only able to give one an approximate idea of the complexity of the codes operating inside a Mamulengo show. The performances were recorded in DVD (about 12 hours), and also on cassette tape (about 08 hours) format. The plays were transcribed and the parts inserted in the thesis were translated. The description of the codes of the puppets' movement and gestures,

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[48] Antonio do Babau (Antonio Alves Pequeno), who died in 1983, was considered one of the best puppeteers of Paraiba (Pimentel, *Joao Redondo*, 233-5). Babau's puppets are part of the folk art collection of *Universidade Federal da Paraiba.*

[49] Antonio Pasqualino, "Marionette and glove puppets: two theatrical system of Southern Italy," *Semiotica 47* (1983): 234.

and voice quality, was the result of a detailed analysis of the recorded performances of Zé de Vina, Zé Lopes and João Galego/Marlene Silva.

Apart from the material collected in the performances, other sources were also used to complete the data. In regard to the Mamulengo texts, I also take into account the data collected from written sources, that is, performance transcriptions made by scholars. Moreover, the analysis of the visual elements, that is, the puppet figures, props, booths and scenery, is also based on data collected at *Museu do Mamulengo* and *Museu do Homem.*

The studies of Oral History were especially helpful in organizing the structure of the interviews, and also in dealing with the material collected. In regard to the master puppeteers (Zé de Vina; Zé Lopes; João Galego; Marlene Silva; and Chico Daniel) I have done life history interviews, and semi-structured interviews. In the former, my interventions were done in a minimal way, and in the latter, they were structured as a series of questions. With the other artists and audience members I have done only semi-structured interviews. The interviewed were transcribed and were later divided in topics (themes) to help the analysis. The interviews comprise about 25 hours.

Substantial research on the Recife newspapers was done in the archive of Fundação Joaquim Nabuco (Fundaje). The period covered goes from 1895 until 2004. Unfortunately, the newspapers from 1945 until 1961 were not microfilmed, and therefore, were not available for the public.

Other important research was done in the *Arquivo Público do Estado de Pernambuco.* Unfortunately the time available for this research was limited, since during the field work the archive was closed for restructuring. Nevertheless, thanks to the kindness of its director, Hildo Leal da Rosa, I was able to obtain access to documents of the *Secretaria da Repartição Central da Polícia* (Police Central Station) referring to petitions subscribed by puppeteers and Mamulengo shows' contractors in order to present Mamulengo shows.

CHAPTER ONE

BRAZILIAN HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND MAMULENGO

For those arriving, the world they entered represented the arena of their profits, in gold and glory. For the native Indians, standing naked on the beach, the world was a luxurious place to live in. This was the effect of that fatal meeting. Along the Brazilian beaches in 1500, wildness and civilisation confronted each other in wonder as they faced each other exactly as they were. Their concepts of the world, life, death and love, were not only different but adverse and cruelly collided. The navigators, full-bearded, hairy, fetid and bruised by scurvy, looked at what seemed to be the incarnation of innocence and beauty. The native Indians, splendid in vigour and beauty looked with the astonishment at these beings coming out of the sea.

O Povo Brasileiro. Darcy Ribeiro[1]

In all Brazil's coastal ports, recently arrived slaves shared a similar condition. In addition to the irreparable emotional scars of separation from loved ones, the horrors of captivity also inflicted survivors of the crossing with emaciation, the *mal de Luanda* (scurvy) and loathsome itchy skin eruptions on the legs, feet and ankles. (. . .) Malnourished, traumatized and disoriented, they were scantily clad, bereft of personal possessions and alienated from familiar surroundings, shelter and food.

A Slave's Place, a Master's World. Nancy Priscilla Naro [2]

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[1] Darcy Ribeiro, *O Povo Brasileiro: a formação e o sentido do Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997), 2.

[2] Nancy P. Naro, *A Slave's Place a Master's World: Fashioning Dependency in Rural Brazil* (London: Continuun, 2000), 3.

BRAZIL


VENEZUELA
GUIANA
SURINAME
GUIANA FRANCESA
Oiapoque
Fernando de Noronha
Penedos de S. Pedro e S. Paulo
Ilha de Martin Vaz
Atol das Rocas
Ilha de Trindade
COLÔMBIA
Boa Vista
RORAIMA
AMAPÁ
Macapá
Pico da Neblina 3.014 m
EQUADOR
Ilha de Marajó
Belém
São Luís
Manaus
AMAZONAS
NORTE
PARÁ
MARANHÃO
Fortaleza
Teresina
PIAUÍ
CEARÁ
Natal
PARAÍBA
NORDESTE
PERNAMBUCO
Recife
ALAGOAS
SERRA DA CAPIVARA
Sergipe
Aracaju
Porto Velho
ACRE
Rio Branco
Palmas
TOCANTINS
RONDÔNIA
CENTRO-OESTE
BAHIA
Salvador
PERU
MATO GROSSO
DISTRITO FEDERAL
Brasília
Cuiabá
BOLÍVIA
GOIÁS
Goiânia
SUDESTE
MINAS GERAIS
Diamantina
Belo Horizonte
ESPÍRITO SANTO
MATO GROSSO DO SUL
Ouro Preto
Tubarão
Campo Grande
Congonhas
Vitória
SÃO PAULO
RIO DE JANEIRO
Rio de Janeiro
Trópico de Capricórnio
PARAGUAI
PARANÁ
São Paulo
CHILE
IGUAÇU
SUL
Curitiba
Santos
Paranaguá
São Francisco do Sul
SANTA CATARINA
Florianópolis
ARGENTINA
OCEANO ATLÂNTICO
RIO GRANDE DO SUL
Porto Alegre
Portos principais
Patrimônios culturais
Patrimônios naturais
ESCALA
0 385 km
URUGUAI
Chuí
-5h
-4h
-3h
-2h

1 – Brazilian Colonial Society: Miscegenation and Disparity

1.1 – The Portuguese Arrival and Colonisation

On 21st April 1500 the Portuguese arrived on the coast of what is today Brazil. It was an expedition apparently destined for the East Indies commanded by Pedro Alvares Cabral, a Portuguese nobleman..[3] The arrival of the Portuguese was a real catastrophe for the Indians. Coming from abroad, in huge ships, the colonisers, especially the priests, were regarded as great shamans in the Tupi mind, the Tupi Indians being the first group to come into contact with the explorers. As mentioned by Darcy Ribeiro, the Indians saw the Portuguese arrival as an astonishing event that could only be understood through a mythical vision of the world. For the Indian, "the Portuguese were the people sent by Maira, the Sun God of the Tupi-Guarani."[4] But, the initial idyllic vision of the Tupi-Guarani would be rapidly destroyed by the cruel relationship between the invaders and the native people.

During the first three decades of the colony's existence, the chief economic activity was the extraction of brazilwood, a tropical tree from which derived the name of Brazil. The trade in brazilwood was carried out by the Portuguese as well as French corsairs and merchants, who invaded and founded settlements in Guanabara Bay (Rio de Janeiro) and in the North, in the present-day state of Maranhão, between 1555 and 1615. Afraid of losing this new possession to another colonial power, the Portuguese crown realised it was necessary to colonise the new land in a more effective and defensible manner. Dom João III, King of Portugal, decided to create hereditary captaincies. He divided the Brazilian coastline into fifteen sections, which were awarded to twelve Portuguese noblemen, called donatary captains.

These land grants, called *sesmarias,* consisted of enormous tracts of virgin land, which the twelve individuals were obliged to cultivate within five years, and to pay a fee to the crown.[5] Each donatary had the right to award huge plots of land

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[3] Since the nineteenth-century, scholars have debated whether the Portuguese arrival in Brazil was a chance happening brought about by the ocean currents or whether there was a prior knowledge of the New World, and Cabral had set off on a sort of secret mission toward the west. In: Boris Fausto, *A Concise History of Brazil,* trans. Arthur Brakel (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), 6.

[4] Ribeiro, *O Povo Brasileiro,* 42.

[5] This is analogous to the 'banalities' farmers paid feudal lords.

(*latifúndios*[6]) to colonists for use as crop farms, usually devoted to sugar and other exports such as ginger and cotton. The donataries were "bureaucrats, merchants, and members of the petty nobility", all connected to the crown.[7] They had the possession but not the ownership of the land. But the possession gave donataries certain rights and privileges in the economic sphere, in the collection of fees, and in the administration of their captaincies. In return, they had to colonise and develop the economy of their territory. However, with the exceptions of the Captaincy of São Vicente in the south (São Paulo), ceded to Martim Afonso de Souza, and the Captaincy of Pernambuco in the Northeast, granted to Duarte Coelho, the overall results were unsatisfactory. As remarked by Schwartz "some of the captaincies were never settled, and others were plagued by donatarial neglect, internecine squabbling, and Indian wars. The few regions that experienced some success owed it to a fortunate combination of sugar agriculture and a reasonably peaceful relationship with the local Indian people."[8]

Following the general failure of the captaincy system, and in an effort to speed up the process of colonisation, the Portuguese crown introduced a new program to secure its American possessions against the continued threat of foreign rivals. In 1549, Dom João III set up an overall government (*Governo Geral*), in order to establish direct royal control through the office of a resident governor and other royal officials. Tomé de Souza was sent as the first royal governor, arriving in Bahia in the company of more than 1,000 people. Of them, 400 were deportees.[9] Within this group came also the first Jesuits with the mission to catechise the Indians, as well as to control the scarce but disreputable clergy already in Brazil.

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[6] The consequences of this process of dividing the land into enormous properties can be felt even nowadays. In Brazil less than 3% of the population owns two-thirds of the land; more than half the farmland lies idle. Four million homeless, landless and jobless peasant farmers are denied a decent living. The *Movimento dos Sem Terra* (Landless People's Movement) works throughout Brazil to ensure that landless people have greater access to land.

[7] Fausto, *A Concise History*, 11.

[8] Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantation in the Formation of Brazilian Society* (Cambridge: University Press, 1985), 17.

[9] Gilberto Freyre described this group as a mixture of 'soldiers of fortune, adventurers, and exiles, 'new Christians' fleeing religious persecution, slave dealers, and traffickers'. (Gilberto Freyre, *The Master and the Slaves*, trans. and ed. Samuel Putnam, 2nd ed. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963), 27.

After the first few decades, marked by efforts to secure Portuguese possession of the land, colonisation patterns began to emerge. Brazil became a colony whose fundamental role was to supply essential foodstuffs and minerals for European commerce. However, following on from the inception of royal control in Bahia, the creation of a sugar industry was undoubtedly the Portuguese crown's primary concern. The *regimento* (instructions) carried by Tomé de Sousa included directives concerning the establishment and regulation of sugar mills:

> He was instructed to grant land for engenhos [mills] to those men who could raise a mill within three years. (. . .) They were responsible for the development of their land and for the protection of its residents. (. . .) Each mill-owner had to process the cane of the lavradores who lived on or near his property. To stimulate the investment and commitment involved in the erection of an engenho, the crown offered certain tax benefits, for example, temporary exemption from the tithe.[10]

Sugar inevitably became the main export. It was produced mostly in the north-east captaincies, mainly in the Pernambuco and Bahia sugar mills. To sustain this industry, Portugal opted for large- scale compulsory labour. The process of Indian enslavement had been extremely difficult. The Indian culture was irreconcilable with regular work. They simply worked for their needs, since much of their energy and imagination was spent on rituals, celebrations, and war. Also, with the diseases spread by contact with Europeans, there came a demographic catastrophe with significant reductions in the numbers of Indians.[11] Hence, in early 1570, faced with the difficulties of enslaving the Indians, expanding cane plantations and establishing sugar mills, the crown sanctioned and encouraged the importation of Africans. Besides this, another reason for the expansion of slavery was the high profits, which had been coming from the African slave trade for more than a century.

1.2 – The Indians

There is no precise estimate of how many Indians lived five hundred years ago, in the territory which is today Brazil. Estimates range from a low of two million in the entire territory to five million in the Amazon region alone.

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[10] Ibid, 20.

[11] Darcy Ribeiro referred to that as a "bacteriologic war", which in his view was the "predominant aspect" of the Portuguese conquest of the new land. (Ribeiro, *O Povo Brasileiro,* 30).

Due to the enormous cultural gulf between the Amerindian and European people, it is easy to understand the astonishment and considerable prejudice present in the first accounts describing the native Brazilian Indians. However, in these writings made by travellers, chroniclers, and priests, mainly the Jesuits,[12] the portraits define Indians with positive and negative characteristics according to the degree of resistance displayed by them. Needless to say, the Portuguese particularly abhorred the Tupinambá practice of cannibalism,[13] and it became a principal excuse—"a just cause"- for the enslavement of these and others Indian peoples.

Considering there was no Indian nation, only dispersed groups of Indians, it was possible for the Portuguese to find native allies in their fights against groups who resisted, but this does not mean that Indians did not confront the colonist, especially when the latter made attempts to enslave them. Efforts to subjugate the Indians took two forms. The first method was carried out by Colonists who, guided by a savage economic greed, simply enslaved Indians. The second was undertaken by religious orders, mainly the Jesuits, who tried to turn Indians into "good Christians", which meant their acculturation and detribalization by resettling them into small towns and villages and turning them into peasants.[14] In Schwartz's view, although both the Jesuits' and the colonists' strategies were physically and culturally destructive, the priests' methods, "despite noble intentions" were actually the worse: "The attention of the Fathers to moral and spiritual matters interfered

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[12] Schwartz asserts that, the Jesuits were in effect the first historians and anthropologists of the Brazilian Indians. However, in the process of conversion they destroyed much of what they studied. (Schwartz, *Sugar Plantation,* 13).

[13] The Tupinambá was the major Tupi-speaking group in the region that was to become the captaincy of Bahia, Schwartz describes their society in this way:

"This group lived in villages of four hundred to eight hundred individuals organised into large family units that shared some four to eight houses. Patrilineal kinship was an important organisational aspect of their society, but divisions of sex and age were also used to define responsibility and privilege. Warfare, the capture of enemies, and their eventual death as victims in a feast of ritual cannibalism were integrative aspects of Tupinambá society because the acquisition of status, the choice of marriage partners, and progress through the age ranks depended on male activities." (Schwartz, *Sugar Plantation,* 29).

[14] As pointed out by Fausto, the Jesuits' missionary notion of work was connected to a European work ethic. That is, to be a 'good Christian' also meant acquiring European work habits, which aimed not at subsistence but at the accumulation of merchandise to be sold. For the Indians, this was a completely alien notion, since for them, working meant simply getting what was needed for immediate survival. (Fausto, *A Concise History,* 16).

more directly and proved more disruptive to Indian life than the colonists' control of their labour and regulation of the work regime." He mentions that in the communal village set up by the Jesuits, the Indians soon lost their cultural integrity since Indians of different tribal groups and tongues were mixed together. This reduced the Indian culture "to a common base" that could be controlled and manipulated by the Fathers. Such methods made preaching and conversion easier, but in doing so increased the pace of detribalization. [15]

The Indians' resistance to subjection was carried out in many ways. One such way was to migrate to poorer regions, seeking isolation. Another form of resistance was refusing to work, which obviously resulted in various forms of punishment. Thirdly, Indian tribes waged many battles and fights against the colonists. After such battles, Indians who surrendered or were captured experienced physical violence, relocation, epidemics, and death. From contact with Europeans, Indians fell victim to diseases such as measles, smallpox, syphilis and the common cold, against none of which they had biological defences. In 1562 and 1563, two epidemics (smallpox and cold) were exceptionally lethal, and they were apparently responsible for 60,000 Indian deaths.

One other natural consequence of the meeting of the two races was the creation of a mixed population, which would form the basis of Brazilian society.

1.3 – The Africans

The Portuguese had begun their slave trade during the fifteenth century, when they started exploring the African coast. By the last decade of the sixteenth century, the African slave trade was very well developed and had proved to be extremely lucrative. The abilities of the various African peoples were well known, and the colonists were especially aware of how profitable their labour had been in the sugar industry of the Atlantic islands.

Estimates of slave numbers shipped to Brazil vary considerably. It is said between 1550 and 1855 four million slaves arrived in Brazilian ports. Most of them were young males.[16] Initially, it was mainly the sugar plantation owners who bought the African slaves. Then later, from the eighteenth century, slaves were used more and more in the gold mines.[17] During the sixteenth century, most of the African slaves

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[15] Schwartz, *Sugar Plantation*, 40.

[16] Ibid, 18.

[17] The first gold deposits were found in Brazil at the end of the sixteenth century. Most of the gold mines were situated in Minas Gerais, a state located in the Southeast region.

came from Guinea (Bissau and Cacheu) and the Mina Coast (ports along the Dahomey coast). At the beginning of the seventeenth century, however, Angola and Congo became the most significant sources of slaves. "Angolans were brought in a great number during the 18th century and seem to have made up 70 percent of all slaves transported to Brazil during that century.[18]

The rebellions and conflicts between masters and slaves continued throughout the colonial period until the abolition of slavery in 1888. From the very beginning, daily resistance was part of the relationship between masters and slaves. Cases of suicide, self-induced abortions by female slaves and murders of landowners and administrators were not uncommon. Collective revolts and escapes were frequent, mainly in the eighteenth century. There were several urban uprisings such as the Malê Uprising, a revolt initiated by hundreds of black Africans (slaves and freed slaves), which occurred in 1835 in Salvador, Bahia.[19] However, the most common form of resistance was flight. As pointed out by Schwartz, "fugitives appear regularly in plantation inventories."[20]

In their resistance to white oppression, the black slaves also organised themselves collectively to form "marooned" communities initially called *mocambos* and by the eighteenth-century, *quilombos*.[21] These communities comprising mostly run-away slaves were a constant feature of the plantation slave regime, and "a litany of

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[18] Fausto, *A Concise History*, 18. Historians customarily divide African peoples into two large ethnic groups: the 'Sudanese', who came from western Africa (the Egyptian Sudan, and the north coast of the Gulf of Guinea); and the 'Bantus' from equatorial and tropical Africa (part of the Gulf of Guinea, Congo, Angola and Mozambique). Within these two large groups, black slaves of many different ethnic groups went to Brazil. The 'Sudanese' included Yorubas, Iwes, Tapas, and Haussas; the 'Bantus,' Angolas, Bengalasm Monjolos, and Mozambicans.

[19] For more information about the "Malê Uprising" see: João Reis and Eduardo Silva, "O levante dos malês: uma interpretação política". In: *Negociação e conflito. A resistência negra no Brasil escravista.* (São Paulo: Cia. das Letras, 1989).

[20] Schwartz, *Sugar Plantation*, 470.

[21] From the Kimbumdo, 'kilombo': small village (permanent or transitory); camp; army; union. (Nei Lopes, *Novo Dicionário Banto do Brasil*, 2003, p.186). In these communities, Africans built a social structure similar to that which had existed in Africa. One of the most important communities was Palmares, situated in a region, which today corresponds to the state of Alagoas, in the Northeast. Palmares, formed in the beginning of the seventeenth century, suffered constant attacks from the Portuguese and the Dutch. However, it endured for almost one century, until it was destroyed in 1695. In contrast to Palmares, the majority of *quilombos* had a short life.

known mocambos could be recited across the course of the colonial period."[22] Notwithstanding the Africans' resistance, which increased in the last decades of the nineteenth century, African and Afro-Brazilians slaves were not able to eradicate forced labour, and Brazil became the last republic to abolish slavery. Among the various components that restricted the African slaves' potential for collective insurrection, was the fact that blacks had been uprooted, arbitrarily separated, and brought in successive waves to an alien land. Moreover Naro stresses that fear of collective mobilization by slaves from the same area "led some prospective buyers to select slaves from different parts of Africa."[23]

Another important factor in this process was the role played by the Catholic Church in colonial times. Although the Church regarded master and slave as "equal in the sight of God", it did not officially condemn and did not oppose the enslavement of Africans. In fact, some religious organisations, such as the Benedictines, even became large-scale slave owners. With a "religious" discourse based on the Christianization of the black people, and consequent salvation of their souls, the Church justified and reinforced the enslavement of the Africans. Fundamentally, blacks were seen as an inferior race. "Scientific" theories held in the course of the nineteenth century, reinforced this general prejudice. As Fausto notes, 'the size and shapes of the blacks' skulls, the weight of their brains, and others factors "demonstrated" that blacks were a race of people with low intelligence, that they were emotionally unstable and biologically destined to subjection.'[24]

The anti-slavery movement in Colonial Brazil initiated numerous struggles in order to undermine African enslavement. Moreover, in the 1820s, guided by economic interest the British government began to press Brazil for a treaty to end the slave trade. The *Lei do Ventre-Livre* (Law of the Free Womb) was passed in 1872 and prohibited the enslavement of children born from slave mothers. Slavery was finally abolished in 1888 with a law promulgated by Princess Isabel, regent at the time. Nevertheless, even after this law was passed, the traffic of slaves continued. As observed by one

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[22] Schwartz, *Sugar Plantation*, 470.

[23] Naro, *A Slave's Place*, 3.

[24] Fausto, *A Concise History*, 20.

Frenchman living in Recife by that time, even after the abolition "a man was bought or sold just as animals were bought and sold, horses or sheep, ox or dog."[25]

1.4 – Brazilian Colonial Society

The three races intermingled on a large scale, especially in the first two centuries of colonization, and a variety of racial types resulted from the intermingling of Portuguese with indigenous Indians and Africans, and on a smaller scale of the Indians with the Africans.

In spite of being racially and culturally mixed, Brazilian society developed through a process of racial and class discrimination, which can still be felt today. The intercourse between Portuguese (male) and Indian (female), which resulted in both official and unofficial marriages, could be explained in two ways. On one hand, being used to the contact with coloured races that invaded their peninsula or were close neighbours to it, the Portuguese were a people used to interbreeding.[26]

On the other hand, Portugal was never able to match other European countries in the number of colonists, and the vast majority who went to Brazil were male and single. Hence, procreation served the purpose of populating a vast and relatively uninhabited land. Therefore, inter-racial breeding rather than migration was the process by which the Portuguese expedited large-scale colonisation of extensive areas.[27] Schwartz argues that, in those regions where miscegenation was common and the Portuguese where "willing to accept Indian women as legal spouses" political relations with the Indians often improved.[28] However, the improvement of community relations in a political sense did not necessarily mean the improvement in interpersonal relationships. Even though miscegenation brought conquerors and conquered physically closer, relations between white men and coloured women continued to be that of "superiors" and "inferiors", and in the majority of cases, "of disillusioned and sadistic gentlemen with passive slave girls."[29]

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[25] In Gilberto Freyre, *The Mansions and the Shanties: The Making of Modern Brazil,* trans. Harriet de Onís (London: Weidnfeld and Nicolson, 1963), 332.

[26] Freyre, *The Master and the Slaves*, 12. Freyre goes even further, affirming that "long contact with the Saracens had left with the Portuguese the idealised figure of the 'enchanted Moorish woman'.

[27] Ibid, 10-11.

[28] Schwartz, *Sugar Plantation*, 3.

[29] Freyre, *The Master and the Slaves*, 343.

The union of Portuguese men and Indian women produced within a few generations a large number of mixed-raced children called *mestiços* or *mamelucos*. As pointed out by Schwartz "these children found themselves in a social and psychological culture, yet not fully accepted by their father's peers. This social and economic marginality of the *mestiço*, and later the *mulatto*, constituted one of the major flaws in Brazilian Colonial society."[30]

Clearly, miscegenation was not enough to create a democratic society. Within the colony's social structure, "purity of blood" was a criterion used to segregate people. Those of "impure" blood were mainly blacks (freed or enslaved), and, to an extent, Indians and different types of racially mixed people. However, slavery and miscegenation created new social realities that had to be reconciled with the application of Portuguese social principles in the new colony.

Colonial Brazil maintained the same structure as Portuguese society. That is, a society based on estates and corporate divisions. In the new colonial context, the differentiation between gentleman and commoner tended to be even greater, given the massive presence of Indians, and the prejudice that the "superior" race held over the "inferior" one, thus justifying the latter's enslavement. In such a milieu, each European became a "potential gentleman" and could live his "noble fantasies": "with a few Indians to hunt and fish, any man could live without recourse to manual labour. With many Indians, a truly noble life could be achieved."[31] This is confirmed by the statement of the attorney general of the state of Maranhão, Manuel Guedes Aranha, who in 1654 affirmed:

> If in civilized countries the nobility is held in high esteem, with more right the white man should be esteemed in the land of heretics, for the former was suckled with the milk of the Church and Christian faith. (. . .) its is a known fact that different men are fitted for different things: we [the whites] are meant to introduce religion among them [Indians and blacks]; and they to serve us, hunt for us, fish for us, work for us.[32]

Firstly Indians and then later, Africans, became substitutes for the peasantry. However, as can be observed in the "reasonable" considerations of the attorney general cited above, the Indians and Africans were ethnically, phenotypically and religiously diverse

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[30] Schwartz, *Sugar Plantation,* 12.

[31] Ibid, 249.

[32] Quoted in Freyre, *The Mansions and The Shanties, p.xxi.*

from Europeans, unlike the peasants in the Portuguese society. These distinctions thus created chances for setting up new differentiations and hierarchies based on the new criteria of colour and culture.

Nevertheless, with Indians and *crioulo* blacks born within Portuguese society, and thus, not easily distinguished by cultural differences, race became the pattern with which to place these people within traditional orders, thus creating a peculiar social hierarchy based on colour. Acculturated Indians, freed slaves and free persons of mixed descent were defined by this criterion, hence, colour gave them a "corporate existence, although distinctions were recognised." [33] There was a special nomenclature for racial mixture: people were known as *mulatos/crioulo*, a mixture of black and white; *mamelucos*, Indian and white; *cafusos*, Indians and black; and *curibocas* or *caboclos*, near whites or descendants of white men. Within this new social hierarchy, those who were free experienced an ambiguous freedom, since, while they were formally considered free, in practice they ended up being arbitrarily enslaved, especially when their colour or their features identified them as black.

A person of colour generally suffered two types of prejudice: firstly, colour indicated origins associated with Africans and consequently with slavery. Secondly, there was always a suspicion of illegitimacy in the existence of a person of colour, since the general assumption was that a white man did not usually marry a woman of inferior racial status. Added to these disadvantages was prejudice about moral inclinations of mixed bloods who, were often characterised as, pushy, clever, unreliable and untrustworthy. This was emphasised by the positivist theories that saw mixed blood races as a degeneration of the 'pure' blood ones.

Nevertheless, such attitudes and discriminatory legislation did not prevent the mixed blood population from growing and becoming the major part of the artisan, wage-labour, and small-farming sectors. By 1800 about 65 per cent of Brazilian population had some African or Indian heritage. In this society, race did not become the only way of evaluating a man's position, although it was the most important one. Class and race were closely tied: "the darker the skin, the lower the class."[34] Combination of race and class reinforced the prejudice and led to the subordination of

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[33] Ibid, 250.

[34] Schwartz, *Sugar Plantation*, 17.

the coloured people. Still, it was a fact that if it did not obstruct, it at least made it difficult to rise from one class to another.

As discussed throughout this study, although it had an intermediate rank of mixed population, colonial Brazilian society was marked by great social distance between the "elite" and the "people". Conflicts were frequent, and consequently, an almost untenable cultural co-existence permeated the relations of these two groups. The elite usually referred to *mestiços* in derogatory terms. At the same time, as contended people of mixed blood found it difficult to meet European norms of behaviour and they were constantly dragged before civil and ecclesiastical judges. Elite representatives, such as royal officials were always complaining that these people were vagabonds, bandits, beggars and blasphemers. As shall be elaborated upon further, the cultural expressions developed by Africans, Indians and mixed people, that is, the popular culture, received the same prejudicial judgement, and went suffered forms of attacks and persecutions.

Slavery and racial discrimination were national institutions. They permeated the whole of society and conditioned the Brazilian way of acting and thinking, reaching into the most mundane aspects of life. They affected the actions and perceptions of everyone: the slave and the free, the white, black, red and brown. The inequality that existed in colonial Brazil has made itself felt throughout our history. Although it is not possible in today's Brazil to talk about "nobles" and "commoners" in the same sense as five hundred years ago, and despite a huge middle-class population, still the extremes continue to exist: the "white" and the "dark"; the rich and the poor; the literate and the illiterate; "high" culture and "popular" culture.[35] The hierarchical division has extended to many aspects of society and has endured for more than five centuries.

The Brazilian northeast popular puppeteers are heirs of this unequal system based on exploitation and racial and class distinctions. The puppeteers are the poor and illiterate blacks, whites, *mulattos, caboclos* that, throughout Brazilian history have been excluded from the goods produced by them. Their puppet theatres are shaped by the history of Brazil, especially that of Northeast.

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[35] Popular culture here understood as the culture produced by the lower class people for the lower class people.

In the temporary time of the puppet show and on its small stage, the history of the Northeast is represented, reinterpreted and reinvented.

2 – Northeast Colonisation Process and the Mamulengo

The Northeast region is composed of nine states: Bahia, Sergipe, Alagoas, Pernambuco, Paraiba, Rio Grande do Norte, Ceará, Piaui and Maranhão. It is one of the poorest regions of Brazil. The region can be generically divided into three sub-regions: the coastal, known as Zona da Mata (Forest Zone); the Agreste and, finally, the Sertão.

The Zona da Mata is a coastal strip, approximately 200 kilometres wide, and is the most densely populated sub-region of the Northeast. Along the coast are situated the main cities and almost all the state capitals,[36] where the majority of the population live. This was the first area to be inhabited and was almost entirely monopolised by sugar-cane plantations. The Agreste, an intermediate area between the Zona da Mata and the Sertão, occupies about eleven per cent of the Northeast territory. With its reasonable rainfalls and soil conditions, regular agricultural activity developed, including the growing of cereals, cotton, and fruit, along with cattle breeding. Finally, the Sertão occupies half of the total Northeast area. It is the poorest sub-area, with its irregular rainfall and periodic droughts.

2.1 – The Master and the Slaves: the sugar plantation context

For the first two centuries of the colonial period, the Northeast, the states of Pernambuco and Bahia in particular, was the major centre of Brazil's economic activity. Agricultural production, based primarily on sugar, provided considerable prosperity for the oligarchy. The plantation owners wielded considerable economic, social, and political power in the life of the colony. Meanwhile, those who produced their wealth, the slaves and "free" mixed-race workers, would remain in the lower strata of society.

Located along the coast, the sugar plantations required an enormous number of slaves. In this agrarian zone and with a monoculture that absorbed other forms of production, there developed a "seigneurial"[37] society. At the top was a minority of

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[36] The only exception is Teresina, the capital of Piaui.

[37] Although Freyre uses the term "feudal", in using the term "seigneurial" instead, I follow Schwartz assertions that "seigneurialism", in fact, is a term that merits some close attention in the Brazilian context because the "donatarial captaincies of Brazil are perhaps best understood as extensions of the Portuguese concept of *senhorio* or lordship." (Schwartz, *Sugar Plantation*, 255).

whites and light-skinned mulattos, and at its base a majority of blacks. Needless to say the cruel and inhuman characteristic of the slavery system, in which slaves were considered "things", property in the hands of their masters.



Fig. 1.1- Field Captain with a captured slave. Painting by J. Baptiste Debret, "Viagem Pitoresca e Historica ao Brasil, 1834 -1839".

Between the two extremities—the master and the slaves—there was an intermediary group consisting of "free-workers". This group was composed of sharecroppers, tenants, retainers, artisans and managers. They were relatively free, generally poor and lived in their own houses separate from the *senzala*. They were of mixed race, including freed blacks and rootless Indians, already disconnected from their tribes. Schwartz, although recognising the distinctions that separated the two groups of slaves and non-slaves, argues that on the sugar farms, both slaves and free workers "lived under the paternalistic control of a planter who viewed his labour force, slave and free, as something more than labour", since for the master, these two groups were not "two separated worlds, but, rather, two points along a continuum". These "free" people were subject to coercion, suffered discrimination, received little remuneration for their labour and were fettered by custom and practice. Hence, the difference between slave labour and free labour did not "in itself inform us about the conditions under which people lived."[38]

Even though on the plantation the slaves and free-workers were both exploited, relations between the two groups were ambivalent. Many accounts relate the participation of these free-men in many slave insurrections. However, even though racially, culturally and socially closer to the slaves, they also served the function of subjugating and punishing them. An example is the figure of the *capitão-do-mato* (field-captain), the man responsible for the search of runaway slaves. Many of them

[38] Ibid, 253.





Figs. 1.2 and 1.3 - Details of a mechanical set of puppets made by Sauba. The scenario portrays the slaves' punishments and tortures at the time of slavery in the sugar farms.

were of mixed race, and even freed slaves, who were authorized to kill stubborn slaves who refused to come back to the plantation.[39]

The life and the social relations developed within the context of the sugar plantation are very present in the subjects, contents and characters appearing in the puppet theatre. These representations appear both as clear or subtler references. One example of the first is the mechanical set of puppets known as *casa-de farinha.* One of the most popular scenarios appearing in *casa-de farinha* is the slaves' life (punishments and tortures) in the sugar farms. The richness of details expressed in the puppets' representations reveal the profound marks that the slavery system left in the Brazilian imagination. Through the puppet theatre, these popular artists keep the memory alive. They say: let us not forget from where we came.

In his classic book *Casa Grande e Senzala* (The Masters and the Slaves), Gilberto Freyre is basically concerned with tracing out the origins and development of Brazilian character, cultural expressions and social institutions. In Freyre's view, the patriarchal system of colonisation set up by the Portuguese in Brazil was represented, in its most complete form, in the sugar plantation context and by the culture arising there. According to Freyre, this was not the "transplantation"[40] of Portuguese culture to the

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[39] The figure and role of the capitao-do-mato appears in many pieces of literature and also in children's jokes. Once popular but now seeming to have disappeared is the game, "The Field Captain': "Elected the Field Captain, the other boys, who played the part of the fugitive Negroes (negros fugidos) would hide themselves. The Field Captain cries out: 'Fugitive Negro!' running after them until catching one. In Veríssimo de Melo. Folclore infantil: acalantos, parlendas, adivinhas, jogos populares, cantigas de roda. (Belo Horizonte: Editora Itatiaia, n.d.), 34.

[40] Freyre sees in this aspect an elemental difference between the English pattern of colonisation and the Portuguese one. For him, the Anglo-Saxons had mostly transplanted their culture into their colonies, while

tropics, but the rise of a new culture, hybrid and contradictory from its very beginning. For Freyre, the harsher aspect of slavery was attenuated over time by the intimacies of proximity, shared day routines and erotic attraction, which gave rise to a *mestiço* (mixed blood) people and a hybrid culture, both very well adapted to the tropics. Hence, in Freyre's view miscegenation was the very centre of Brazilian identity and an evidence of a successful process of race mixture. This central idea of Freyre's works[41] was an inverting of positivist race theory that understood miscegenation as a degeneration of the "pure" race, a pathological condition, rather than a quality.

Nevertheless, Freyre's views have been subject to serious criticism, mainly from the end of the 1940s to 1970s.[42] One aspect criticised is the generalised notion of Colonial Brazil as being represented by the Big House and *Senzala* polarities, since the vast territory and the diversity of the economic, social and cultural practices in the diverse regions of the country do not necessarily fit within the Big House and *Senzala* scenario.[43] The other aspect, and this is emphasised more than the first, is that by smoothing (and romanticising) the brutal aspect of Brazilian slavery, Freyre was considered an apologist for Brazilian slavery, and also, a 'creator' of a fictional idea of Brazilian society as a racial democracy, which history proved not to be so. Nevertheless, as noted by Cleary, the notion of Freyre as a defender of Brazilian slavery "is an over-simplification, since he does not deny the importance of hierarchy and violence in Brazilian culture, but sees patriarchy rather than the institution of slavery as its most important axis."[44] Apart from his extended anatomy of patriarchy in

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the Portuguese had mixed with the others. Hence transplantation (England pattern) versus miscegenation (Portuguese pattern) would be the difference between these two processes of colonisation.

[41] Here I am referring to a trilogy written by Freyre, in which he analyse the Brazilian society: *Casa-Grande e Senzala* (*The Master and the Slaves*, 1933); *Sobrados e Mocambos* (*The Mansions and The Shanties: The making of Modern Brazil*, 1956) and *Ordem e Progresso* (*Order and Progress: Brazil from Monarchy to Republic*, trans. and ed. Rod W. Horton, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970).

[42] Some examples are: Caio Prado Junior, *Formação do Brasil Contemporâneo - Colônia* (São Paulo: Livraria Martins, 1942;) and Florestan Fernandes, *A Integraçao do Negro na Sociedade de Classe* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1965).

[43] This was mainly criticed by Fernando Henrique Cardoso, *Cor e Mobilidade Social em Florianopolis* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1960).

[44] David Cleary. "Race, Nationalism and Social Theory in Brazil; Rethinking Gilberto Freyre," David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. Harvard University, (n.d.), 10. [database on-line], TRANCOMM; accessed May 21, 2005.

Colonial Brazil, Freyre's works clearly express his concern with popular culture in all its manifestations. His accurate description and analysis of the cultural practices resulting from the miscegenation process and emerging in the plantation complex, and also, in the urban context[45] in Colonial Brazil, help us to understand the formation of Northeast popular culture, including the puppet theatre. It is mainly in this particular that I drawn on Freyre's works[46] in this part of my study.

According to Freyre, the plantation complex represented an entire economic, social, and political system, which would be the first base of Brazilian society: "a system of production (estate/monoculture); a system of labour (slavery); a system of transport (the ox-cart; the *bangue*[47], the hammock, the horse); a system of religion (family Catholicism, with the chaplain subordinated to the *paterfamilias*, with a cult of the dead, the saints, etc.); a system of sexual and family life (polygamy and patriarchy); and a system of politics (*compadrismo*)"[48]

At the base of this patriarchal system was the family, understood as "house" and "lineage", an institution based on hierarchy and authority. At the head of this was the patriarch, who required the unquestioning respect and obedience of his children, wife, servants, slaves and dependants. In return he was expected to provide sustenance, direction and protection. The formation and perpetuation of the family, independently of the nature of the domestic relations, remained the central concern of the sugar planters throughout the colonial era. Success in this process guaranteed continuity; failure brought obscurity. In such a milieu, individual and social relations were based fundamentally on differences between "superiors" and "inferiors": white/coloured; men/women; adult/children, but mainly between master/slave, in which protection and cruelty were tied together, pervading interpersonal and social relationships. Thus, ambiguities were the mark of this system: the white male's sexual freedom and the white female's sexual repression; the master being at the same time the protector and the executioner of his subordinates; the abundance of food in the big house and the shortage in the slave quarters; and so on.

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[45] Mainly Recife and Olinda

[46] Especially on *The Master and the Slaves* and *The Mansions and the Shanties*.

[47] It was one type of litter with a leather top and curtains.

[48] *Compadrismo* was a system of oligarchic nepotism and patronage established through family tie. This system extended the size of the family and often reinforces economic ties between *compradres*. From *compadre*: a godfather, or marriage witness; sponsor, etc.

Perversities were obviously most practised against the slaves. Nevertheless they also extended to the master's relatives. Many accounts refer to diverse types of punishments and even murders of the sons and brothers who transgressed patriarchal authority: As pointed out by Freyre, the authority of the father "was carried to its logical conclusion: the right to kill."[49] However, it was mostly practised against women. Considering it was primarily connected to the notion of honour, and since the honour of the house was tied to the honour of the women, it was they who suffered the major repression: daughters were to remain chaste and the wife free of any compromising situation and rumour. The preservation of the family honour was bound together with the continuation of lineage and property. The daughters of the planters had to accept the husband chosen by the head of the family, or they were placed in convents. Also, the law permitted a husband to kill a wife who "cuckolded him" and those who did not wish to take such extreme action could find other means of control, such as to send them to convents for the rest of their lives.[50]

Ambiguities were also visible in the relationships between whites and blacks developed inside the "big-house." The close contact in such a restrictive universe gave rise to many conflicts but also to many cultural interchanges. As Freyre points out that promiscuity was not just acceptable but encouraged among white males, and were mostly practised with female slaves. This often gave rise to jealousy and sexual rivalry between the mistress and the *mucama,* which resulted in many types of torture perpetrated by the mistress, such as gouging out the *mucanas'* eyes; burning their faces; cutting their breasts off, kicking their teeth, and so on.[51] The circle of violence beginning with the patriarchal figure spread through the other relationships.

The cruelty practised by the mistress against the female slave appears in the lyric of one of the songs presented in the puppet show of João Galego and Marlene Silva, puppeteers from Carpina, Pernambuco. The chorus goes as follows:

> "Vamos atràs da Sé/ na casa da Sinha Teté, maninha, / ver a mulatinha da cara queimada./ Quem foi que queimou? A senhora dela, maninha."[52]

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[49] Freyre, *The Mansions and the Shanties*, 59.

[50] The same happened in Catholic Europe till well into nineteenth century.

[51] Freyre, *The Master and the Slaves*, 351/ 381.

[52] Transcribed based on the show presented in Carpina on 9 December 2003.

[Let's go there behind the Sé,[53] / in the house of mistress Teté, little sister, / to see the little Creole with burned face. / Who did burn it? It was her mistress, little sister.]

Moreover, the young white men were encouraged by their parents to practice sadism on young black slaves, both males and females. In *O Negro no Brasil* (The Black in Brazil), Julio Chiavento mentions how colonisers made sexual use of the blacks, saying that "since early infancy, *negrinhos* (young male Negroes) were offered as a gift for the *sinhozinhos* (little male master), and the latter were precociously initiated in sadistic relations". Chiavento argues that these young slaves served as objects of torture and sexual pleasure for their *sinhozinhos* and were called Mané-Gostoso (Gorgeous-Mané): "Everything was very amusing and funny under the gaze of the landowner family-the greater the violence, the greater the pleasure."[54]

Searching for links between the puppet theatre and these social practices, I found a reference made by Borba Filho to a puppet called *Mané-Gostoso,* which bears a similarity with the *negrinho* in the context of the Big House. The author defines the *Mané-Gostoso* as "*boneco de engonço* (type of mechanical puppet), which moves the legs and the arms when the strings are pulled."[55] *Mané-Gostoso* is a very popular children's toy in the Northeast region, and it is common to find children amused with his movements. Thus, there are many connections between the puppet/toy *Mané-Gostoso* and the little slave *Mané-Gostoso* described by Chiavento. The little slave, as well as the puppet, is manipulated by its owner for his or her pleasure and amusement. So like the puppet, the little slave is placed in the category of an object, which again illuminates the coloniser's view of the slave.

On the other hand, female slaves, known as *ama-de-leite* (wet nurse) or *mãe-preta* (black mother), were in charge of the breastfeeding and care of the white children. This often gave rise to affectionate relations between these women and the white children, and often they were placed in a higher position than the other slaves working inside the big house. From this close contact many aspects of the African culture were introduced into the patriarchal family, playing a fundamental role in the constitution of Brazilian culture. Nair de Andrade points out that through their lullaby

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[53] *Sé* means cathedral.

[54] Julio Chiavento, *O Negro no Brasil: da senzala à guerra do Paraguai,* 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1980), 139.

[55] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia,* 69.

songs the wet nurses influenced the formation of Brazilian musical culture. [56] Moreover, Câmara Cascudo notes, "it was through the black mother that many African stories had arrived here [in Brazil]. These *ama-de-leite* had a fundamental role in the propagation, fixation and transformation of African stories in Brazil. Also, it was a powerful factor in the formation of the mentality of Brazilian children."[57]

Freyre reinforces Cascudo's assumption, remarking, "it was the black women who became amongst us the great stories tellers. (. . .) The *akpalô*, an African traditional institution of story telling, was maintained and developed in Brazil in the person of the old female African". He notes that some of these women were professional storytellers, since telling stories was their major occupation, and that "they used to go from mill to mill just to tell stories."[58] One puppeteer gives an account of how Mamulengo first appeared on a farm in the interior of Bahia, having been derived from a performance by a woman slave.[59] We can consider this hypothesis through the figures of the old black female storytellers mentioned here.

As Freyre remarks the social culture of the sugar farms was made by individuals sharing space and time and everyday relations of attraction and repulsion, approximations and distances. And it is important to bear in mind the evil face arising from this brutal system: death, suffering and excruciating torture of the bodies and souls. However, it is also impossible to ignore the other face that laughed and played, that resisted and transformed the nightmare into songs, dances and stories. In a system deeply marked by a strong hierarchical division between master and slaves, according to Freyre, "there was an interdependence of emotions and sentiments, and not merely a conflict of economic interests. There is no other way to explain the hybrid manifestations, not only cultural but physical, which exist among us [Brazilians]."[60] Following Freyre's assertion, Câmara Cascudo argues: "against all logic and pre-logic,

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[56] Andrade, Nair. "Musicalidade do Escravo Negro no Brasil," *Novos Estudos Afro-brasileiros,* V.II (1988): 198.

[57] Luís da Câmara Cascudo, "Literatura Oral," in *Historia da Literatura Brasileira Vol. V*, ed. A. Lins. (São Paulo: José Olympio, 1952), 157.

[58] Freyre, *The Master and the Slaves*, 231.

[59] See Chapter Two.

[60] Freyre, *The Mansions and the Shanties*, xvii

the sugar industry based on the slavery, on the whip, on the violence of the administrators was a breeding ground of ballads and popular folguedos."[61]

2.2 – The Relationship between the Catholic Church and Northeast Cultural Practices

As noted already, although the Catholic Church regarded masters and slaves as "equal in the sight of God", it did not officially condemn and did not oppose the enslavement of Africans. However, it was through the mediation of the Catholic Church that many African and Indian cultural practices were renewed and transformed in Colonial Brazil.

Catholicism provided the spiritual, moral and social base of colonial life. Although the universal concepts of the Roman church were recognised, they were mixed with a great variety of beliefs and folk practices. Freyre argues that, the Catholic Church in colonial Brazil was greatly influenced by the Catholic Church in Portugal. Portuguese Catholicism had "(. . .) a more social than religious liturgy (. . .) with many phallic and animistic reminiscences originated from the pagan religions: on festival days the saints almost got down 'alive' from the altars to have fun with the people". Given the nature of Brazilian slavery and the role played by the Catholic Church, African customs, beliefs and language were not forcibly repressed or eliminated and some African cultural practices were renewed and strengthened in colonial Brazil. The development of isolated cultural values was even encouraged by slave owners and the Catholic Church, as well as some Government representatives, as long as these values contributed to the reinforcement of the desired structure. One good example is a letter written by Minister Mello e Castro to the Governor of Pernambuco in 1796 about the dances of the Africans. In one part of the letter he says: "Even though not entirely innocent, [they] should be tolerated for the sake of avoiding, through this lesser evil, greater ones, and always employing all gentle measures which your good judgement suggests to gradually do away with amusements so contrary to decent customs"[62]

Most popular Brazilian cultural manifestations are a result of the mixture of religious and secular elements, and were mediated by the Catholic Church. Many of these religious/cultural practises were first conceived of in the sugar plantations as a result of various festivities, most of them related to Church Festivals. Saint's days, baptisms, marriages, novenas and sugar mill blessings were occasions for celebrations.

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[61] Luís da Câmara Cascudo, *Sociologia do Açúcar: pesquisa e dedução* (Rio de Janeiro: Instituto do Açúcar e do Álcool 1971), 234.

[62] Quoted in Freyre, *Mansion and Shanties*, 265.

Schwartz refers to the blessing of the mill as the greatest event of the year, since it marked the beginning of the new crop:

> Machinery was repaired, kettles replaced, contracts for cane and firewood reviewed, and oxen brought from the pastures. All that humans could do was completed, and now only divine help was needed. On the appointed day, the parish priest or the resident chaplain officiated at the blessing of the mill (. . .) Christ or the engenho's [mills] particular patron saint was invoked to guard from harm all those who laboured on the estate and to assure a successful harvest.[63]

Later in the day of the blessing of a mill, there was often a banquet in the big house. On these occasions, the slaves could look forward to rewards of *garapa* (cane juice) or cane brandy, followed by revelry and dancing, with the merry-making lasting until dawn. Ribeyrolles[64] also describes slave gestures and activities, involving parody, wit, irony and mockery, which were performed as part of the *caxambùs*,[65] or *batuques*,[66] crosses between religious and secular ceremonies. Needless to say that parody, wit, irony and mockery are the core of the comic folk traditions, in which hierarchy inversion plays a fundamental role.

The *Bumba-meu- Boi*, a Brazilian folk drama that enacts the death and revival of an ox, seems to have first appeared in the Northeast region in the context of the sugar farms. In regard to the Mamulengo, for some puppeteers its primary source lies with the African slaves in the rural context. Included in the puppeteers' assumption is the belief that the rise of Mamulengo came about for two different reasons: some point to revenge as the main reason, while others believe it rose as a way of conciliation between the two races. Nevertheless, the same principles of parody, mockery and role reversal appear as fundamental elements in the constitution of the Mamulengo puppet theatre. With regard to hierarchy inversion, its most constant feature remains in the relationship between the landowner (the villain), and his employee (the hero). The latter is almost always represented as a black character, who works in the farmer of the white colonel (or captain). Among other reversals, one appearing constantly is the

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[63] Schwartz, *Sugar Plantation*, 99.

[64] Ribeyrolles, Charles. Brasil Pitoresco; história; descrições; viagens; colonização; instituições. Biblioteca Histórica Brasileria, VI. (São Paulo: Livraria Martins, 1941), 51

[65] A slave festival in which drumming, dancing and verse prevail; also a coarse, lively Afro-Brazilian dance.

[66] Generic designation of Afro-Brazilian drums beating and dances. Sometimes, especially in the past, it was used to refer to a noisy din.

hero's conquest of the landowner's white wife (or daughter). Rodrigues de Carvalho in his article *Aspectos da Influência Africana na Formação Social do Brasil* (Aspects of the African Influence in the Brazil Social Formation) points out that the slave's attraction for his mistress is a common subject appearing in the verses of *Pai João* (Old John).[67] One example described by the author goes like this:

> "Deus 'primita' que chegue 'sabro', / Que meu Sinhô vai p'ra feira,
> P'ra eu ficar com 'mim' sinhora / sentadinho na cadeira.
> Deus 'primita' que chegue 'rumingo',/ Que meu Sinhô vá p'ra missa
> P'ra eu ficar com 'mim' sinhora/ comendo bôa linguiça."[68]
> [God allows that Saturday comes, / for my master goes to the fair,
> And I can stay with my mistress/ sitting together in the chair.
> God allows that Sunday comes/ For my master goes to mass
> And I can stay with my mistress/ Eating sausage with her]

As can be noted, the slave's role reversal (he takes the place of his master) may be understood as a revenge of the black slaves towards their master. Nevertheless, as discussed on Chapter IV, together with sexual aggression, racial aggression appears frequently in the Mamulengo plays, particularly in the form of verbal jokes.





Fig. 1.4 and fig. 1.5 – The scenes show the white and black peoples' close proximity in the daily routines inside the big-house. Paintings by J. Baptist Debret (1834-1839).

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[67] Pai João is a generic designation for the figure of the old male slave storyteller. Câmara Cascudo points out that the figures of *Pai João* and *Mãe Maria* (Mother Mary), the female corresponding figure for Pai João, gave rise to a series of tales called *Estórias de Pai João* (Stories of Old John), one of the Brazilian traditional tale cycles in which the narratives of the slavery period and the psychological (and we could include, stereotypical) trace of the black slaves (cunning, lascivious, naïve and playful) are fixed. (Luís da Câmara Cascudo, *Dicionário do Folclore Brasileiro*, 10th ed. São Paulo: Global, 2001), 467.

[68] Rodrigues de Carvalho, "Aspectos da Influência Africana na Formação Social do Brasil," in *1° Congresso Afro-Brasileiro- 1934* (Recife: Massangana, 1988), 57

Another character that can be linked with the sugar plantation context is the figure of the priest, who appears constantly in the puppet theatre as a lascivious character often speaking "pig" Latin. Freyre points out the importance of the role played by the chaplains in the sugar farms and remarks that the Church that affected primarily colonial Northeast Brazilian rural society was not "the cathedral with its bishop, nor the monastery or abbey", but the plantation chapel. In these isolated areas, the chaplain "was the Church", the absolute representative of God, although hierarchically inferior to the big house master. The chaplain was responsible for the moral and spiritual guidance of the sugar mill residents, and sometimes served as tutor for the planters' children.[69] Nevertheless, the chaplains' behaviour was not always consistent with their moral teachings. Freyre observes that it in the eighteenth century many chaplains lived in the big house, accustoming them to "the comfortable situation of the patriarchal system", having "close contact with black women and mulatto girls." This situation caused reactions from some members of the clergy, such as the Jesuit priest João Antonio Andreoni, who reminded his colleagues that "the chaplain ought to conduct himself as a member of God's household, not that of another man".[70]

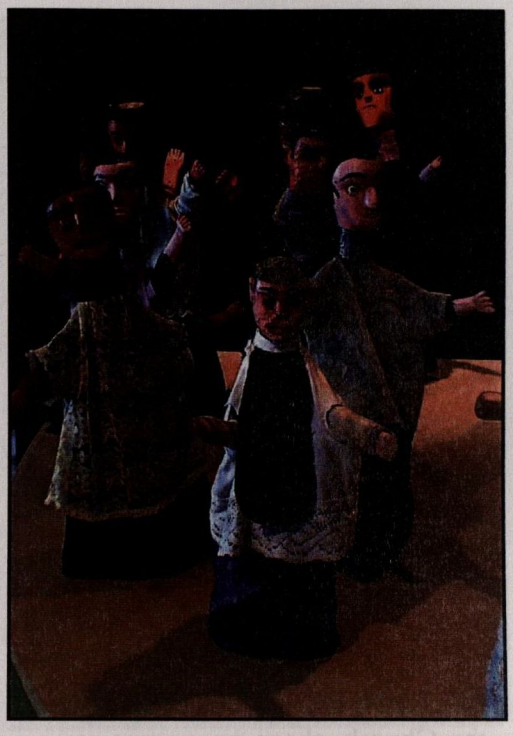

Fig. 1.6 – A group of glove-puppets from various puppeteers. From left to right, in the first line: Zé da Burra; Maxiaminiano Dantas and Solon. In the background: Solon, Otilio, Luiz da Serra and Antonio Biló. As can be observed, there is a unity in the representation of the priest figures, with all of them dressed with white, black and purple garments.

According to Freyre, this promiscuous behaviour gave rise to "malice-inspired traditions" that would confer on the plantation chaplains the function of procreators.[71] This clerical characteristic can be observed quite clearly in the priest characters appearing in many

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[69] Schwartz, *Sugar Plantation*, 314.

[70] Freyre, *The Master and the Slaves*, 190. However, this seems to be a characteristic of Catholic priests all over the country, not just in Pernambuco. As mention by Father Antonio Vieira, "The problems of the Pernambuco mission resembled those elsewhere in Brazil: a corrupt secular clergy, illegal slavery, and concubinage. In Thomas M. Cohen, *The Fire of Tongues - Antonio Vieira and the Missionary Church in Brazil and Portugal* (Stanford: University Press, 1988) 20.

[71] Freyre, *The Master and the Slaves*, 192-3.

Mamulengo texts. Moreover, the large number of puppets representing priests in the Mamulengo Museum collection demonstrates the priest character's popularity in the Mamulengo puppet theatre.

The chaplains also took on the role of converting the slaves to Christianity. This practice was based on methods of coercion and pressure. A Christian name was given to the slave at the time of baptism.[72] As mentioned before, Indian and African acceptance of European culture and religion became an essential prerequisite to mark those within and those outside mainstream society. As a result, the slave population in Brazil rapidly became infused with the dominant religion. Even so African religions and cults were maintained, and transformed, giving rise to the religious syncretism.[73]

The Church conceded to the slaves a part in its rites. Indeed, the Africans infused into these rites their cultural and religious practices, impregnating them with a completely new dynamic. Although there was some resistance from some sectors of the Church, these new practices were, little by little, accepted and incorporated. Black confraternities or brotherhoods formed,[74] in which black saints became patrons, were tolerated and even encouraged by the church. For Africans and African-Brazilians, among the most important saints (and the brotherhoods established in their names) were Saint Benedict and Our Lady of the Rosary. Public Church festivals organised by the brotherhoods honouring these saints played an important role in the cultural life of colonial Brazil, mainly in the context of the

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[72] Although it is unclear how and when the slave acquired a surname, the acquisition of freedom or manumission was an event that led to the assumption of a family name. (Schwartz, *Sugar Plantation*, 402).

[73] Afro-Brazilian cults, such as *Candomble* and *Umbanda*, are both possession religions and are widely practised in Brazil today. These Afro-Brazilian religions are a mingling of the pantheon, practices, and beliefs brought to the New World by Yoruban slaves and freed men, with the Catholicism of the dominant European culture. To avoid repression by the priests, the slaves cultivated their Yoruba entities by using the names of Catholic saints. Thus, Yemanja became Our Lady of Conception; Omolu, Saint Jerome; Iansã, Saint Barbara; and so on. For more information about Afro-Brazilian cults see Olga Gudolle Cacciatore, *Dicionário de Cultos Afro-brasileiros* (Rio de Janeiro: Forense universitário/SEEC, 1977); Edison Carneiro, *Candomblés da Bahia* (Salvador: Museu do Estado/ Secr. de Educação e Saúde, 1948).

[74] Since the early fifteenth century, there were fraternities or brotherhoods in Europe. In France some *Confrèries* were formed to honour particular saints by dramatising their lives and miracles. In Italy and Spain they were charitable associations known as *compagnie* and *confradiàs* respectively. See Jessica Milner Davis, *Farce* (London: Methuen, 1978), 10.



Fig. 1.7 – A Maracatu group from Recife in the carnival of 1954.

cities. As Roger Bastide noted, the attachment which the black population had for black saints led some parishes in Brazil to establish and celebrate a feast day for Saint Benedict as early as 1711, although this saint was not officially recognised by Rome until 1743, nor canonised until 1807.[75] One popular tradition organised by these black confraternities was the coronation ceremonies of the kings of Congo and Angola, which gave rise to the *Maracatu,* a popular Pernambucan folk manifestation.

Linda Heywood in her article "The Angolan-Afro-Brazilian Cultural Connections" argues that many of the religious and cultural expressions practised in colonial Brazil, were the result of a trans-cultural process that had started at least one century before with the African trade to Portugal, in which the Catholic Church played a central role:

> The root of Afro-Brazilian culture lay deep in the history of Afro-Portuguese relations, especially as it was mediated through the Catholic Church. Since early medieval times, the Catholic Church had been the articulator of both elite and popular culture in Portugal. Although best known for the Inquisition and the forced conversion of Jews and Muslims in Portugal and Spain, the religious brotherhoods and pageantries, which the church

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[75] Roger Bastite, "Opiniões sobre o Folclore," *Cadernos* 10 (1077): 52.

> sponsored, allowed a folk Catholicism to flourish alongside an orthodox Catholicism in medieval Portugal. This same process would happen with the hundreds of thousands of west and west-central Africans who came to Portugal from the mid 1400s onwards.[76]

Heywood, like Freyre, understands that the main reason why an African folk Christianity flourished in Portugal stemmed from the church practice of honouring saints, including non-white ones. In this scenario, the brotherhoods became an important network for Lisbon's black population during the sixteenth century. As in Pernambuco, the Portuguese black brotherhoods also celebrated the crowning of Congo and Angolan monarchs. According to Heywood, this was very common in Portugal by the end of the fifteenth century:

> Africans in Portugal not only used the brotherhoods for religious and welfare purposes, but they also used them as forums for preserving and transforming African culture. (...) One of these, which highlighted the theme of Portuguese/Congo/Angola/Brazil linkages, involved a ceremony in which Africans dramatised the conversion and crowning of the Christian King of the Congo.[77]

Besides the Saints day—including St. John's that, according to Freyre, was one of the first popular Church festivals in Brazil—another important celebration in Colonial Brazil was Christmas. In Colonial Brazil religion pervaded all aspects of life and provided unity to disparate cultural and ethnic elements. Many cultural expressions that had arisen on the plantations acquired new features in the cities. The cities worked as crucibles, where cultural practices acquired a broader visibility and were mixed with profane cultural manifestations, such as Carnival.

2.3 – The Development of the Cities

Parallel to the expansion of the small villages that developed around the sugar mills and farms came also the development of coastal cities with a great economic, social and cultural impact in the Northeast: cities such as Olinda, the first capital of Pernambuco, and Recife, its current capital. Olinda was the first permanent European settlement of Pernambuco and was established in 1537. Fifty years latter, Olinda's population was approximately 700 people, who included, the owners of the Captaincy

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[76] Linda M. Heywood, "The Angolan-Afro-Brazilian Cultural Connections," *Slavery and Abolition - A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 20, n. 01 (1999): 10.

[77] Ibid., 11-12.

(Duarte Coelho and family), the clergy, including Jesuits who arrived in 1551, the Carmelites (1580) and the Franciscans (1585). In addition, the city was inhabited by the military and other Crown employees. Excluding the clergy, the majority of the population was composed of Portuguese, who went to Brazil in Duarte Coelho's expedition. Many of these men had received lands and had become landowners, while others became traders. Besides the Portuguese inhabitants, there were rootless Indians, African slaves and the first generation of mixed people.[78] Olinda's population, even if more heterogeneous, was numerically inferior to that of the rural areas. With the development of the sugar industry, the major part of the captaincy's inhabitants was concentrated in the mills and plantation areas. As in the rural areas, the poverty of the poor city dwellers contrasted with the splendour and wealth of the "lords" of the sugar mills. As pointed out by Fernando de Azevedo:

> The city was a place to which one [the rural aristocrat] went to flee from the tedium of work in the [9]country, to expand in the tumult of potentates one's instinct for power and for the easy ostentation of opulence and of luxury which the wealth accumulated on their plantations permitted to the sugar lords (. . .) This wealth overflowed into the city houses, in the reckless spending of feast and banquets and in tourneys and other celebrations.[79]

Recife, established three years later than Olinda in 1540, was initially a place for the delivery of merchandise. Because of the enormous extent of its reefs, Recife was a natural port. The co-dependence of Olinda village and the port of Recife was established from the beginning of the Portuguese occupation. A functional specialisation quickly emerged in which the village was the domain of authorities, sugar aristocracy and clergy, while the port was the place where maritime activities, commerce and craftwork prospered. According to Freyre, Recife was nothing more than an agglomeration of free *mestizos,* together with some artisans and peddlers of European origin. However, as a

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[78] Virginia Pontual and Vera Milet, "Olinda: Memórias e Esquecimento," *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Estudos Urbanos e Regionais* 4 (2002): 18.

[79] Fernando de Azevedo, *Brazilian Culture: An Introduction To the Study of Culture in Brazil,* trans. William Rex Crawford (New York: Macmillan, 1950), 13. Freyre observes that many of the farms and sugar-mill owners would spend up to six months in Olinda during the period of the feast-days, which coincided with the rainy season, from Carnival to St. John's Day. (Freyre, *The Master and the Slaves,* 274).

consequence of Dutch occupation from 1630 until 1654[80] this situation was reversed. Recife was transformed into one of the most structured and beautiful cities of colonial Brazil while Olinda was to be almost completely burned and destroyed. With Recife's improvement, there were advances in urban life. These included an increase in administrative, industrial and commercial activities and consequently, a growth in the urban population, as well as the enrichment and empowerment of the merchants.

2.4 – Urban Expansion

With the rise of commerce and industry and consequently, the development of the bourgeoisie, life in Recife would be profoundly transformed. The growth of the city began to exercise a great power of attraction over the rural population from the sugar farms and sugar mills, including the plantation owners, those of mixed race and the freed slaves. The expansion of the capital's populations can mostly be explained by the rural exodus that began at the end of the nineteenth century. There were several contributing factors: the end of slavery in 1888, the faltering of the sugar industry and consequently the reduced number of jobs, and the absence of an agrarian reform policy that could keep the ex-slaves in rural areas. Given these conditions, a great number of freed slaves came from the sugar plantation areas to the cities. Additionally, the terrible drought that occurred in the inland area of the Northeast region (*Sertão*) from 1877 to 1879 resulted in large-scale migration toward the coastal cities, mainly to Recife.

Parallel to the city mansions, which were adaptations of the big houses of the rural planters, there was a growth of shanties where the poor population lived. These shanties developed without any urban plan and were, indeed, an agglomeration of people living under conditions that were unacceptable in humanitarian term. With the expansion of the urban population came more cultural, racial and class conflicts. The city was a more dynamic and diversified space compared to the stratification of the

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[80] With the development of the sugar industry, the port of Recife became the biggest port in Portuguese America in a short period of time. Sugar was the main source of wealth for Pernambuco and it was exported through this rapidly expanding city. Such wealth soon aroused Holland's interest. The Dutch, who had already invaded Salvador in 1624, turned their attention toward the sugar produced in that region and exported through this port. In February 1630, the Dutch invaded Olinda and Recife. In 1634, to exact revenge on the Portuguese for the resistance they put up in Olinda, the Dutch burned down Olinda village and set up their own government in Recife. Nevertheless, with victory at the battle of Guararape and other smaller clashes, Portuguese rule replaced that of the Dutch in Pernambuco in 1654.

rural areas, so with the growth of the poor, free population and further, with the "Europeanization" of the city life style, conflicts between the upper and lower classes became much more explicit and frequent.

The opening of the Brazilian ports to foreign commerce at the beginning of the nineteenth century was an important factor in that process. In the port of Recife, ships arrived frequently from many different countries.[81] Trade with England increased and, consequently, many English and their customs became part of Recife's everyday life. In fact, English and French lifestyles became a reference point for the upper classes, giving rise to a "fervent" apology for the "Westernization" of Brazil. Freyre remarks that "old" customs and the "old" way of life, which until that time had been closer to Eastern cultures (mainly Africa and Asia), were rejected by the elite and started being replaced by European culture.[82] According to Freyre, the great concern of the City Council of Recife was to give the state's capital all possible semblance of a European lifestyle. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, the City Council issued many ordinances to repress "abuses", obviously related to the lower class population, mainly to blacks "whose behaviour or dress was considered unsuited to their servile state."[83] Freyre cites many examples of these prohibitions published in the acts of City Council of Recife:

> To shout, scream, or cry out in the streets, a restriction direct against the Africans and their outburst of a religious or festive nature. (...) Negro porters were also forbidden to go about the streets singing between nightfall and sunup. This was a severe restriction, given the African habits of lightening work with songs; 'dancing and singing, shouts and shrieks' were forbidden in the hours of silence; 'those games [*capoeira*] were forbidden in streets, squares, on beaches or stairs, which Negroes and vagabonds are in the habits of playing, under penalty of two to six day's of imprisonment, if they were free, or twelve to thirty-six stripes in prison, after which they will be handed over to their master'; (...) Anyone found 'naked on the shore' or 'taking a bath uncovered, without due decency would be punished by imprisonment or the lash.[84]

The large number of injunctions and prohibitions which favoured one single group, "a single minority and regional class, race or culture" indicated that parallel with the process of "Europeanization" of Brazil, there came an strengthening of the old system

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[81] France, England, Germany, Africa, China, etc. (Freyre, *The Mansion and the Shanties*, 271-301).

[82] Freyre assumes Portugal was closer to the Oriental in culture than Europe, both from the Moorish presence in the country and for its geographical location. (Ibid., 273-4).

[83] Ibid., 261.

[84] Ibid., 261-2.

of oppression, and in such milieu, not only of slaves and servants by the master and of the poor by the rich, but of Africans and natives by those who considered themselves "the surrogates of European culture", that is to say, the elite residents of the city. About this, Freyre writes:

> (. . .) those justices of peace, those provincial presidents, those chiefs of police, those priests spent their time harassing the *batuques,* the *cadombles,* the *maracatùs* of slaves and Africans as though they were waging a crusade. In Salvador, in keeping with ordinances issued by the City Council in 1844, '*batuque* dances and gatherings of slaves in any place and at all times' were forbidden.[85]

Freyre, criticising the role played by a newspaper from Recife in endorsing the repressive actions against cultural practices of the black people, affirmed "this policy of coercion and violent repression met with the approval of the leading organs of opinion of the period. In 1856 the local police, applauded by a newspaper as enlightened as the *Diário de Pernambuco,* dispersed a group of Negroes of Rosario dancing in Recife at carnival time.[86]

When researching the local Recife newspaper mentioned by Freyre, the *Diário de Pernambuco,* I came across articles referring to the restrictions made by the police authorities on popular entertainment, including Mamulengo. Just to cite two:

> The head of the police dispatched a circular to the police authorities strongly prohibiting the entertainment known as Boi, Mamulengo and Fandango, and allowing the Pastoril until the date of 11 of the current.[87]

> The district commandant determined to the police force that, on the days of Pastoril, to assign one more policeman, apart from the ones already assigned on the articles 17 and 16, in order to inspect the Pastoril of the Aldeia of the 14° district.[88]

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[85] Ibid., 265.

[86] Ibid., 266.

[87] "O Dr. chefe de polícia expedio circular às autoridades policiaes, prohibindo terminantemente os divertimentos denominados Boi, Mamulengo e Fandango, permitindo os Pastoris até o dia 11 do corrente." (*Diário de Pernambuco,* 05 January 1902, p. 02.)

[88] " O Sr. Commandante do distrito determinou que o corpo que fizer a guarnição nos dias em que houver pastoril, nomeie mais um official além dos que trata o artigo 17 de 16 do mez findo, afim de fiscalizar o pastoril da aldeia do 14º sendo que, para acompanhar a cada um dos officiaes nomeados se escalarão duas praças". (*Diário de Pernambuco,* 08/12/1901, p. 1,2). Aldeia is a popular area of Recife

In 1903 the City council promulgated a law (Lei n.344 - 01/01/1903) to control the use of the public space. This law, besides establishing taxes for the use of the public areas (streets, markets and fairs) by ambulant traders and show-men, also obliged the latter to get a licence from the *Secretaria da Repartição Central da Polícia* (Police Central Station) in order to present their entertainments.[89] While repression and restrictions were applied to the use of the public spaces by popular artists, there was an expansion in the number of theatres and private clubs for the amusement of the upper classes, such as the *Teatro Apolo*, inaugurated in 1842 and *Teatro Santa Isabel*, a neo-classic building inaugurated in 1850. From the Italian company *Clara della Guardia*[90] to the *Imperial Companhia Japoneza Kahdara do Teatro Kabuki de Tokio* [Kahdara Imperial Company of Kabuki Theatre of Tokyo][91] from the end of eighteenth until the middle of twentieth century, many international operas and theatre companies performed in the latter.

2.5 - The Mamulengo in Recife in the end of the Nineteenth and Beginning of the Twentieth Century

There is no precise number of *mamulengueiros* in Recife by the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. According to Borba Filho, the only reliable information about this period is about the puppeteer Dr. Babau (Severino Alves Dias), one of the famous *mamulengueiros* of that time. The puppeteer Januário de Oliveira (Ginu) remarks that Babau performed every weekend on the streets of Recife being helped by his wife.[92] Borba Filho mentions also Cheiroso, who succeeded Dr. Babau, acting in the city from around 1930 till 1950. Borba Filho does not refer to the puppeteer real name. The nickname Cheiroso (Scented) had derived from the puppeteer's profession, since he made and sold perfumes on the streets of Recife.[93]

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[89] *Diário de Pernambuco*, 01 January 1903, p. 02.

[90] Anton Giulio Bragaglia, *Pulcinella*, Firenze: Sansoni Editore, 1953), 479.

[91] *Diário de Pernambuco*, 15 October 1930, p. 03.

[92] Januário de Oliveira, interview *Museu da Imagem e do Som* , Recife, December, 1975. There is no information about the date of Dr. Babau birth. In regard to the date of his death, Ginu, who worked with Dr. Babau, in the same interview, says that Dr. Babau would have died in 1927. Nevertheless, by the advertisements appearing in the *Diário de Pernambuco*, it seems that Babau performed in Recife until 1931.

[93] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 80.

However, thanks to some advertisements published in *Diário de Pernambuco*, we can presume that the number of *mamulengueiros* was in fact quite large. These references (from 1896 till 1940) were advertisements published by many parish churches of Recife, and the metropolitan area. Basically these articles were invitations to people to celebrate Christmas festivities from 24th December till 5th January. Masses, food and gift stalls, fireworks, and popular entertainments, among them, the Mamulengo, Pastoril, and Cavalo-Marinho (Bumba-meu-Boi) formed the so-called Christmas attractions. From this significant source of information (considering the paucity of data regarding to Mamulengo), we can assert that those Christmas festivals, which persisted until the latter half of the twentieth century, were one of the biggest means of entertainment for the population in Recife, and the metropolitan area. Last but not least, these events happened in very poor neighbourhoods as well as in the elite areas.

It is important to emphasize that the same popular *folguedos*, which were once repressed by the police, are exactly the ones that appeared with more frequency during these Christmas festivities. This shows us that while they were organised (and possibly controlled) by "respected" institutions such as the church, they were accepted and encouraged; while on the other hand, when organised in an independent way, by the artists themselves, they suffered persecution.

The very first extract notice about the Mamulengo, already mentioned by Borba Filho, is precisely of one of these advertisements, on 23rd December 1896: [94]

> Tomorrow there will be held many pastimes in the picturesque suburbs, such as crib, little manger and mamulengo, two huge bandstands for music and entertainment in many tents, there is going to be a mass at midnight, with a surprising illumination, lots of flags, fireworks and so on . . . The manager of Caxangá Company will run extra trains from 6pm till daylight.[95]

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[94] Ibid., 67. The author refers to the announcement on 23/12/1896 in the *Jornal do Recife*, instead of *Diário de Pernambuco*. As far as research has shown there is no reference to the newspaper cited by Borba Filho. Moreover, the same advertisement cited by the author of the same data is found in the *Diário de Pernambuco*, which led us to surmise that Borba Filho mixed up the name of the newspaper.

[95] *Diário de Pernambuco* , 23 December, 1896, p. 02. "Haverá amanhã diversos divertimentos no pittoresco arrabalde, taes como presépio, lapinhas e mamulengo, dois monumentais coretos para banda de música e entretenimento em muitas barracas, havendo missa a meia-noite; assim como, surpreendente iluminação, embandeiramentos, fogos do ar e de vista, etc., etc. O gerente da companhia de Caxangá expedirá trens extraordinários das 6 horas da tarde até o amanhecer do dia."

One can see through the extra trains' operation timetable that this merry-making used to last the whole night long. The advertisements show us that, every year, the churches proclaim the sophistication of their attractions. This can lead us to believe that there was a great deal of competition among the parish churches. Local illumination (candles or alcohol lights); merry-go-round, music bands (including Jazz-band); choir; popular entertainments; and even "*fakirismo*" (related to fakir) were mingled with the religious celebrations. Between 1902 and 1936, the Mamulengo is listed as an attraction in almost all parish churches. Another example is as follows:

> The celebrations to be held today at Campina de Casa Forte promise to be sparkling. The electrical illumination at the centre of the Campina will be astonishing as it is in the shape of the sun. The church's facade illuminated in all its contour lines will have a fantastic emphasis. (...) During the whole night, lots of fireworks will be launched with special attention to a panel representing the Christ birth. (...) There will be all sorts of amusements for the public, such as: a beautiful crib with charming girls; funny mamulengo of Mestre Babau, etc. [96]

From 1930 on, some advertisements for Christmas celebrations organised by non-religious organizations, such as: Usina do Timbu (Sugar Refinery Timbu), 1930; Tecelagem de Seda e Algodão de Pernambuco (Silk and Cotton Textile Factory of Pernambuco), 1937; Centro Educativo Operário (Workers Educational Centre), 1938; Sindicato dos Fabricantes de Pólvora (Trade Union of Gun-power Makers), 1940, began to appear.[97]

The majority of these advertisements do not mention the mamulengueiros' names; they just refer to the Mamulengo itself. Nevertheless, two advertisements, one

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[96] "Prometem ser de um brilho extraordinário nas festas de hoje na Campina de Casa Forte. A illuminaçao elétrica será deslumbrante, no centro da campina esta disposta em forma de sol. A fachada da igreja illuminada em todos os seus contornos apresenta um realce extraordinário. (...) Durante toda a noite serão queimados lindos fogos de artifícios destacando-se o painel do nascimento de Cristo. (...) Toda sorte de divertimentos o publico encontrara naquelle local. Taes como: um lindo presepe de mimosas crianças, engraçado mamulengo do conhecido Dr. Babau; etc." *Diário de Pernambuco*, 24 December 1930, p.05.

[97] In Brazil, workers institutions, such as societies and trade unions, started to be empowered during the 1930s with the Getúlio Vargas government. Sugar refineries, which were developed from the very first mills, became from the 1940s on, one of the biggest Christmas celebrations promoters in the interior areas of the state.

in 1930 (above mentioned), and another in 1931[98] make a nominal reference to Dr. Babau that confirms this puppeteer's popularity in Recife, as Borba Filho had indicated. Another interesting point is that the Mamulengo is, in general, announced followed by adjectives which emphasise its qualities: "(. . .) mamulengo by a competent professional";[99] "(. . .) there will be a well fitted up mamulengo";[100] "(. . .) presentation of a respectable mamulengo";[101] among others. This fact can be considered as evidence that Mamulengo did not come with a good reputation among the elite. Therefore, to be able to be included in the festivals organised by the church these performances should have some kind of "distinct quality". We can presume that this difference is related to the themes that usually appear in Mamulengo, that is, sex, drinking, fighting, and the representation of the clerical figures, itself. As a consequence, a "well fitted up" Mamulengo could mean the actual absence of these themes.

Through the greater quantity of Mamulengo performances happening at the same time (that of the parish churches' Christmas festivals), we can consider three possible scenarios: first, there was a great number of mamulengueiros living in Recife and in metropolitan area; second, the same mamulengueiros presented themselves in more than one parish church per evening; and finally, there was a big influx of mamulengueiros coming from the interior regions of the state during this period of the year. The lack of nominal references to these puppeteers does not allow us to make a final conclusion about these suppositions.

Unfortunately another source of information that could illuminate these questions presents the same problem. As already mentioned, from 1903 on, the City Council demanded that the show-men get a license from the *Secretaria da Repartição Central da Polícia* (Police Central Station) in order to present their shows. The majority of these petitions[102] referring to the Mamulengo presentations were signed by

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[98] "(...) the well-known mamulengo of Dr. Babau will perform a entire new repertoire." ("o celebre mamulengo do Dr. Babu apresentara novo e impagavel repertorio.") *Diário de Pernambuco*, 23 December 1931, p.06.

[99] Ibid.

[100] *Diário de Pernambuco*, 23 December 1933, p.05.

[101] *Diário de Pernambuco*, 23 December 1936, p.05.

[102] These documents are locate on the *Arquivo Público do Estado de Pernambuco* (Public Archive of Pernambuco State), Recife.

priests, and they refer specifically to the presentations during the above-mentioned Christmas festivals. Only two single petitions belonged to the puppeteers themselves and they refer to presentation outside the Christmas period. They are:

> I decide on this day to give Mr. José de Almeida Pedrosa permission to operate freely a group of talking puppets named "Os Matutos do Interior" (The Country Bumpkins), that is placed on Pátio do Terço (. . .) [103]

> I decide on this day to give Mr. Agripino Carneiro de Lacerda permission as he asked for, to present in Farol Street, in Olinda, an amusement called 'Mamulengo' once he satisfies the necessary regulations.[104]

If we compare the quantity of references to Mamulengo, which appeared as part of Christmas festivities, with these two requests for licenses, we can easily deduce that the great majority of mamulengueiros in Recife presented themselves without a proper license. It is conceivable that this situation, among other factors, has been a fundamental element in the reduction of the shows' duration presented in the urban context, if compared to the ones performed in a rural context.

2.6 – The Northeast inland areas and its influence on the Mamulengo

While the coastal area (*Zona da Mata*) developed from the sugar industry, the inland areas of the Northeast (*Agreste* and *Sertão*)[105] were inhabited and developed mainly through increased cattle farming. The development of the sugar mills demanded complementary activities without which sugar production would have been impossible, namely cattle farming and subsistence agriculture. Cattle breeding was the primary economic activity of the inland areas of the Northeast and fulfilled a dual function: to

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[103] "Resolvo nesta data conceder licença ao Sr. José de Almeida Pedrosa, a fim que o mesmo possa fazer funcionar, livremente, uma trupe de bonecos falantes denominada, 'Os Matutos do Interior' a qual se acha localizada no Pátio do Terço (...)" Secretaria da Repartição Central da Policia, 25 October (the year is illegible), portaria n° 890.

[104] "Resolvo nesta data conceder licença ao Sr. Agripino Carneiro de Lacerda, conforme requereu, para fazer funcionar na rua do Farol, em Olinda, um divertimento denominado "Mamulengo", uma vez que satisfaz as exigências regulamentares". Ibid, 25 November 1927, portaria n°.625.

[105] The Agreste is an intermediate area between the Zona da Mata (coastal area) and the Sertão and occupies about eleven per cent of the Northeast territory. With its reasonable rainfalls and soil conditions, regular agricultural activity developed there, including the growing of cereals, cotton and fruit, as well as cattle breeding. The Sertão is the western area of the Northeast and occupies half of the total area of the region. It is the poorest sub-area, with its irregular rainfall and periodic droughts.

complement the economy of the sugar plantation and to initiate the penetration, conquest and settlement of the interior areas of the Northeast.

This process did not occur immediately. At first, cattle were reared on sugar farms, used as stock and beasts of burden. As time went by, the sugar industry expanded and more land was required to grow more sugar cane. Hence, the cattle were driven away from the limits of the agricultural area and the second stage began, in which a clear delineation came to exist between agriculture and cattle breeding. However, they were still neighbouring and interdependent activities. From the beginning of the seventeenth century, cattle farming became more independent of the sugar farms, occupying great tracts of interior land, mainly in the *sertão* area.

The inland communities were mostly composed of mixed-race poor people, displaced Indians, ex-slaves and runaway slaves. The latter, having escaped from the farms of coastal areas, hid themselves in distant inland regions. Freyre points out that often it was the cattle that "guided" the men to the lands of the interior, not the opposite, as one might expect: "the cattle, looking for pastures of good quality, entered the virgin lands, moving ever further westward. The cowboys, following the cattle, found new lands, and thus, established new pastures, fixing themselves in the new environment."[106]

In this new pattern of land use appeared the figure of the *vaqueiros* (cowhands), one more element to emerge in the colonial society. The valuation of the cattle and the consequent sprouting of the cowhand figure, "the knight of the leather armor",[107] gave rise to a complete mythology based on the cattle cycle, which exerted an enormous influence in the culture of this region. As Pimentel notes, the cowhand (or cowboy), "a central character of the so-called folklore of the cattle cycle", has an immediate identification with the public due to his immense charisma and recurrent presence in the northeastern imaginary.[108] This can be verified in the numerous popular romances and popular poetry (*Cordel*) and in the folk dramatic expressions, such as

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[106] Freyre, *Master and Slaves*, 342.

[107] Due to the characteristics of the sertão vegetation (caatinga) the cowhands had to protect their bodies against the thorny branches, which gave rise to a particular type of costume composed of hat, waistcoat and a cover for the legs, all made out of leather.

[108] Altimar Pimentel, "Vaqueiros heróicos e sagazes," *in*: *Vida & Arte* (n.d), 06, quoted in Alcure, Adriana S. "*Mamulengo* e *cavalo-marinho*: o universo compartilhado das *brincadeiras* da Zona da Mata pernambucana" Unpublished paper, 04.

Bumba-meu-Boi and *Cavalo Marinho*. With regard to the puppet theatre, the cowboy and the ox figures are central characters in the great majority of the northeast puppet theatre. As already noted, the puppet theatres of Rio Grande do Norte (João Redondo) and Paraíba (Babau), and in the Mamulengo practiced in some areas of Pernambuco, mostly in the inland areas, feature the most popular hero, Benedito, a black and poor cowboy employed on a farm of a rich and white landowner. In the Mamulengo of Zona da Mata Pernambuco, the cowboy character plays a less important role and seems to be derived directly from the *Cavalo Marinho* folguedo.[109] This may be understood as the reflection of the small activity of cattle breeding in the coastal area, and consequently,



Fig. 1.8 – The cowboys in the Sertão of Pernambuco. The costume made of leather protects the bodies against the thorny branches of the *caatinga* vegetation.

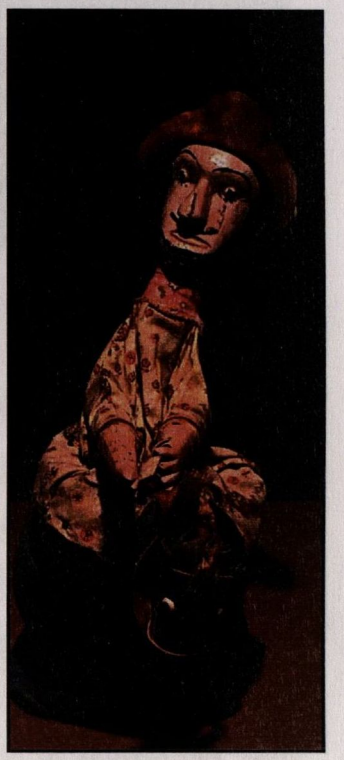

Fig 1.9 – A cowboy riding a horse. Rod puppet made by Solon.

the lesser importance of the cowboy in that region.

The communities, which developed in the inland areas, did not have the same rigid social divisions as the coastal areas and sugar plantations, yet it was by no means a more democratic society. Among the people who emigrated westward, there were owners of large estates primarily devoted to cattle breeding. Even if in the inland area there were a certain number of *minifundios* and middle-sized farms, the greater part of it, as in the Zona da Mata, was in the hands of owners with fairly large estates. Camarotti remarks that:

[109] See discussion on Chapter Two.

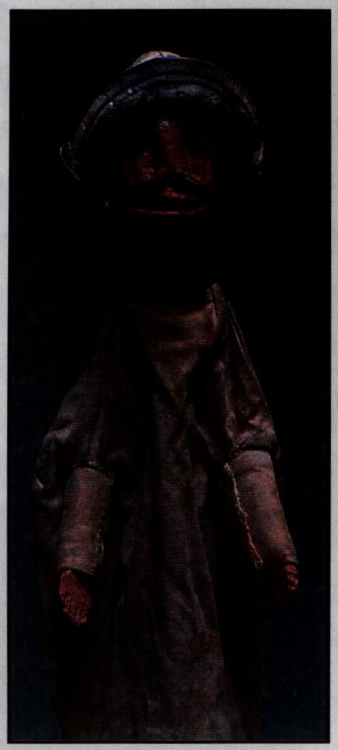

Fig.1.10 – "João Raimundo". A glove-puppet made by the puppeteer Maximiniano Dantas



Fig.1.11 – A cowboy glove-puppet.

The owners of these estates allowed landless families to clear the land and grow food crops or cotton in exchange for grazing rights or rent, or share of the cotton production, or for one or two days of free labour each week. These relationships were, and are, highly exploitative of the landless, who, having no advantages with which to negotiate and with minimal legal rights are forced to accept very harsh contracts to remain on the land.[110]

Moreover, it is important to register the presence of the *jagunços*, that is, murderous gunmen and bodyguards of the colonels, who defended with extreme violence the interests of their master, their family and their properties. As we can observe, the system of exploitation that started in the coastal areas had moved westward. The antagonism between the master of the *casa grande* and the slave of the *senzala*, in the context of *Sertão*, turned into the antagonism between the *coronel*[111] (Colonel) and the exploited "free" but landless poor people.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, with the discovery that cotton grew well in the *Sertão* area, there was an increase in the flow of people coming from the other sub-regions in hope of employment. Nevertheless, the terrible drought that occurred in the region from 1877 to 1879 resulted in large-scale migration toward the Northeast coastal cities, to the North and Central-South regions of Brazil. Many of the migrants were not so successful and returned to their inland homes. Meanwhile others had never left the *Sertão*. These people had to confront periodic droughts and their consequences: unemployment and poverty. In addition, the *sertanejos* (the people from the *sertão*) experienced many types of violence practised by the colonels and their *jagunços*: sexual violence and family homicides; robbery of cattle and lands, and so

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[110] Camarotti, "The Nature, Roots and Relevance", 108.

[111] The figure and role played by the *coronéis* (colonels) gave a rise to the *coronelismo,* a term used to designate the authoritarian power of rural strongmen.

on. With the lack of government policy and the fragility of law and order institutions, a nomadic existence began to take place within the region, with desperate families moving around in the vast territory of *sertão* in search of relief for their hunger and thirst. In such a context, the *sertanejos* tried to make justice with their own hands, generating, as a form of defense, a social phenomenon that propagated revenge and more violence: the *cangaço.*

The *cangaceiros* were armed men and women who assaulted cities, villages and farms. The most famous was Lampião, the great leader, and his partner, Maria Bonita. Lampião's band consisted of more than fifty people, both men and women. During the 1920s and 1930s, they crossed seven states of the Northeast region, pursued by more than 4,000 soldiers or 'monkeys', as the *cangaceiros* called the police force. They were exterminated in the late 1930s, almost all with extreme violence.[112]

Another phenomenon that developed in the *Sertão* was the *fanatismo.* The *Fanáticos*, whose most prominent spiritual leader was Beato Antonio Conselheiro, was a group of mystics who believed their misery was a consequence of their sins. Therefore, the only way to acquire heavenly forgiveness was through prayer and penitence. After leading a nomadic life in the interior, in 1893 Beato Conselheiro and his followers built a settlement known as Canudos on an abandoned ranch in the *sertão* of Bahia. It attracted people coming from diverse parts of the interior. The Canudos population reached somewhere between 20,000 and 30,000 inhabitants. After three defeated military expeditions, a well-equipped expedition made up of 8,000 men was sent to fight against the 'fanatics'. The fight lasted one month and Canudos was completely razed. Canudos's defenders died in battle or were taken prisoner and their throats were slit. Beato Conselheiro himself died from disease some days before the end of the battle.

Camarotti understands that such violent reactions to both movements, carried out by the force of government, jointly with the landowners and the bourgeoisie, demonstrates the power that such groups had acquired in the Northeast: "such groups

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[112] The *Cangaço* had started in the eighteenth century, with the *cangaceiro* Jesuíno Brilhante (known as Cabeleira). He attacked Recife and was imprisoned and hanged in 1786. As time went by, the *Cangaço* became a lucrative activity and more cangaceiros groups appear stealing from farms and killing people in the sertão areas. But, unlike Lampião's group, these first cangaceiros were at service to the colonels.

of rebels grew out of the agrarian crisis, became very dangerous to the existing order and were, therefore, severely persecuted for many years."[113]

The *Cangaço* and *Fanáticos* would profoundly mark the North easterners' imagination, and their leaders were transformed into legends. This can be observed in the extensive references to the figures of Lampião and Maria Bonita, and Beato Antonio Conselheiro, in both high and popular cultural expressions. In the *cordel* literature, Lampião and his band appear as good bandits battling against, and eventually overcoming the forces of darkness and evil. As noted by Dineen, in many cordel *folhetos* "the medieval world of kingdoms, kings and vassals becomes associated with the relation and subordination in the rural North east", with the *cangaceiros* replacing the good knights.[114]

With regard to the Northeast puppet theatre, many references to Lampião and his group can be found. The figures of Lampião and Maria Bonita present in the collection of *Museu do Mamulengo* express the popularity of these characters in the Mamulengo. Zé de Vina, a puppeteer from Zona da Mata, Pernambuco, tells that he used to perform a scene featuring Lampião and his *cangaceiros*, which he learned from one of his masters, Pedro Rosa, who died in 1970 when he was 85 years old. He recounts the scene as follows: "The scene started with eight soldiers drinking *cachaça* (a spirit made of cane sugar). When they were completely drunk, Lampião and his band invaded the city, robbing houses and people. It ended with a fight between the *cangaceiros* and the soldiers, with the latter, because of their drunkenness, losing the combat." He added that, although Lampião was a feared figure in the Northeast, the scene was "very comic with the soldiers making lots of mistakes during the fight."[115]

In his study of João Redondo puppet theatre, Delfilo Gurguel refers to many puppet characters that have names of famous *cangaceiros*, such as Pilão Deitado, Antonio Silvino and Jararaca. For Gurguel, this attests to the adherence of the puppet theatre to the history of the region.[116] The *cangaceiros* scenario also appears frequently in the *Casa de Farinha.* A complete set of these mechanical puppets, made by Sauba, a

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[113] Camarotti, "The Nature, Roots and Relevance", 111

[114] Mark Dineen, "The Relationship between Erudite Literature and Popular Culture in North East of Brazil: Ariano Suassuna and Armorial Art," *Latin American Studies* 50 (1990): 15.

[115] Zé de Vina, interview, Lagoa de Itaenga, Pernambuco, 06 March 2004.

[116] Deifilo Gurgel, *João Redondo: Teatro de Bonecos do Nordeste* (Petrópolis: Vozes, UFRN, 1986), 19

puppet-maker from Pernambuco, shows an attack by Lampiao's group at a farm. As can be seen by the pictures below, the scene is depicted in great detail with dramatic sense and expresses the violence of such attacks.

In *Sertão*'s more isolated and rustic space, there arose a culture significantly different to the coastal culture. According to Freyre, the relatively small number of Africans involved in the formation of that area resulted in a less festive culture than that on the coast.[117] Moreover, many scholars and writers relate the cultural practices of the *sertanejo* to the climate of the region and the living conditions deriving from it.[118] The constant drought and the lack of governmental attention to the region,



Fig.1.14 – "The attack of Lampiao's group". *Casa de Farinha* set of puppets



Fig. 1.15 – Detail of a dead man



Fig. 1.12 – Two glove puppets portraying Maria Bonita and Lampião. Each puppet carries a ruffle hanged in the back. (Solon).



Fig. 1.13 – Lampião and Maria Bonita portrayed by rod puppets. (Zé Lopes).

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[117] Freyre, *Master and Slaves*, 346

[118] The two most significant works were the romances *Os Sertões* of Euclides da Cunha and *Vidas Secas* of Graciliano Ramos.

considered the poorest in Brazil, created many conflicts that would profoundly mark the *sertão* culture.

These factors are reflected in the puppet theatre of the *sertão* in the states of Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Norte and Paraíba, which distinguished it from the Mamulengo of Zona da Mata of Pernambuco. In the latter, the influence of many *folguedos* with its dances and songs, the booths, more colourful and sophisticated, the puppet figures and their ornaments, and so on, contrasted with the crudeness and simplification of these elements in the former, as shall be discussed in Chapter Three.

3 – The Second Half of the Twentieth Century: Major Facts and their Impact on the Mamulengo

3.1 – Progressive Period

From the 1950s until the first four years of the 1960s, there were great efforts made across most levels of society towards a more democratic Brazil.

In the Northeast region, conflicts over land, exploitation, and poverty continued to give rise to sporadic rebellion. However, it was in the 1950s that a more organised resistance by the rural masses began to emerge. Rural associations were recognised, at least in theory, by the constitution of 1946, but it was in 1955 that the 'Peasant League' was created.[119] The Peasant League's main aims were to keep peasants from being thrown off their land, to keep the price of renting land down and to fight against the practice whereby the tenant farmer had to work for free, one day a week, for the owner. Its influence soon began to grow and spread, shaking archaic structures and consequently frightening the ruling classes. The actions of the Peasant League were felt in the States of Pernambuco, Paraiba, Ceará, Goiás (in the central-west) and even Paraná in the south of Brazil. In Pernambuco, one of the Peasant League actions resulted in a strike at the sugar refinery, *Engenho da Galiléia* (Galilee Sugar Mill), in 1959. Soon the "League" would be linked with communism, reinforcing the rationale used to support the military coup in 1964, which claimed that a revolution was fomenting in the Northeast region.

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[119] Charles Antoine. *Church and Power in Brazil*, trans. and ed. Peter Nelson (London: Sheed and Ward, 1993) 65-73.

Another important movement at that period was the *Movimento de Educação de Base* (Movement for Basic Education), or MEB, set in 1961 by the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB), and embraced by other governmental and non-governmental organisations. The level of illiteracy in the Northeast region was, and still is, the highest in Brazil. The movement was aimed at assisting the disinherited classes of illiterate peasants in the area. The literacy method developed by Paulo Freyre linked teaching literacy with teaching 'awareness'. This was a truly revolutionary method in its approach, since it sets out to educate the individual within the context of his own culture, and at the same time make him an instrument in his own cultural and social development. The literacy movement had an impact on the nature of the political forces in the hinterland of the country. This change was partly due to the newly acquired right to vote, since in Brazil, at that time, the illiterate had no right to vote. Paulo Freyre´s method had, therefore, besides its cultural consequences, extremely important social and political repercussions.[120]

Paulo Freyre, together with other Pernambucan intellectuals and artists,[121] created the *Movimento de Cultura Popular,* or MCP (Movement for Popular Culture). The MCP targeted both children and adults, "for the emancipation of the people, through education and culture". The objective of MCP was to encourage "the practice and research of scientific and technical subjects, as well as sports, artistic and folk expression."[122] Therefore, popular cultural expressions began to be considered as a fundamental element of the Brazilian cultural identity, and consequently, many intellectuals turned to the art produced by the popular classes. A special commission *Comissão para a Cultura Popular* (Commission for Popular Culture) was created as part of the Ministry of Education, having Paulo Freyre as its president. The MCP had the support of the Pernambucan intellectuals and factions of the political left, such as the *União Nacional dos Estudantes* (National Union of the Students) and the *Partido Comunista Brasileiro* (Brazilian Communist Party) - PCB- among others.

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[120] Antoine, *Church and Power*, 63.

[121] Francisco Brennand, Ariano Suassuna, Hermilo Borba Filho, Abelardo da Hora, José Cláudio, Aloísio Falcão e Luiz Mendonça.

[122] Camarotti, "The Nature, Roots and Relevance", 116.

The MCP was inspired by the *Teatro Popular do Nordeste* (Northeast Popular Theatre) (TPN) created by Ariano Suassuna[123] and Hermilo Borba Filho in 1958. The aim of the TPN was to make an art based on the popular traditions of the Northeast, and therefore, artists and intellectuals started collecting elements of popular culture and used them in their own creative works. Many plays created and produced by the group were inspired by the *Pastoril, Bumba- meu-Boi* and Mamulengo, among other popular expressions, and were performed in open air spaces in factories, workers trade-unions and in the cities of the interior areas.

The Mamulengo played an important role in the TPN. The puppet theatre inspired the plots and acting style of some of the plays performed by the group. Also, some puppeteers constructed puppets and worked directly with the TPN during a certain period of time. Ariano Suassuna's play *A Farsa da Boa Preguiça* (The Farce of the Good Laziness), an apology for the Brazilian pseudo-laziness and for the poets' creative idleness, considered one of the playwright's masterpieces, was based on a Mamulengo play called *O Preguiçoso* (The Lazy Man) performed by Benedito a puppeteer, who lived in Recife.[124] Moreover, one of the puppeteer's puppet characters—Olares- was used by Borba Filho in his play *O Cabo Fanfarrao* (The Braggart Corporal).[125] Another puppeteer involved in the TPN activities was Ginu, a *mamulengueiro* from Recife already mentioned. According to Leda Alves, Ginu, constructed the puppets[126] for the play *A Vida do Grande Dom Quixote de La Mancha e do Gordo Sancho Pança*, a parody of Cervantes' romance written by Antonio José da Silva, the Jew in 1733 for the puppet theatre. Ginu also participated in many rehearsals teaching the actors how manipulate the puppets.

Even before the creation of the TPN, the popular artists were already in contact with the Recife theatrical movement. The *Teatro do Estudante de Pernambuco* (Students

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[123] Ariano Suassuna was born in Paraiba state in 1927. He is considered one of the most active Brazilian intellectuals alive. He wrote many romances and plays portraying the northeast people and popular culture.

[124] According to Borba Filho "Benedito" was not the real name of the puppeteer, but the name of his Mamulengo. Unfortunately, Borba Filho was not able to know the puppeteer's real name, since "he completely disappeared". (Borba Filho, *Fisionomia,* 117).

[125] Ibid.

[126] The set of puppets constructed by Ginu is part of the *Museu do Mamulengo* collection.

Theatre of Pernambuco) - TEP[127] organised a forum about popular culture in 1947, in which, the puppeteer Cheiroso, among other popular artists participated. From that first contact, Cheiroso began to work with the TPN. Like Ginu, he constructed the puppets figures for the play *Amor de Don Perlimplin com Beliza em seu Jardim* (The Love of Don Perlimplin for Belisa in his Garden) by Garcia Lorca and taught the actors how to work with the puppets. According to Borba Filho, inspired by the puppeteer, the TEP created special department of puppet theatre.[128]

Borba Filho argued that one of the TEP's aims was to give incentive to establish popular artists in their original region through a process of their valorisation.[129] Nevertheless, to ascertain whether interference in popular culture exerted by these people who originated from other cultural substrata had, in fact, opened the way and had stimulated the condition for the practice of these popular expressions and the survival of the popular artists; or if they have tended to be more an individual appropriation of popular culture, which in many cases had led to the flourishing of a sophisticated culture deserves serious examination. What it is known is that Ginu, one of the puppeteers actively involved in the TPN, died in 1977 "in poverty and completely forgotten."[130] But, we have to bear in mind that all the progressive movements that had started in the 1950s were repressed and destroyed with the military coup on 31 March 1964. Maybe, Ginu's fate was the reflection of the interruption of the ideals and practices of these artist and intellectuals.

3.2 – The Military Coup and the Dictatorship in Brazil

The coup was alleged to have been undertaken to "free" the country from corruption and Communism and to restore democracy. Nevertheless, for the next 21 years Brazilian democracy would face its most serious crisis since the republic was

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[127] The *Teatro do Estudante de Pernambuco* was created by a group of students of the School of Law of University of Pernambuco in 1946. Borba Filho, besides been one of its creators, directed the TEP until 1952, when it was extinguished. As informed by Suassuna, the Northeast Popular Theatre (TPN) was directed inspired in the TEP.

[128] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia,* 83.

[129] Ibid, 82.

[130] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 103.

established in 1889. The military deposed the President João Goulart[131] by invoking what is called *Atos Institucionais* (Institutional Acts) or AIs. The "revolutionary" Supreme Command was authorised to cancel mandates and to suspend political rights for a period of ten years. Based on these exceptional powers, the regime's enemies began to be persecuted, arrested and tortured.

In November 1964, Congress approved the *Estatuto da Terra* (Land Statute), whose purpose was to get agrarian reform underway and to promote an agricultural policy. But this law, just like others statutes that came later, were little more than words on paper. Consequently, the rural exodus that began at the end of the nineteenth century greatly increased in the 1970s. As will be discussed later, this phenomenon exerted a great impact on the Mamulengo practised in the rural areas.

With the increase of civil reactions against the military government and the Brazilian political situation, in December 1968 the government issued the *Ato Institucional* n. 5. By that decree, repression thus became official, censorship was complete, and the stage was set to eliminate all political opposition. In other words, it was total dictatorship. The repressors were now much less cautious in the use of torture and imprisonment. As far as the number of political prisoners was concerned, the Brazilian press estimated the figure to be 12,000 at the end of 1969.[132] The imposition of censorship was immediate and total. Many artists, writers and intellectuals with more revolutionary ideas fled Brazil and became refugees in different countries. Many who remained were tortured. Songs, books, plays, and so on, were censored and many theatres were closed. Every theatrical performance had to be previewed by the censors, who had the power to cut parts or even suspend the entire show.

As for the *mamulengueiros*, many accounts refer to the persecution they suffered. Santos pointed out that the repression of Mamulengo, which had always been persecuted for both "moral and political reasons", increased during the period of the Brazilian dictatorship with the puppeteers being harassed by the military authorities: "(. . .) because of its power to attract crowds and being an efficient way of propagating of ideas

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[131] João Goulart assumed the Presidency of Brazil in 7 September 1961. He was first elected as vice-president of Janio Quadros in October 1960. However, with Janio Quadros' resignation seven months after he had take office, João Goulart assumed the presidency. João Goulart government was considered one of the most progressive in Brazilian history, mainly due to the agrarian reform in search to a more equalitarian distribution of the land.

[132] Antoine, *Church and Power,* 20.

considered exotic and subversive, the Mamulengo was severely hit by military repression." Consequently, the performances were supervised by policemen, which, in Santos's view, suppressed "the spontaneity of the *mamulengueiros* and their audience."[133] Zé Lopes narrates an incident involving a puppeteer and a policeman during the period of the dictatorship:

> A mamulengueiro was performing in one village called Cacimba, in the district of Vitória de Santo Antão. Vitória was known for having the most ignorant policemen of the region. This mamulengueiro was presenting the scene of Joaquim Bozó and João Redondo da Alemanha and there were four policemen patrolling the show. Then, one of the policemen got nervous with the scene—it was about a fight between the old man João Redondo da Alemanha and the Negro Joaquim Bozó—and he shot one of the puppets. Everybody got scared and ran way. I don't know what happened to the puppeteer afterward, but I think they took his name at the police station. But anyway, he was relieved that the shot was directed at the puppet, and not him.[134]

As mentioned earlier, the practice of tax collection had started in Recife on 1903. But, according to Santos, as a way of increasing control over the shows, the police intensified the collection of a tax levied on performances in open areas. In his view, besides being a form of control, these taxes represented a form of exploitation of popular artists by corrupt policemen.[135] Zé de Vina reinforces Santos' assertions remarking that the collection of the tax was an old practice of the policemen of Zona da Mata, which had been imposed even before the dictatorship. Nevertheless, he also affirms that it was increased during the military government and reinforces the suspicion of the corrupt nature of these taxes, which "in the majority of cases remained in the hands of dishonest policemen."[136] The practice of the tax collections is depicted in scenes of Mamulengo shows, also appearing in *Cavalo Marinho*. In the shows of Zé de Vina, Zé Lopes and João Galego/ Marlene Silva, for example, the tax collector (a fiscal officer) generally named *Frescal* comes onstage asking for the paper that attests the payment of the tax.[137]

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[133] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 185.

[134] Zé Lopes, interview, Gloria de Goità , Pernambuco 14 February 2004. Zé de Vina confirmed the event but he didn't have more information.

[135] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 61.

[136] Zé de Vina , interview, Lagoa de Itaenga, 24 March 2004.

[137] See transcription of this scene on Chapter Three.

As a consequence of the repressive actions carried out by the military government, many puppeteers incorporated censorship into their puppet shows, being then the first ones to adapt their performances to the new political context. As pointed out before, due to the Peasant League movement in the Northeast, rural workers suffered severe political repression, and many were imprisoned, tortured and even killed. According to Santos, these factors created a veritable "paranoia in regard to communism", and in many *mamulengueiros* shows "the Devil came to be represented as a communist."[138]

Ginu tells in an interview given in 1975 (that is, during the military dictatorship period), that a few years before, when he was still performing in the streets of Recife, he was obliged to get a license in the police station every two months. Moreover he narrates: "The *mamulengueiros* here [in Recife] were regularly pursued mainly by two policemen, Zé Mendes and Sherlock [an allusion to Sherlock Holmes], who besides patrolling around our performances also interrupted the show when some 'bad' word [an aggressive or malicious word] was pronounced. They ordered me to cut, and then I cut it, I cut the word."[139]

Unfortunately there is no register of the type of subject or words that were commonly censored, since the Mamulengo, as an oral genre, had not left registers of this period. However, according to Santos, Ginu was one of the *mamulengueiros* that associated the Devil with the communists in his puppet shows.[140]

3.3 – Industrial Expansion and Rural Exodus

While the country was enduring one of its darkest political periods, the government was successful in the economic arena. The so-called economic miracle extended from 1969 to 1973, combining extraordinary economic growth with relatively low rates of inflation. But the miracle had its weak points and negative sides. One of its vulnerable points was its excessive dependence on the financial system and on international commerce, or in other terms, the attachment of the country to international monopolist capitalism. The negative aspects were mainly of a social nature; since the military government's economic policy favoured the accumulation of capital. Industrial expansion, especially in the automobile industry, favoured high and medium-income

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[138] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 185. Unfortunately Santos did not give more details about this fact.

[139] Januario de Oliveira, interview Museu da Imagem e do Som, Recife, Penambuco, December, 1975.

[140] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 185.

classes and squeezed unskilled workers' wages. This produced an accentuated concentration of income, a longstanding feature of Brazilian society. In addition, there was the imbalance between economic growth and the decline or even abandonment of state-sponsored social programs. Brazil became notorious worldwide for its high industrial potential coupled with very low standards of health, education, and housing.

The development of industries, which were located mostly in metropolitan areas, together with the military government's lack of agricultural policy, generated a disorganised growth of the urban population. From the 1940s to the 1970s, 68.8 percent of the Brazilian population lived in rural areas. Two decades after, there was an inversion in these numbers. At the end of the 1990s, 78 percent of the population was concentrated in urban areas, mostly in the big cities.[141] This phenomenon had a negative impact on the puppet theatre of the interior areas of the northeast region.

In Pernambuco state, until the first years of the 1980s, the quantity of mamulengueiros inhabiting and performing in the interior of that state was extensive.[142] The puppeteers, and the other members of the puppet groups, lived either in towns or in small farms (*sitios*) working on the land (in the rural areas), or doing small services (in the town). Although none of them lived exclusively from Mamulengo,[143] the puppet theatre represented a significant part of their working activity and consequently, functioned as a complementary resource for these popular artists' small incomes.

The Mamulengo groups[144] travelled particularly from August to March performing in the cities, but mostly in the small farms of the region. This time of the year, besides being the dry season, was also the crop period, which represented higher circulation of money and consequently, more requests for puppet shows.[145] As explained by Zé de Vina, the only Pernambucan puppeteer still alive from that time, the contracts were done in advance and generally, there were about six to seven contracts each month, with the shows occurring mostly

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[141] Ana A. Camarano and Kaizô Iwakami Beltrão, *Distribuição espacial da população brasileira: mudanças na segunda metade deste século* (Rio de Janeiro: IPEA, 2000), 14.

[142] As far as research has shown, in Pernambuco state there were at least 22 active documented puppeteers by that time. In Zé de Vina's opinion this number does not represent reality, since, as he remarks, "there were puppeteers in almost all municipalities of Pernambuco many of them living in remote areas of the state." (Zé de Vina, interview, Lagoa de Itaenga, 24 March 2004). Today, this number had drop to about 07 puppeteers.

[143] Borba Filho, Fisionomia, 118; Santos, *Mamulengo*, 64.

during the weekends and holidays. This means that almost all weekends the puppeteers presented their shows.[146] In the cities, the contracts were mainly done by small traders, generally owners of bars that used Mamulengo as a commercial strategy for attracting customers,[147] but also by politicians (mainly during their electoral campaigns) and by the city councils during the annual festivities (e.g., June cycle festivities, the City anniversary, etc.). In the *sitios*, the contracts occurred on the occasion of family festivities, (e.g., birthday, marriage), but also, to attract costumers, since, in many small farms there were bars.[148]

Depending on the location of the *sitios*, the group had to travel about 30 kilometres. The journeys were done on foot and the materials (puppets, musical instruments and booth) were carried on horses. According to Zé de Vina, and also Luiz da Serra,[149] during the journey the group used to sing and to improvise verses, "to help us to cope with the tiredness and to pass the time." Due to the great distances, generally there was more than one contract within the same area, and, sometimes, the group could stay on the road for more than fifteen days before finally returning to their homes.[150]

During the 1980s and 1990s, many of the small farms were abandoned or were sold to the owners of the cane farms,[151] with the rural population moving to the cities in search of a 'pseudo-better- life'. Parallel to the decrease of the shows in the *sitios*, came also the reduction of the contracts in the city context. With the increase in the circulation of mass media products, the city councils and local politician began to

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[144] The numbers of the group components vary from seven to nine persons, including the master puppeteers, the contra-mestre (main helper), the intermediary, one or two helpers and three or four musicians.

[145] Santos, *Mamulengo* , 42.

[146] Zé de Vina, interview in Lagoa de Itaenga on 23 March 2004. Zé de Vina information is confirmed by others puppeteers. See: Santos, *Mamulengo* 84-5; 92-3.

[147] Some puppeteers had fixed contract with bars. One example is Manuel Amendoim (Manuel Guilherme da Silva) a puppeteer from Goiana, Pernambuco, who presented every Saturday on a bar. Manuel Amendoin was born approximately on 1902, and there is information about the date of his death. Borba Filho, *Fisionomia,* 119.

[148] Although there was a significant reduction on the number of these types of contracts, they still occurred nowadays.

[149] See Santos, *Mamulengo,* 83. Luiz da Serra was considered one of the best puppeteers of Zona da Mata, Pernambuco. He was born in 1906 and died in 1986.

[150] Zé de Vina, interview, Lagoa de Itaenga, 25 March 2004.

[151] Camarano and Beltrao, *Distribuição espacial,* 32.

contract regional and national known artists (mainly music bands) instead of the local artists. Nevertheless, the reduction of the Mamulengo contracts in the rural context seems to have started even before that period. At the end of the 1970s, Luiz da Serra, in interview with Santos, already stressed this process.[152] As pointed out before, the process of rural exodus started at least a century ago. But, in the last two decades of the twentieth century it has increased greatly.



Fig. 1.17 – A television set placed in a square of Morro Branco, a village of Ceará. Interesting to note the correlation between the TV set, and the puppet stage.

3.4 - The expansion of Mass Media

After 1964, Brazil's telecommunications improved tremendously. In 1960, only 9.5 percent of urban residences had televisions. In 1970, this proportion had risen to 40 percent. During this time, thanks to the benefits received from the government, TV Globo expanded and became the national network and controlled the medium. It also became the government's mouthpiece, a propaganda channel, the likes of which had never existed in Brazil. This change would deeply mark culture in Brazil.

By the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, televisions were placed in the squares of the villages, towns and poor quarters of the capitals, where the majority of families could not afford a TV set. Consequently, the television began to occupy in these communities, the space previously occupied almost exclusively by the popular entertainments produced by the community itself. Until the middle of the 1970s the puppet theatre, along with the popular *folguedos* and the popular circuses

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[152] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 84.

were, almost exclusively, the only entertainments available, especially for the rural communities, but also for the poor urban ones. These traditional local cultural expressions underpinned the values and symbols that characterized and consolidated these communities' identities. With the presence of the television, they had to share their space with the cultural products circulated by the mass media.

The process of circulation of mass media products had already started in the first half of the twentieth century with the expansion of the radio. The radio allowed for the broadcasting of cultural manifestations from the different regions of Brazil, and played a crucial role in breaking down regionalism in popular culture, mainly in regard to the music. Rhythms, songs and singers from different regions were nationally broadcasted allowing for the fusion of the regional rhythms and consequently, giving rise to new rhythms. Also, the radio allowed for the upsurge of musical celebrities, with the singers (and their repertoire) becoming nationally known.

The radio phenomenon added new elements to the Mamulengo puppet theatre. Parodies of famous songs became part of the puppets characters' repertoires, a device also used by the circus clowns, and still largely used by some puppeteers. An illustrative example is the parody of Roberto Carlos'[153] popular song *Jesus Cristo* (Jesus Christ) made by Chico Daniel's[154] puppet character, João Redondo. This device is also used by Zé Lopes' guitar players. Also, national hits were incorporated in the Mamulengo musical repertoire and began to be performed together with traditional northeast songs. This was (and is) particularly observed in the urban context. The puppeteer Arionaldo José de Oliveira (Capitão Jatobá) from Recife, who died in 1975, mixed the music of Valdick Soriano (a popular Brazilian tacky singer) with traditional northeast rhythms. The puppeteer Ginu was proud in announcing that his Mamulengo was "*irradiado*" (radioed), referring to the innovation he brought to his puppet show by amplifying his voice.[155]

By contrast with TV broadcasting, radio, due to its less centralised nature, represented a more democratic intervention. In fact radio had always been an important publicity of the puppet theatre and others popular expressions. As remarked by Zé

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[153] Roberto Carlos, known as "The King", started his career on the 1950s. Even nowadays, he is considered the most famous Brazilian pop singer.

[154] Chico Daniel is one of the most popular puppeteers from Rio Grande do Norte.

[155] Januario de Oliveira, interview, 1975.

Lopes, the cities' local radio stations had always been used to inform the population about local cultural events, including Mamulengo shows.[156]

Television, as a more sophisticated and complex apparatus is obviously always a centralising and therefore, homogenising medium, but, in Brazil, this aspect was even more intensified. As pointed out above, from the end of the 1970s, due to TV Globo's close ties with the military government, it took on an extraordinary role. From the middle of the 1980s, TV Globo programs were broadcast to almost the entire country. With centralised production in Rio de Janeiro, and on a minor scale in Sao Paulo, the cultural codes and practices of these two metropolises became 'central' codes and were 'naturalised' as the national code. Consequently cultural expressions and practices from the rest of the country, and particularly from the rural areas, became the 'peripheral' codes. Opinions on the 'periphery' would vary from 'out-of-date' to 'typical and exotic'. They were mostly perceived as 'exceptions to the rule', the 'marginal' as opposed to the 'central'. Thus, the Southeast urban region became culturally dominant. In particular, the *carioca* (the people born in Rio de Janeiro) middle class way of dressing, speaking, thinking and behaving was 'legitimised', while the regional and rural cultural codes became marginalised. This had greatest impact among the new generations of the northeast and other 'peripheral' regions. With the process of introjection of the values and cultural practises propagated by the television, the younger generations started rejecting the cultural practices and expressions of their own regions. This general tendency was encouraged and reinforced by the municipalities' cultural policies, with the favouring of regional and national well-known groups. With these changes operating and the lack of cultural policy towards the popular manifestations, including the puppet theatre, there was a significant decrease in the number of mamulengueiros, both in the interior areas and in Recife. In 1978 the puppeteer Solon, from Carpina, Pernambuco, had already denounced this situation saying that "the Mamulengo is dying, because nobody cares."[157]

Many puppeteers' apprentices seeing the difficulties faced by their masters either gave up entirely their Mamulengo activities, or specialised in the construction and selling of puppets. One example of the latter is Sauba, who had learned his Mamulengo with Solon. Sauba stopped performing about twelve years ago and has since specialised in the construction

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[156] Zé Lopes, interview, Glória de Goitá, 15 December 2003.

[157] *Revista Mamulengo* 7 (1978): 35

of *Casa- de- Farinha.*. Sauba explains that, nowadays, the selling of puppets is much more lucrative work than performing, and said that "today I have a house and a small piece of land due to the puppets I make and sell, mainly the *Casa-de-Farinha.* Before, when I was a puppeteer I had nothing of my own.[158] The words of Sauba express a reality that had its start about 25 years ago and has continued until today. This process is a result of both a lack of public policy for popular puppeteers, and of the increasing trade of artefacts, among them puppets, specially made for tourists. This can be evidenced by the growth of craft shops, mainly in Olinda and Recife. Nevertheless, despite all the adversities, many puppeteers have resisted, which indicates that regardless of the changes, the Mamulengo still elicits a great response from the audiences. Moreover, the young audience began to represent a new market for the puppeteers, as well as the tourists.

To face the transformations operating in society mainly relating to the increasing circulation of mass media products, many changes have occurred in the Mamulengo shows. The puppeteers, like all popular artists, are capable of new interpretations and appropriations, improving works designed for public consumption, and many of the subjects, themes, and characters broadcast by the television have been reinterpreted and incorporated in their performances, such as homosexuality,[159] the increase of scenes touching upon marital infidelity,[160] and different ways of addressing to the audience.[161] On the other hand, the puppet theatre, among other traditional expressions, has been assimilated into some TV programs. In 1974 two puppet shows of Capitão Jatobá, were recorded and broadcast by the TV Globo.[162] Also, Master Solon was the central subject of a TV Educativa documentary.[163] Recently, a special program about the Mamulengo was broadcast nationally by TV Globo, having Zé de Vina as one of the puppeteers documented.[164]

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[158] Antonio Elias da Silva, interview, Carpina, Pernambuco, 18 January 2004.

[159] See discussion on page 310-11.

[160] This was particularly observed by Zé de Vina. In his view, although marital infidelity has always being a common theme appearing in Mamulengo scenes, it has increased due to the influence of television. According to him, the audience's attachment to this sort of plot is directly linked to the recurrent theme of infidelity in soap operas. Zé de Vina, interview, 24 March 2004.

[161] See discussion on page 372-3.

[162] The shows were broadcast for the states of Northeast region. In *Revista de Cultura e Educaçao*, p. 43.

[163] Revista Mamulengo, 7 (1978): 35. There is no reference to the date of the documentary.

[164] The program was broadcast on November 2004.

3.5 – The Re-democratisation of Brazil

The first significant political participation of almost the entire nation happened with the national civic movement known as *Diretas Já*, which campaigned for direct elections. It happened on 25th January 1984, and was an important step in the restoration of democracy in Brazil. In May 1985, legislation provided for direct presidential elections. It also gave illiterates the vote and it legalised all political parties. After the elections for the national constitutional assembly in 1986, the first direct presidential elections since 1960 were held in 1989. However, the marks left by twenty-one years of military dictatorship in the country have not been easy to wipe away. Moreover, five hundred years of history based on the enormous gap between the rich and poor of Brazilian society has made modernisation and development still a distant reality for a large part of the citizenry.

In the 1990s, with the advance in Brazilian tourist policy there was an increase in the puppeteers' and other popular artists' working activities. Until today, the tourist policy of Pernambuco is mostly based on the rich folk tradition of the state, and consequently, many projects were developed with the objective of showing the Pernambucan traditional culture to the tourists. One of these projects was carried out from 1989 until 1992 by the *Casa de Cultura* (Culture House) of Recife, in which mamulengueiros from the various areas of the state performed weekly for an audience composed mostly of tourists.[165]

The impact of such projects is two-sided. On one hand, there is the danger of transforming the traditional and popular expressions into a frozen 'folkloric' form, a commodity to be 'consumed' by an audience that do not share, and probably do not understand the values and symbols carried on in these traditional and popular expressions. This certainly leads to the loss of the symbolic meaning and consequently, to the lack of communication between these artists and the audience. On the other hand, such projects represent amplification of the work field for the popular artists. According to Solon, the *Casa de Cultura* project was an important step in the valorisation of the Mamulengo, and also, in the mamulengueiros' auto-valorisation.[166] Moreover, it opened up the possibility of new contracts since the project's activities were broadcast by local TV allowing for the dissemination of the artists and their works.

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[165] Leda Alves (the Director of "Casa de Cultura" from 1989-1992). Interview, Recife 14 March 2004.

[166] *Diário de Pernambuco*, 23 October 1976, sec. 2, p.01.

Following the development of the tourist industry and its natural consequence, that is, the increase of the "folk" art and artefacts, in 1998 the Brazilian Federal Government created the project *Artesanato Solidário* (Supportive Craftwork) with the objective of valorising and professionalizing artisans from the diverse regions. In 2001 the Mamulengo was included in the project, with the city Gloria de Goitá, in the Zona da Mata Pernambuco, elected as the "City of Mamulengo", having Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes as the puppeteers responsible for the workshops. An abandoned shed located in the central area of the town was transformed in the *Galpão do Mamulengo* (Mamulengo Shed), and became a centre for the development of new puppeteers and puppet makers. The shed has a permanent exhibition of the figures made by the new artisans, allowing for the tourist to visit and to buy the pieces. It is also used for presentation of puppet performances. But there has been an emphasis on the construction aspect rather than the dramatic. Hence, after four years only a few puppeteers were in fact qualified, whilst many puppet makers were trained. I will not hazard a guess as to say that the dissimilarity in the number of puppet-makers and puppeteers resulting from the project is the result of the project's orientation, since it is a much more complex question that involves a far wider context than that which is addressed in this study. But, perhaps it expresses a conflict between old practices and the new demands of the present. As already noted, the puppeteers' process of learning has been based on a long-term relationship between master and apprentice, and it seems that this concept (and practice) of learning is quite distinct from the concept (and practice) of workshops.

In May 2002 the Pernambuco Government approved the law Lei do Registro de Patrimônio Vivo do Estado de Pernambuco (Law of the Register of Living Patrimony of Pernambuco State). The law "aims to benefit the artists and masters of the popular and traditional culture of the State and to preserve the popular and traditional manifestations of the Pernambucan culture, as well as allowing the artists pass on their knowledge to the new generations." To be considered qualified for the registration the law orders the artists have: "to be alive, to be Brazilian and resident in the State of Pernambuco for more than 20 (twenty) years, to have proven participation in cultural activities for more than 20 (twenty) years, and to be able to transmit their knowledge or their techniques to the pupils or the apprentices." The selected artists receive a mensal grant of R$ 1,500 (in the case of group) or R$ 750 (in the case of single artist).[167] Since 2002, new subscriptions are opened each year.

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[167] *Lei do Registro de Patrimônio Vivo do Estado de Pernambuco- RPV/PE*. Folder of FUNDARPE. Recife, Secretaria de Educação e Cultura, n.d., 01-2.

However, the total number of selected artists cannot exceed 60. At least two puppeteers, Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes, have subscribed themselves in the current year.

Since this is a recent law, one cannot evaluate its results. But, in the face of the enormous difficulties popular artists have been confronting throughout Brazilian history and aware that the decrease of their cultural practices has been caused much more by lack of space and material resource and poverty than for lack of interest and meaning, this law represents an important step in the revitalisation of the traditional and popular manifestations.

Brazilian society, molded in these five hundred years of History, is a plural-ethnic and multi-racial society, whose cultural diversity constitutes its outstanding characteristic. From that diversity emerged multiple traditional and popular manifestations that are shaped by and also express cultural practices based on the collective memory. Due to changes operating in the context of Brazilian society, including the massive circulation of mass media products, there has been a reduction of the space for traditional and popular manifestations. It is therefore necessary that the official institutions create instruments capable of stimulating these traditional cultural practices, aware of the new forms and meaning due to the transformations inscribed by the present time. As well remarked by Carvalho, "to defend the traditions, I repeat, does not mean to completely negate what is brought by the mass media, but, what it suffocates and forbids to happen: the long memory, the plurality of voices that aim to inscribe their stories, more durable collective symbols." For that, Carvalho argues, "we have to start from what Bronowski calls 'democracy of the intellect', or Richard Rorty's 'conversion of humanity'" in a search to construct a "symbolic radical pluralism" capable of confronting cultural alienation. Carvalho argues that on the basis of the defense of this plurality, "which seems apparently based primarily on the symbolic field", there is the expressive field: "cultural alienation is not only the territory of the false consciousness or the symbolic rootlessness, but mainly the simplification and monotony of the expressive resources, the poorness of the spirit caused by the repetition-adhesion to a unique level of culture."[168]

To talk nowadays about a democratic society means to provide conditions for the production and more equal circulation of the cultural expressions created within this society. The Mamulengo puppet theatre, together with other manifestations of popular culture, is the visible expression of a long memory that has been constructed in 500 years of history; contradictory history: beauty and misery tied together, which is the result of the fusion and tensions arising from the meeting of the three basic races: Indians, Europeans, and Africans.

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[168] Carvalho, "O Lugar da cultura tradicional", 35-7.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MAMULENGO SOURCES

PART I – The European, African and Indian Influence on Mamulengo

1 – Puppet Theatre in Brazil: First References

In the book *Fisionomia e Espírito do Mamulengo*, the first about Mamulengo puppet theatre, the author Borba Filho points out that, due to the lack of documentation, it is impossible to determine when and how the puppet theatre arrived in Brazil,[1] and, we could add, what type (s) of puppet theatre (s) arrived with the European colonisers. The most commonly held hypothesis is that the first 'performances' using puppets were presented by the Jesuits, who went to Brazil with the first Portuguese colonizers. Anchieta, a Jesuit priest well-known for his wide use of the theatre as a means of converting the Brazilian Indians to Christianity, seems to have used either live 'actors', puppets or both in his sacramental autos.[2]

Although the use of actors in the Jesuits autos is well documented,[3] it is unfortunate that we cannot say the same about the use of the puppets. Borba Filho, for example, only says that "we can suppose that Anchieta may have used the puppets in his shows" and that "the Indian might have moved the puppets".[4] Magda Modesto argues that many historians have documented the use of the *Maracás* (a musical instrument) which acquire a quality of the puppet when manipulated by the *pajés* (shamans) in celebrations characterized by the Portuguese as "Nativities": "In order to induce the Indians to the battles or to the plantations, the

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[1] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia,* 55.

[2] Priest José de Anchieta, a famous Jesuit missionary, commonly known as the Apostle of Brazil, born on the Island of Tenerife, in 1553 and died in Brazil in 1596. Among other autos, Anchieta composed and directed a drama, which was acted in the open air at Bahia. The auto was performed in three languages: Tupi-Guarani, Portuguese and Spanish. By means of interludes in Tupi-Guarani, the Indians were able to grasp its meaning. This was also possibly the first attempt at dramatic art in the New World. In Mario Cacciaglia, *Pequena História do Teatro no Brasil: quatro seculos de teatro no Brasil*, (São Paulo :EDUSP, 1986).

[3] For further information about the Jesuit theatre see: Cacciaglia, *Pequena História*, 1986

[4] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 56.

pajés used their *Maracás* (a *cabaça*[5] placed over a stick, covered on the top with feathers, carved with possible eyes (sic) and full of seeds - a musical instrument) which were transfigured into puppets by the actions and voice of the shamans."[6]

H. Pereira da Silva comments on a 'very rare' print which depicts puppet theatre being presented on the deck of a fifteenth century Portuguese caravel. Describing the print, he says it showed "a very attentive audience, staring at the puppets that were moved by shadow (sic), strings and rods."[7]

As pointed out by Silva, this print can be regarded as supporting a "plausible hypothesis" that the puppet theatre was brought to Brazil at the very beginning of its colonisation around the middle of the sixteenth century, when the Jesuits arrived. However, so far I have not been able to find any other record of this print and, unfortunately, Silva died in 1995. Again, the lack of documentation leads us into the domain of hypothesis.

The first concrete reference to the puppet theatre in Brazil appears in the publication, *O Rio de Janeiro no Tempo dos Vice-reis* by Luiz Edmundo. According to the author, in the eighteenth-century the theatre of marionettes made up for the lack of stages and theatres in Rio de Janeiro. Referring to documents found in Lisbon, Edmundo mentions the existence of three different groups of this "peculiar" theatre of marionettes in Rio de Janeiro, from the time of the "Vice-Roys": door puppets, "improvised shows for the appreciation of the passers-by"; puppets in overcoat, "much simpler, yet more popular and more picturesque than the door puppets"; and finally, the living-room puppets, "more developed and resembling the theatre with actors and having characteristics of a situation comedy".[89] Luiz Edmundo describes the three types of puppet show as follows:

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[5] Type of round, hollow dried fruit measuring about 15 cm diameter

[6] Modesto, Magda, "A Arte do titere no Brasil: novas tendencias de pesquisa," *Adágio* 30/31 (2001): 53.

[7] H. Pereira da Silva, "Teatro de Bonecos," *Revista de Teatro* 463 (1987) :12

[8] Luiz Edmundo, *O Rio de Janeiro no Tempo dos Vice-reis* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1932), 448.

[9] Alexandre Passos points out the same three types of puppet theatre in Lisbon by the eighteenth century. See: Alexandre Passos, *Bonecos de Santo Aleixo: As Marionetas em Portugal nos séculos XVI a XVIII e a sua influência nos Titeres Alentejanos* (Évora: Cendrev, 1999).

The door puppet show:

> There is a wide open door, where a bedspread in a bright colour is placed across the door, separating it in two distinct parts. The upper part is the open stage, where the puppet appears and gesticulates, manipulated by the hands of a hidden man. There is no scenery. . . . In front of the stage, there is the inevitable blind man playing the accordion or the fiddle, whipping the dissonant string of the instrument. Placed on the ground there is a can to put the coins.[10]

The puppets in overcoat:

> They were made by wandering showmen usually performing in the fairs, on the churchyards on days of festivities. (. . .). The puppeteer was everything in this curious type of puppet theatre, using his own body as the stage. The overcoat stretched in a horizontal line from one shoulder to the other made the stage front. (. . .) Hidden inside the overcoat, a young boy moved the puppets. . . . the 'stage-man' is, at the same time, an 'orchestra-man' playing the guitar.[11]

The living-room puppets:

> It was set inside a house in a room with white walls stained by the smoke of the oil lamps. . . . In front of the public there was a very small stage, where marionettes of 30 to 50 cm moved in cardboard scenery. . . . The overture was the sound of a *rabeca.*[12] (. . .) On the poster was written the name of the play: *O desespero de Dona Brites que perdeu na festa da Glória as suas anquinhas de arame ou a escola das novas socias* [The despair of Dona Brita for the loss of her *panier* in the party of the Gloria or The school of the new partner] The back stage made out of cardboard depicts the Largo do Carmo. . . . The puppets have heads of cardboard and are fully dressed. They have articulated wooden arms moved by little iron springs . . . The front stage is covered from up to down with vertical iron wires.[13]

As Edmundo describes it, this play is a farce containing all the ingredients of the genre. A gallant man is trying to win a young lady's love at a party. In the middle of the ball, D. Brites, the young lady, loses her *panier* (which makes her skirt fall to the floor). The farce proceeds with D. Brites hiding herself while a young boy tries to find her *panier*. Finally, she comes back onstage (now, with her hip back in place) and the play ends

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[10] Edmundo, *O Rio de Janeiro*, 449.

[11] Ibid.

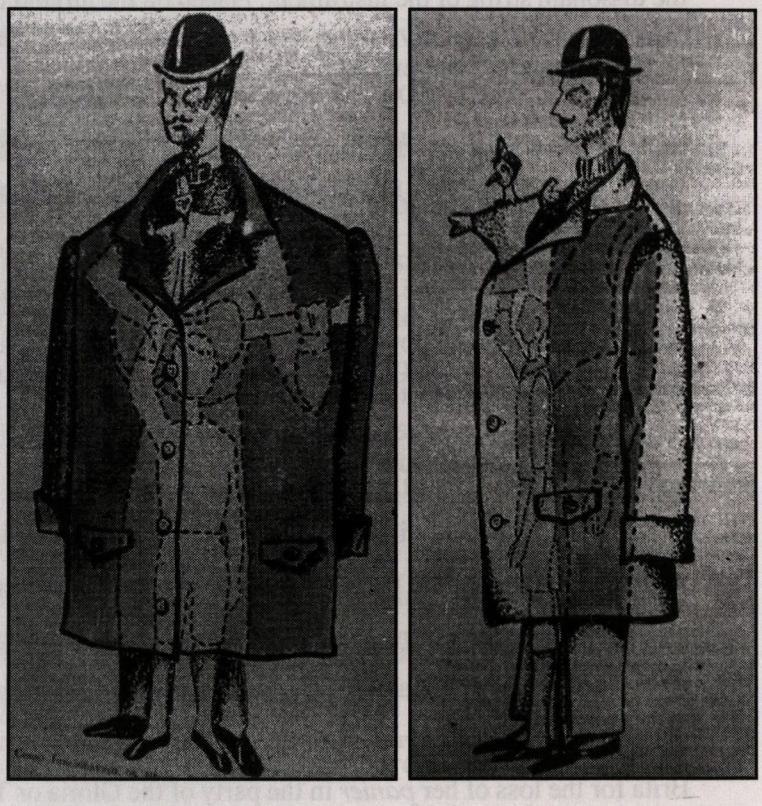
[12] Rabeca is a primitive type of violin.

[13] Edmundo, *O Rio de Janeiro*, 454.

with the gallant man asking D. Brites' mother for the hand of her daughter. The mother agrees, D. Brites faints and, after a big fight, the curtains are closed.

The three types of puppet theatre described by Edmundo in Rio de Janeiro were very popular in many European countries, and there is no doubt they were brought by the Europeans who came to Brazil.

In his book about the Portuguese puppet theatre *Dom Roberto,* João Paulo Cardoso talks about two prints that show typical scenes of everyday life in Lisbon in the eighteenth-century, where we can see two forms of puppet theatre practised in Portugal by that time: "In one, the booth was a simple cloth placed across the door. Behind it, the puppeteer presents his puppets. The other show us a performance of the interesting Titeres de Capote [Puppets in Overcoat], very popular both in Portugal and Brazil, in which, a man/musician use his own overcoat to hide a young puppeteer." [14]



Figs. 2.1 and 2.2 – The diagrams show the puppet in overcoat from two different angles. In the first, the child moves the puppets while the man plays the guitar.

We can suppose that the protagonist of the Portuguese glove-puppets, Dom Roberto, might have been engaged in some beatings on the simple stage of the 'door-puppets'. Dom Roberto (one of the many denominations of this character in the eighteenth century), seems to be a descendent of the Italian *Pulcinella* that arrived in Portugal with travelling artists in the middle of the seventeenth century.[15]

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[14] João Paulo S. Cardoso, *Teatro Dom Roberto: Breve História e Notas* (Porto: Teatro de Marionetas, n.d.) 13

[15] Cardoso, *Teatro Dom Roberto*, 2.



Fig. 2.3 – Puppets in overcoats were also seen in Spain. This print shows a version appearing in Valencia, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries[1].

In eighteenth-century Lisbon, indoor puppet theatre was very popular. Operas, comedies and variety acts were performed both in theatres, such as *Theatro do Bairro Alto, Theatro da Mouraria* and *Fangas de Farinha*, and in private houses. The latter could be private house or one rented for this purpose. Alexandre Passos reports performances in residences of aristocrats, including those of the ambassadors, consuls; marquises, and so on. Nevertheless, showmen also performed in private houses for a poor audience.[16] For Passos, the living-room puppet theatre was taken to Rio de Janeiro by the Portuguese and, according to him it was "a modest imitation" of the puppet opera of the *Theatro do Bairro Alto*.[17] Perhaps he is right if his comment is directly related to Edmundo's description. But, perhaps he is not totally correct if we consider the possibility that there were other places in Rio de Janeiro with indoor puppet theatre performances. The first *Casa de Òpera* (Opera House) in Rio de Janeiro, showing both live theatre and puppet theatre, was owned by Father Ventura, who "had succumbed to sorrow" after the fire burned his theatre on a night in 1776 during a performance of *Os Encantos de Medéia* ('The Enchantment of Medeia) written by Antonio José da Silva.[18] Unfortunately, we

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[16] Passos, *Bonecos de Santo Aleixo,* 41.

[17] Ibid., 75

[18] The author, known as 'Antonio José da Silva, the Jew', new Christian son of Portuguese parents, was born in Rio de Janeiro on 1705. In 1713 the family was extradited to Portugal, accused of practising Judaism. He died on 11 March 1739, executed (strangled) during the Inquisition. See: Luciana L. Picchio, *História do Teatro Português* (Lisboa: Portugália, 1964), 188.

do not have any other information about the show he mentions. But perhaps it was not just 'a modest imitation' of the Portuguese puppet opera.[19]

As we can see from the examples above, the profane European puppet theatre crossed the Atlantic to appear in Brazil. We can suppose, it appeared in other cities besides Rio de Janeiro.

[19] J. Galante de Souza, *O Teatro no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: INL, 1960) 140.

2 – European Influence

2. 1 – Some Hypothesis

There is virtually no record of the beginning and development of Mamulengo. The lack of information about this subject has led scholars to construct some hypotheses to try to understand how the Mamulengo puppet theatre emerged in Pernambuco. Given this lack of documentation, all the work relating to this topic falls into the domain of conjecture. Hence, it is necessary to qualify claims by the use of such phrases as 'maybe', 'it is possible that', 'we can not be sure', and so on.

Borba Filho postulates that Mamulengo puppet theatre seems to have originated primarily from the European medieval cribs. The evidence used by Borba Filho to support his hypothesis seems to be the first puppet theatre performance documented in northeastern Brazil, that is, the *presépio de fala* (speaking cribs)[20] of the nineteenth century. Explaining his supposition, the author says:

> In the Middle Ages, the Church used the puppet theatre for the diffusion of religion attracting the laity in a direct and simple manner. In this context, the puppet theatre many times acquired the name of *presépio* [crib], showing the birth of Christ. It may have come to Brazil in this configuration, which can be proved by the show described by Manuel Quirino[21] in Bahia called speaking cribs. [The show] was not particularly about the Nativity, but based on biblical themes. (. . .) Speaking cribs appears in opposition to the static cribs, where the figures were displayed following the narrative of the birth of Christ." [22]

Borba Filho suggests that the same process occurred in Pernambuco, "where the crib generated two traditions": the *Pastoril* (pastoral), "with flesh and blood actors", and the Mamulengo, "with wooden actors".[23] Before discussing Borba Filho's supposition let us examine the speaking crib performance described by Manuel Querino and quoted by Borba Filho. Querino points out that the shows took place both outside and indoors, the latter often were occurring in private houses. With regard to outside

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[20] In the south of France (Marseille, Aix and Toulon) the same terminology (*crèche parlant*) was used to designate the puppet theatre derived from Nativity scenes. It is clearly the same notion behind the words, since, they are applied to the cribs that were not just a set of figures, but to a crib they brought an action into it: dialogues, sound effects, lighting, and movement to the figures.

[21] In fact the name of the author is Manuel Querino, not Quirino as mentioned by Borba Filho.

[22] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 64.

[23] Ibid.

shows, Amaral notes they were performed in squares and other public spaces.[24] The shows were usually performed during religious festivities, such as Christmas and Easter, and were described as follows:

> For this type of performance a large cloth with an opening gave the idea of a proscenium making a little theatre with its own stage imitating a big theatre. At the back, a painted panel, showed the view of the city.[25] Between this backdrop and the front of the stage, there were people in charge of the talking, the songs and the movements of the puppets, which were string puppets.
>
> The performance started with singing accompanied by flutes, tambourine, castanets, *ganzá* [shaker] and guitar. When the front curtain was opened, we could see God the Father (*Padre Eterno*) creating the world. In the following scenes, we see other parts of Genesis: the expulsion from paradise, the division of the water, Cain and Abel and finally, the deluge. All scenes had the intrusion of the devil called *Compra-Barulho* (Baying- Noise). The performance finished as it was begun, with music and singing.[26]

Here, the first confusion appears: when Borba Filho remarks that "the crib generated two traditions", *Pastoril* and Mamulengo, is he referring to static cribs or speaking cribs? Considering the first possibility - static (or mechanical) sets of figures representing the scene of the birth of Christ can we say that both traditions, *Pastoril* and Mamulengo, came from that?

However, let us assume he is referring to "crib" as the form of puppet theatre developed from Nativity cycles, which seems more probable, since, as indicated above, he notes: "In this context (Middle Age Europe) the puppet theatre many times acquired the name of *presépio* (crib), showing the birth of Christ. It might have come to Brazil in this configuration". Is he saying that the Pastoril and Mamulengo come from the crib puppet theatre? By presenting these questions I do not intend to devalue the admirable work done by Borba Filho, who deserves our recognition. I have

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[24] Ana Maria Amaral, *Teatro de Bonecos no Brasil e em São Paulo de 1940 a 1980* (São Paulo: COM-ARTE,1994), 17.

[25] It is likely that the author is referring to Salvador, the capital of Bahia.

[26] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 61. Unfortunately, Borba Filho did not specify the date of the performance, since he just says it was in the nineteenth century. Neither does he mention the source when he took Querino description. In the research I have done so far on Manuel Querino, published works, unfortunately I did not find the description of the speaking crib.

referred to his work often in this study. Most probably, what has caused the confusion is the problem of terminology.

It is beyond the scope of this study to go deeply into the history of Mamulengo. This subject matter alone could be the focus of one entire study. Nevertheless, I would like to put forward some considerations, which I hope can be useful for future studies. Referring to the puppets of Mamulengo, Santos points out: "In the general sense, we can assert that the Mamulengo [here he refers to the puppets as figures or sculptures], originated from the animated religious statuary, developed among us [in Brazil] the form of mechanical puppets like those in the old cribs, and after, acquired their actual profane form."[27] As can be observed, Santos traces the 'evolution' of the Mamulengo figures starting from European animated religious statuary, passing to the "Brazilian" mechanical cribs and finally, acquiring a secular form. So, what he is saying is that the Mamulengo figures come primarily from the mechanical cribs.

Borba Filho, comparing the development of Mamulengo and *Pastoril* in Pernambuco, says: 'The puppet theatre, an animated form coming from the crib, suffered the same process as the *Pastoril*. It started representing Christ's birth, passed to the representation of biblical scenes and, little by little, was contaminated by everyday subjects. Looking for a broader audience, it took on a secular form, although it continued to be performed on church festivals."[28]

Although Santos is talking about the Mamulengo figures and Borba Filho about the text, we can observe the same linearity pervading both thoughts: the idea of 'evolution' as a straight line starting from religious subjects and finally achieving a profane form close to the Mamulengo practised nowadays. Hence, the profane characteristic "acquired" by the Mamulengo is seen by the scholars as a process of secularisation.

Richards Axton in his book *European Drama of the Early Middle Ages* approaching the medieval church drama via three profane traditions (mimicry; combat and dancing-game) observed that "'the uniqueness [of profane traditions] is, to me, so striking as to make any easy assumptions about the 'evolution' of all medieval and Renaissance drama from ecclesiastical 'seed' quite untenable". Although taking into account the differences of

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[27] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 159.

[28] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 67.

both historical time and subjects discussed, we can trace a parallel of Borba Filho and Santos' arguments and the idea of 'evolution' criticised by Axton.[29]

Another problem with the assertions of Borba Filho and Santos is that it seems they transported the Medieval European puppet theatre process of secularization to Brazil in order to understand the appearance of north-eastern Brazilian popular puppet theatre, since its origins have been related primarily to European religious tradition.

Evidently we find many similarities between the two processes since Brazil was colonised by Europeans with the Catholic Church playing an important role in this process. However, in the period between Brazil being 'discovered' (1500) and actually colonised, from the middle of sixteenth century on, the European religious puppet theatre had already acquired a secular form, even if religious forms were still being performed. Moreover, we have to consider the profane popular puppet tradition that coexisted with religious forms of puppetry throughout Medieval and Renaissance Europe, as will be discussed further. First, let us draw some conclusion from the evidence that seems to have led Borba Filho to suppose that, in Pernambuco, the crib generated two traditions: *Pastoril* and Mamulengo.

2.2 – The Crib Tradition in Brazil: *Pastoril* and Mamulengo

According to Pereira da Costa the crib tradition was taken to Olinda, first capital of the state of Pernambuco, by the Franciscan religious order in the sixteenth century.[30] His assumption was based on the descriptions present in the book *Novo Orbe Serafico Brasileiro : Chronica dos Frades Menores da Provincia do Brasil*, written by Friar Antonio de Santa Maria de Jaboatam. In his book, Jaboatam describes the life of the Franciscan priests in colonial Brazil. Among them was Friar Gaspar de Santo Antonio, who, according to the author, was the first friar to promote the crib tradition in Brazil. From Jaboatam's descriptions it seems that Friar Gaspar promoted the cribs during most of his religious life, first in the Franciscan Monastery in Olinda and after in the Franciscan Monastery in Ipojuca, both cities of Pernambuco state, where he lived from 1585 to 1635:

> In his religious life, he was an example of all virtues. . . . [He] was very devout to the mystery of the birth of Christ, doing in those days, apart from his particular devotions,

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[29] Richard Axton, *European Drama of the Early Middle Ages* (London: Hutchinson, 1974), 12.

[30] Pereira da Costa, *Folk-Lore Pernambucano* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1908), 189.

some *passos* of the Christ-Child in Bethlehem in order to reinforce in his religious fellows, even more affection to that mystery; and there, he said some praises and made his devout representations, even when he was a very old man of 93 and after 50 years of religious life in that Monastery.[31]

Even if there is no doubt about the presence of the cribs tradition in Brazil by the end of the sixteenth century, we do not have any information about its nature since then, for as we can see, Jaboatam's description is very vague. However, by reading between the lines of Jaboatam's report, I shall speculate as to how it might had been.

Describing some acts of Frei Gaspar in regard to the cribs, Jaboatam says: '[He made] some *passo* of the Christ-Child (. . .) voiced his praise and made his devout representations' (my italics). The term *passo* first appeared to designate the seven phases of the Christ's martyrdom.[32] Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, it was a used both in Portugal and Spain, to indicate "a small play."[33] Therefore, we can deduce that when there was "made some *passo* of the God Child", it might had been the representation of a small drama, maybe some brief passages of the Christ-Child's life.

[He] voiced his praise" refers to Frei Gaspar praying and perhaps singing on that occasion, since singing was an important part of the crib celebrations among the Franciscan friars, as I mentioned earlier.

Finally, in interpreting the phrase, "made his devout representations", although you can 'represent' something just with images (static figures, for example), the Portuguese word 'representações', set in this context, is mostly used to designate a performance.

In another chapter, where Jaboatam emphasises the cultural relevance of the Franciscan Orders in Brazil, he reinforces the importance of the crib tradition in Brazilian colonial life. Again, he recognises the role played by Frei Gaspar:

Since its beginning, the Ipojucan Convent was a popular centre of piety. Contributing to that popularity was the set of the Christmas crib, made by F. Gaspar de S. Antonio, who died in that convent in 1635. The Bethlehem Mystery, which Saint Francis

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[31] Antonio de S. M. Jaboatam, *Novo Orbe Serafico Brasileiro : Chronica dos Frades Menores da Provincia do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Typografia Brasiliense, 1859), 189.

[32] Luis da Câmara Cascudo, *Dicionário do Folclore Brasileiro*, 10nd (São Paulo: Global, 2001) 489

[33] Passos, *Bonecos*, 60.

> celebrated with such great solemnity in Greece, shortly turned into the most appreciated party of colonial Brazil.[34]

Jaboatam reports that the Christmas crib "was the most appreciated party of colonial Brazil", therefore, this strongly suggests that it was not just a static crib set inside the church, but something more striking produced by the Franciscan friars, including something such as a performance, maybe a mixture of static and living figures played inside and/or outside the church.

In the sixteenth century in the Iberian Peninsula, many types of Christmas celebrations were already well developed, such as *Vilhancico* and *pastorelas,* among other dramatic representations of shepherding. In those representations, songs and dances were interconnected with small dialogues to recall the events connected with the birth of Jesus and also, profane subjects. By the Priest Fernão Cardim's description of a *presépio* (crib) performed in Bahia in 1584, we can observe the same elements (dances, songs and dialogues) in the very beginnings of the Brazilian Christmas celebrations: "The Indians performed a shepherding dialogue, in 'Brasilica'[35], in Portuguese and in Castilian languages. (. . .) There was good music of voices, flutes and dances."[36] Câmara Cascudo says that in northeastern colonial Brazil, it was a common practice to sing and dance in front of the cribs, set up during the Christmas season. Cascudo, like Jaboatam, confirms the popularity of this Christmas celebration.[37]

Since its beginning, the Franciscan Monastery in Olinda was also a school for Indian children and it was a common practice to use songs and dances in the Christian education of the 'small souls'. Hence, it is possible that the Indian children would have participated in the Christmas celebration taking place in Olinda, just as it happened in Bahia. Moreover, it would not be too much to think of the Indians dancing, singing and perhaps reciting small dialogues in front of the cribs set up by Friar Gaspar.

If we cannot know with certainty the exact nature of the crib, and other Christmas celebrations in Pernambuco in their first configurations, we can know for sure that by the eighteenth century they had already developed into a more profane

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[34] Jaboatam, *Novo Orbe* , 48-49.

[35] *Brasilica* refers to the native Brazilian Indian language. Since there were more than a thousand different languages among the Indian tribes, the term is the general term to refer to them.

[36] Quoted in Mario de Andrade, *Danças Dramáticas do Brasil*, Vol. 1 (São Paulo:Martins, 1959), 351.

[37] Cascudo, *Dicionário*, 533.

form. In 1726, Dom Frei José Fialho, Bishop of Olinda, recommended to the priest of Pernambuco, "for the grace of God and of the holy apostolic faith, do not consent to performances of comedies, colloquies, representations, or balls within any church, chapels, or churchyards."[38] Ecclesiastical prohibitions, like other types of censures, are always a good source of evidences.

It would seem that Dom Frei José Fialho had raised his voice in vain, for at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Tollenare found that in Recife they were still dancing in the church of São Gonçalo of Olinda. Only in 1817 did the canons prohibit such dances, "for the Europeans censure them as an indecency unworthy of the temple of God." [39]

Pastoril

Pastoril is a Brazilian shepherding dramatic representation at Christmas time, based on the dances and songs of the shepherdesses. The Brazilian Pastoril presents many resemblances with the Iberian Peninsula shepherding dramatic representations, such as the Spanish, *Vilhancico* and the Portuguese, *Presépios Melodramáticos* (melodramatics cribs).

Vilhancico, from the Spanish word, *villano* (villain), was a type of Christmas dramatic representation developed in Spain between fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. *Vilhancico* was a melodramatic dialogue represented in the form of songs, both solo and chorus, made by common people dressed as shepherds. In Portugal, the *vilhancico* was interconnected with other types of Christmas representations being performed in front of the cribs.[40] By the end of eighteenth century the Nativity also acquired the form of *presépios melodramaticos* (melodramatics cribs), also known as *autos pastoris* or *presepe* (shepherding *auto*s or crib). These dramatic representations were mostly performed on improvised stages, with very simple scenery representing the scene of the birth of Christ,

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[38] Costa, *Folk-Lore*, 221.

[39] G. Tolenare, "Notas Dominicais tomadas durante uma viagem em Portugal e no Brasil em 1816, 1817 e 1818," *Revista do Instituto Arqueológico, Histórico e Geográfico de Pernambuco*, 61 (nd): 448

[40] Gil Vicent's play, *Monólogo do Vaqueiro*, written in 1502 in order to celebrate the birth of D. João, son of the Queen D. Maria and the King D. Manuel, is clearly influenced by these shepherding dramatic representations. In the play Gil Vicente makes a correlation between the newborn (D. João) and Christ child, transforming the queen's bedroom into a crib. (Picchio, *Teatro Português*, 156).

in which biblical scenes were interspersed with small farces. These representations became very popular and were performed all around the country.

The shepherding representation acquired in Brazil a particular feature, which takes the form of a dramatic dance. Two choirs of shepherdesses, one dressed in red and the other in blue, praise the child-God and allude to the events connected with his birth. As mentioned by Mario de Andrade, the religious Pastoril was always represented in front of a crib, or lapinha (little manger), showing some episodes of the Nativity through verse dialogues and songs.[41]

As time went by, jocular dialogues and comic characters were introduced into the liturgical representation, such as the old man, a type of lecherous clown. The manger disappeared from the scenery and the role of the shepherdesses became, each time, more sensual and provocative. The old men known as *Bedegueba* (among numerous other nicknames), commanded the *jornada* (the shepherdess' songs) telling jokes and running the proceedings with numerous improvisations. His dialogues with the shepherdesses were riddled with double meanings and he engaged in discussions and games with the audience. He got up to many capers and also sang songs, which had been adapted to his own particular needs.[42]

In 1801, the Bishop of Olinda, Azeredo Coutinho, asked for the intervention of the Government "to stop the performance of the *pastorinhas* (little shepherdess)". Although the Government assured him it "would make all effort to excise for ever these affronts to our saintly religion", the profane *Pastoril* maintained its popularity until the middle of the twentieth century. [43]

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[41] Andrade, *Danças Dramáticas,* 352.

[42] Roger Bastite understands the insertion of the clown figure in the Pastoril as an influence coming from the circus. Furthermore, he asserts that in the twentieth century, when the Pastoril acquired a characteristic of a "sung comedy", with the clown playing the major part, it also received influence from the radio. (Bastite, "Opiniões", 53).

[43] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 66. We find some nineteenth century documents, which show the persecution suffered by the profane Pastoril of that time. Most of these documents are articles from local newspapers, such as *A Pimenta*; *Lanterna Mágica* and *O Carapuceiro*, all from Recife. In an 1842 article we read: 'Again, we must speak against the Pastoril. It is a shame the way those shepherdesses (pastorinhas) dress and dance, provoking the audience with sensual movements and manners. Their costumes, one group dressed in red and the other in blue, create two separate groups, like two 'political' parties, generating rivalry between them. These groups, at the peak of the excitement, scream, shout, applaud and often the performance ends in fights

The frequency of performances of the profane *Pastoril* greatly increased towards the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, when it became popular entertainment, rather than a religious celebration. By that time, *Pastoril* turned into a source of income for the poor population, and was performed outside and inside, as in bars and private houses. Nevertheless, the religious *Pastoril* was still performed by "girls of good families", mainly as part of middle and high-class schools' Christmas celebrations, and also by groups associated with Catholic parishes. The two types of *Pastoril* - religious and profane- coexisted for a long period of time and there are abundant documents that inform us of their similarities and differences.[44]

If the *Pastoril*, and its process of secularisation, is well documented, we cannot, unfortunately, say the same regarding Mamulengo. Brazilian scholars of folklore, who produced studies in the nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries,[45] just ignored the puppet theatre practised in northeastern Brazil. Moreover, virtually none of the travellers to northeast Brazil in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, who wrote about Brazilian cultural expressions, mentioned the Mamulengo. The only exception is Henry Koster, an Englishman, long resident in Portugal, who lived in Pernambuco between 1804 and 1814. In his book, *Travels in Brazil*, Koster describes a festival that took place in Goiana, a small city in Pernambuco, in order to celebrate the first mass of a secular priest in the Church of Our Lady of O: 'There were puppet-shows,[46] tumblers and all their attendants in great abundance; fireworks and bonfires,

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with many injured persons. We can conclude by saying that Pastoril is a pastime of mediocre and low minded people." (*O Carapuceiro*, 24 December 1842, p. 2).

[44] During the first half of the twentieth century, the inhabitants of Recife made many requests to the Central Police Station of Recife for licenses to present "decent" pastorals at private houses and church festivals, or simply, a "pastoral" in bars and open spaces. The documents are very well preserved in the *Arquivo Público do Estado*. For some examples see Appendix III. Although Pastoril performances have greatly decreased by the middle of twentieth century, today we observe an upsurge of performances in Recife following the flux of revival of folklore and popular culture. On one hand, the Pastoril groups organized by local associations present resemblance with the "religious" Pastoril, such as the *Pastoril de Cirinéia*, *Pastoril da Familia Ramos*, among others. On the other hand, the profane Pastoril has been revived by popular entertainers, such as *Pastoril do Velho Faceta*.

[45] Mário de Andrade (1932); Câmara Cascudo (1952); Pereira da Costa (1908).

[46] Cascudo translated the term "puppet-show" as "mamulengo". However, we have to be aware that, in Pernambuco, the term 'Mamulengo' was also used to designate 'puppet'. Thus, the use of the term, "mamulengo", does not necessarily mean the puppet theatre tradition of Pernambuco. In: Henry Koster,

noise, bustle and no lack of quarrelling. Within the chapel there was a display of wax tapers, praying, singing, and music as is usual. The assembling of persons was very considerable."[47] In later pages of his book, Koster describes in detail the *Auto do Fandango*[48] among other entertainments. However, the "puppet-show" does not receive the same treatment, since he merely mentions it.

Therefore, some questions arise: why did such scholars not consider writing about the puppet theatre? Were the performances, by that time, so few in number that they were seen as an inexpressive popular form? Those are difficult questions to answer without the necessary documentation.

As far as research has shown, Querino's description of speaking cribs is the first clear evidence of a puppet theatre performance in the northeast region. Moreover, Borba Filho also mentions a type of puppet theatre described by A. Freitas called *Presépio de Calunga*[49] *de Sombra* (Calunga Shadow Crib) in Ceará and Piauí states. As indicated by Freitas "it was a shadow puppet theatre performing histories of the creation of the world". Unfortunately, I did not find any additional information about the Calunga Shadow Crib.[50] According to McCormick and Pratasik, in the early nineteenth century in Spain, and particularly in Catalonia, shadow performances were a prominent form of entertainment during Lent, since they were the only type of theatrical activity allowed by the Church.[51] Although we are not in any position to

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Viagens ao Nordeste do Brasil trans. Luiz da Câmara Cascudo (Rio de Janeiro: Cia Editora Nacional, 1942), 228.

[47] Henry Koster , *Travels in Brazil* (London: Logman, 1816), 229.

[48] *Fandango* is a Brazilian dramatic dance showing the arrival of the sailors on the coast of Brazil. It was part of the *autos* performed in the Christmas season. In some versions, the fandango presented the fight between Christians and Saracens. (Cascudo, *Dicionário*, 225).

[49] *Calunga*, from the multilingual Banto term, '*Kalunga'*, means 'little puppet". In Nei Lopes, *Novo Dicionário Banto do Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro: Pallas) 57. In the northeastern states of Rio Grande do Norte, Ceará and Piauí, the puppets are also called *calunga* and the puppeteer, *calungueiros.*

[50] Again, Borba Filho does not indicate the source of this information, since he merely mentioned "J.A. Freitas". The author, João Alfredo de Freitas, who is cited by Gilberto Freyre in his book *Casa Grande e Senzala*, seems to have published two books: *Algumas palavras sobre o Fetichismo religioso e Politico entre nós* (1883) and *Lenda e superstições do Norte do Brasil* (1884). In my research I only found the latter, and unfortunately, there is no reference to *Presépio de Calunga de Sombra.*

[51] McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppet,* 7.

confirm this, we may consider a possible link between the Spanish shadow performances and the Brazilian Calunga Shadow Crib.

The first definition of the term Mamulengo is given by Beaurepaire Rohan in his book, *Dicionário dos Vocábulos Brasileiros* published in 1889. He describes Mamulengo as:

> A type of popular entertainment, consisting of dramatic performance made with puppets on a high stage. Behind it, two trained persons make the puppets exhibit themselves through movement and talking. These dramas represent both biblical and contemporary subjects. The performances are shown on the occasion of church festivals. The audience applauds and delights in these entertainments, rewarding the artists with small amounts of money.[52]

By Rohan's definition, it is clear that religious and profane subjects were present in the configurations of northeastern puppet theatre. We can suppose that it was this hybrid characteristic (cited by Rohan and Querino) that guided Borba Filho to formulate the hypothesis of the Mamulengo puppet theatre as having originated primarily from the European medieval cribs.

Borba Filho indeed makes references to the many forms of European profane puppet traditions in the constitution of Mamulengo, and also recognizes the protagonists of the Northeast puppet theatre – "Benedito and João Redondo" – as belonging to the same category of the popular puppet theatres' heroes, such as Punch, Pulcinella, Guignol, and so on.[53] So, why he does consider the crib to be the primary source of Mamulengo? Can we affirm that Mamulengo is the result of a secularization process? Do we have enough to conclude this?

What I am discussing throughout this study is the danger of the linear idea of "evolution" from a certain point to another. As pointed out before, there is no documentation about how, when and what types of puppets arrived in Brazil. Nonetheless, I would put forward the hypothesis of the coexistence of religious and profane forms of puppet theatre since the beginning of Brazilian colonization; including in Pernambuco, the state where Mamulengo first appeared. Considering this possibility, and here referring particularly to European influences, we can suppose that Mamulengo, from its first configuration, has connections with the mechanical cribs;

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[52] Beaurepaire Rohan, *Dicionário dos Vocábulos Brasileiros* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1889), quoted in Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 68.

[53] Ibid., 12.

with the puppet theatre coming from Nativity cycles and cribs; and finally, with the puppet theatre derived from the *Commedia dell'Arte*. As it is well known, popular puppeteers take inspiration from many difference sources, working and adapting the collected material in order to enrich their shows.

In order to clarify some aspects related to the sources of Mamulengo, I think it is important to examine briefly the interrelations between puppetry and religion in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, Europe, as well as the dramatic representation coming from the Nativity cycles (including the crib puppet theatre), and finally, the puppet theatre coming from the Commedia dell'Arte.

2.3 – The European Religious Puppet Theatre in the Middle Ages and Renaissance

The story of puppets and the puppet theatre in Medieval Europe, as with the arts in general, has been mostly related to religious subjects. Hartnoll argues that, the theatre, "so strictly forbidden to Christians- often by men who, like St. Augustine, had enjoyed it before their conversion- renewed itself in the very heart of their cult."[54] George Speaight, although recognising the presence and importance of the minstrels in the medieval puppet theatre, argues that "the story of puppets in the Middle Ages may be traced through another line of succession - religious art and religious drama."[55]

Nevertheless, the importance of both religious and profane traditions in the constitution of the European theatre the in Middle Ages is well discussed by Richard Axton. For him, "the importance of traditions of profane drama, independent of the

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[54] Phyllis Hartnoll, *The Theatre, a Concise History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 35

[55] George Speaight, *The History of the English Puppet Theatre*, 2nd (London: Robert Hale, 1990), 32. In regard to the comic traditions, Speaight notes:

The traditions of mimes, with their mimicry and circus tricks, were gradually absorbed into that of the bard, with his staider (sic) recitations of epic poems, and by the end of the tenth century we began to see the emergence of the great army of minstrels, gleemen, jongleurs, and troubadors who flocked to every Court in Europe (. . .) with their old ballads and new love songs, their tricks, and sometimes, their puppets. Not all minstrels followed the court: there were some, we are told, who hung around taverns and village greens." One example cited by Speaight is Perrinet Sanson who, in 1408, performed with "his wife, children, a bear, a horse, a nanny-goat, and his puppets". The author remarks that even centuries before this date, these entertainers, sometimes carrying puppet shows with them, must have wandered across Europe. In fact, from the Middle Ages onward, they have flourished in those places (streets, squares, fairgrounds, and taverns) as elements of the Carnival popular culture, the diffusion and importance of which have been brought to light by Bakhtin (1965). (Speaight, *The History,* 28).

sacred drama of the church and constantly enriching it, has not often been recognized". The reason for that 'unfamiliarity' with profane drama traditions, he argues, may be due to the lack of a register of profane drama texts, since, "most of the dramatic texts surviving from the early Middle Ages are scripts for church plays"[56]

Although Axton is talking specifically about the text of the medieval theatre, we may understand the tendency to focus on the medieval puppet theatre with religious subjects as the result of the same process, that is, the lack of documentation about the profane puppet tradition of that time. Nevertheless, if the documents about the use of puppets in the European religious plays in the Middle Ages are not so scarce as the profane puppet tradition, they did not represent, either, a rich source of information that could give a clear picture of how the puppets were used in that period.

What is known is that the presence of "puppets" at the altars and in the ceremonies of the medieval church occurred gradually. The religious puppets came from the sculptures of the biblical holy figures that 'invaded' the Churches by the beginning of the Middle Ages. Throughout time these static figures became articulated, acquiring movements by means of strings and many other mechanisms.

One famous figure was the Rood of Grace at Boxley, in Kent, England. It was a crucifix that is said to have most probably been made in the fifteenth century. The figure of Jesus was supposed by the people to be "miraculously gifted with movement and speech". At the abbey's dissolution certain engines and old wire with old rotten sticks in the back were found in the cross which, when operated by the monks, caused the eyes and mouth to move."[57] Evidently the figure was jointed, allowing for the movement of its limbs, eyes and lips. Another type of this sort of religious image of the same period shows the Resurrection of Our Lord, "which put his legs out of the sepulchre, and blessed with his hand and turned his head."[58]

Automata were another type of moving figures presented in medieval times, mostly in the churches. These mechanical articulated figures were usually moved by part of the mechanism of a clock, like the one in the Lund Cathedral in Sweden, where the saints, martyrs, angels and biblical scenes were shown from hour to hour.

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[56] Axton, *European Drama*, 11.

[57] 'Houses of Cistercian monks: The abbey of Boxley', A History of the County of Kent: Volume 2 (1926), 153-55.

[58] Speaight, *The History,* 32.

Baird asserts that many types of these moveable religious images (automata, mechanical, joined and articulated) were employed in the representation of religious celebrations in the churches. One example cited by him is the thirteenth-century performance of 'Mysteries of Mid-August' in France. This famous celebration, that took place in the Church of St. James at Dieppe, celebrated the Virgin's Assumption. Parallel with the scene of the assumption of the Virgin into heaven, "a masterpiece of medieval showmanship", which was performed entirely by marionettes and moving statuary, a marionette clown ran about making monkeyshines.[59]

Nevertheless, Speaight notes that the presence of joined and articulated figures in the churches does not necessarily mean that they were used in dramatic representations, and argues that it was only by the end of Middle ages that the use of these figures "results in the actual representation of religious puppet plays in churches."[60] By the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, there is some evidence of an attempt to bring an educational purpose to the puppets, and on some altars, carved figures appear telling stories of the bible. In Spain, the reredoses or retabula depicted the human figure in a dramatic attitude. The word 'retablo' was used in Spain to designate "an early puppet show."[61] Porras argues that by the same period, in the Cathedral of Gerona, Barcelona, puppets were used in the religious play "Las tres Marías", performed at Easter celebrations. As the author explains, this mystery was first performed by three young priests dressed in dark female dresses: "But since it seems inappropriate for priests to be travestied, they were replaced by articulated puppets."[62]

In fact, with the *Synodus Oriolana* decree that came into being in Spain at the end of the sixteenth century, we have evidence of the use of puppets in a more dramatic form. The *Synodus* prohibited the representation of the actions of Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the saints, either in churches or elsewhere, by clay images moved in some kind of ordered motion.[63] Speaight, quoting a description of a sixteenth century antiquary, mentions a play performed with puppets at the end of that century in Witney, England. He points out that in the days of ceremonial religion:

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[59] Bil Baird, *The Art of the Puppet* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), 64.

[60] Speaight, *The History,* 34.

[61] McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppet*, 5.

[62] Francisco Porras, *Titelles - Teatro Popular* (Madrid: Editora Nacional, n.d), 94.

[63] Ibid., 114.

> They used at Witney to set yearly in manner of a Show, or Interlude, the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Christ (. . .) the priest garnished out certain small puppets, representing the persons of Christ, the Watchman, Mary, and others, amongst which one bore the part of the Watchman who [espying Christ to rise] made a continual noise, like the sound that is caused by the meeting of two sticks, and was thereof commonly called Jack Snacker of Witney.[64]

We can note the presence of comic characters in the religious plays. Comic characters were the core of the popular, profane, dramatic traditions of the Middle Ages. The minstrels and jugglers with their songs, puppets, trained animals, and so on, seem to have been much more common in that period than the scanty records would lead us to believe. As Axton urges, we must be careful not to minimize the importance of profane traditions in the constitution of the European theatre in the Middle Ages. As pointed out by Speaight "comic local characters were to continue to intrude into every kind of spectacle on the puppet stage for the next four hundred years, and they had probably been doing the same thing for at least two thousand years previously."[65]

2.4 – Nativity Cycles, Cribs and the Puppet Theatre

The greater part of the important manuscripts of biblical drama belongs to the cycles, which attempted to cover the history of Man from his creation to the Day of Judgement. In these cycles there appeared, almost unconsciously, something like the principle of unity: first came the creation, then the fall of Man, which demanded his redemption. The redemption, after being foretold by the prophets, was accomplished by the birth and passion of Christ, with his resurrection. Axton understands the uprising of the 'cycle' plays in Medieval Europe as a symptom of a popular demand for "contextual completeness", and at same time, "a clerical attempt at explaining to the laity in the vernacular the meaning of the Christian stories". According to Axton, when the vernacular was adopted, "the nature of the everyday language as well as the purpose in hand encouraged a different focus on the divine events as human happenings in the contemporary world."[66] The author points out that, little is known about how these plays were composed or first instituted. However, he argues, "it is

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[64] Speaight, *The History,* 34.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Axton, *European Drama,* 100. Temporal and special anachronism is one of the major characteristics of theatrical performances related to religious subjects, be they performed with puppets or live actors.

clear that such encyclopaedic spectacles of sacred history were not derived from any comparable known Latin Drama."[67]

The cycle plays were primarily devoted to portraying the life and passion of Christ, his harrowing of hell, his resurrection and his ascension. However, the episodes from the Old Testament (from Creation to Judgement) were also dramatised because they are seen to prefigure the central drama of Christ's life. The plays do not present a continuous story, but, rather, "a continuous theme - fall and redemption- through an episodic structure."[68] Nativity became an important cycle running from Christmas to Epiphany, influencing many popular dramatic traditions, including the puppet theatre.

The Nativity was largely represented in the form of cribs. The tradition of representing the set of the Christ's birth is attributable to the Franciscan religious orders in Umbria, Italy. As pointed by Pereira da Costa, the devotion to the crib is no doubt of very ancient origin, but it remained for St. Francis of Assisi to popularise it and to give to it the tangible form in which it is known at the present time.[69] According to Andrade, historical information about the first crib settled in Italy are too vague, but the form in which it first appeared in Umbria indicates that the crib had already been influenced by the liturgical drama developed in France and England:[70] "The Franciscan *lauda* often took the form of dialogue, even if it was more lyric than dramatic, which leads us to think that the Christmas liturgical dramas had crossed the Alps being nominated in Italy as *Sacra Reppresentazione*"[71] In the Iberian Peninsula, the Christmas liturgical drama seems to have appeared in the twelfth century,[72] and, as mentioned before, from the fourteenth century on, many types of Christmas representations were developed in Spain and Portugal (e.g., *Vilhancico; presépios melodramaticos*).

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[67] Ibid., 170.

[68] Ibid., 113.

[69] Pereira da Costa, *Folk-Lore*, 189.

[70] Here, Andrade refers to the Easter and Christmas *Tropos*. He pointed out that by the middle of tenth-century they had developed into small liturgical dramas performed by clerics and 'chanters', both in the Churches of France and England. (Andrade, *Danças Dramáticas*, 345).

[71] Ibid., 346.

72 The oldest document about this kind of dramatic representation is the Old Castilian 'Auto de Los Reyes Magos. The Auto de Los Reyes Magos (c.1155), together with the Anglo-Norman Jeu d'Adam (c.11609), the Anglo-Norman La Seinte Resureccion (c.1175) and Jean Bodel's Jeu de Saint-Nicolas (c.1200) are the earliest vernacular liturgical plays of Medieval Europe. (Axton, European Drama, 100)

The Nativity plays and the crib tradition spread out all over Catholic Europe and also to far countries of the East and America, where European countries established colonies.[73] Yearly, from the eve of Christmas, a crib representing the birthplace of Christ was shown in Catholic churches, as well as in convents and palaces, in order to remind the congregation of the birth of Jesus and to recall, according to the tradition of the Gospel narrative, the events connected with the birth of Jesus.

As time went on, the static figures arranged in scenes representing the birth of Christ (used for devotional purposes) developed into a more elaborate set.[74] The Nativity scenario became mixed with everyday life events, and many figures and subjects were included in the original crib. While some cribs remained static installations, in others the figures had a degree of animation, either by means of a mechanism (mechanical cribs) or of manual operation. As they evolved from performances in churches, convents and palaces, into the sphere of popular entertainers, cribs fell into the same category as peepshows and other attractions. As remarked by McCormick and Pratasik, "whilst some cribs retained a hybrid format, others evolved into full-scale puppet theatre".[75]

By the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Nativity plays were present in the traditional repertoire of many European popular puppet theatre companies. Yet, according to McCormick and Pratasik, they appeared with different approaches:

> Some go back directly to religious plays of the latter Middle Ages and Renaissance, whereas others are developed versions of the eighteenth-century crib. By the time they had passed into

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[73] As mentioned above, it seems to have arrived in Brazil by the middle of the sixteenth century. In the seventeenth century the cribs were present also in Goa, the Portuguese colony in India (Passos, *Bonecos de Santo Aleixo,* 59).

[74] In eighteenth century Naples, besides the manger, the bigger cribs depicted the palace of Herod, the town of Bethlehem, "the latter represented anachronistically as a contemporary town with people working at different trades." In: McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppets*, 100. In Brazil, at the end of the nineteenth century, cribs developed to a great extent. An example of this sort of crib is the *Piriripau* animated crib, which depicted 45 scenes with a total of 586 figures moved by a complex mechanism. As in the depiction of Naples, the town of Bethlehem was presented as a contemporary Brazilian town, with fairground, amusement park, churches, and so on. In: José Adolfo Moura, "O Presépio de Piriripau," *Revista Mamulengo*, 8 (1979) : 25.

[75] McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppets*, 5.

the hands of professional showmen, it was not easy to separate the two sources, which frequently became completely entangled and overlaid with other contemporary material.[76]

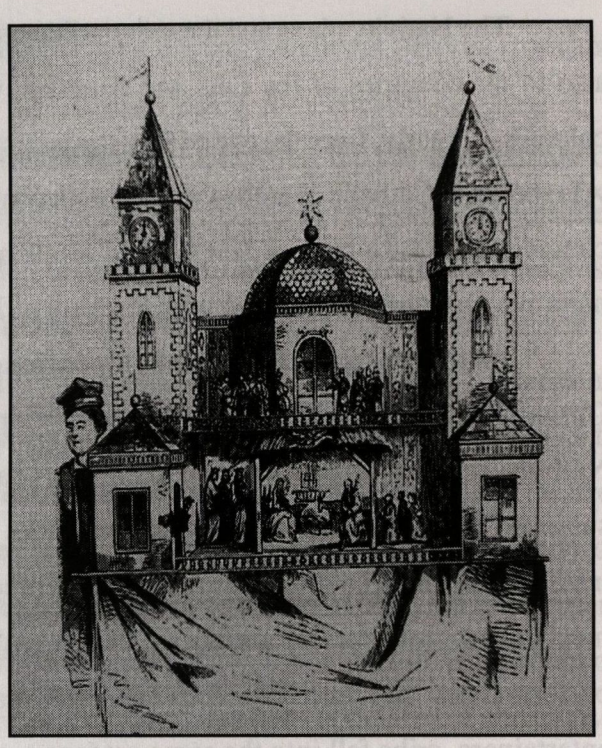

Fig. 2.4 – Warsaw szopka, 1862. In the first level central area is placed the crib. The stage area at the front was used for the representation of the Herod play with stick puppets.

In Austria, the Slavic states, the Catholic German states and the Iberian Peninsula, the figures were often manipulated by operators hidden behind or beneath the stage. In Russia, Byelorussia, the Ukraine, Romania and Poland, portable cribs known as *szopka* (box) or *vertep* (Bethlehem) were taken to houses by seminary students or minor clerics in order to earn a little money. As time went on, this practice became more commercialised and fell into the hands of professional entertainers.[77] In Russia, the crib often had three-level scenery representing Heaven, Earth and Hell.[78] In Poland the *Szopka* had the shape of a cathedral and was placed between two chairs, so that small stick puppets could be manipulated from underneath. Segel referring to the development of the *Szopka* pointes out that:

> In its earlier stages of development, the *Szopka* was used for dramatic presentations of traditional biblical scenes related to Christmas. The performers were usually schoolboys and parish church sextons. Secular scenes gradually came to be introduced in order to depict the various non-biblical figures that came to pay

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[76] Ibid., 163.

[77] Ibid., 6.

78 Baird, The Art of Puppets, 67.

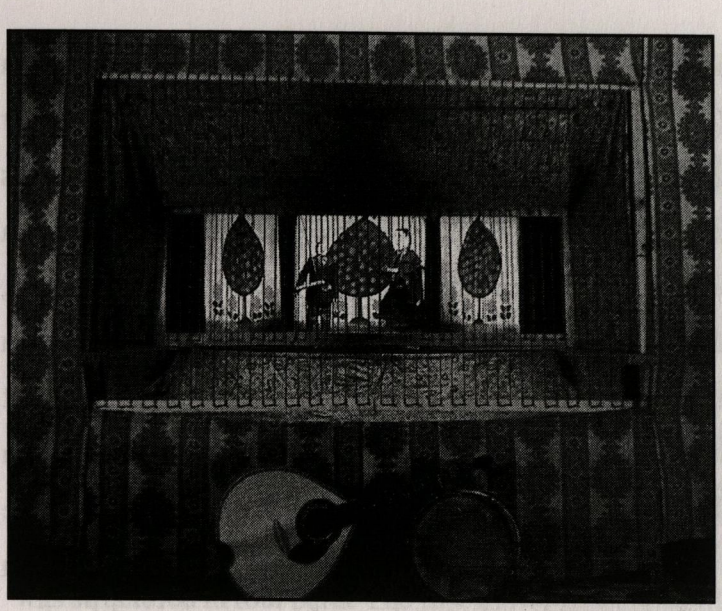

Fig. 2.5 – Bonecos de Santo Aleixo stage. In the back, a scene with Mestre Salas and Padre Chanca.

homage to the newborn Christ. Eventually, these secular scenes began taking on a life of their own and operated independently of the religious text.[79]

The secular scenes came to feature primarily local types [e.g., peasants, landlords, clerics, tavern keepers, soldiers, etc.] in everyday situations not necessarily related to Nativity. Much of the humour of the *Szopka* performance derived from the interaction of the two groups and from the contrast between the "folkish, but biblical, Polish of the Nativity scenes and the everyday colloquial speech of the secular characters."[80]

In eighteenth century Portugal, cribs could be found in the form of static or mechanical figures, and in the form of puppet theatre. While the former often maintained their religious connection, mainly representing the Nativity, the latter became so secular that in some cases, they had completely lost their religious reference, though maintaining the name 'crib'. As mentioned by Passos, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Portuguese words for crib (*Presépio or presepe*) were largely used to designate a puppet theatre company, which included in its repertoire both religious and profane plays.[81]

In the Alentejan *Bonecos de Santo Aleixo*, which is a full-scale puppet theatre evolving from the Nativity plays and cribs, biblical episodes are shown together with scenes depicting everyday life.[82] The prologue consists of a ballet of angels and the

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[79] Harold B. Segel, *Pinocchio's Progeny: Puppets, Marionettes, Automatons, and Robots in Modernist and Avant-Garde Drama* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press), 201-2.

[80] Ibid., 202.

[81] Passos, *Bonecos de Santo Aleixo* , 106.

[82] The *Bonecos de Santo Aleixo* is still performed nowadays by the actors of Cendrev (Cento Dramático de Évora). The group inherited the puppets and all the knowledge involving this puppet tradition from Mestre Talhinhas, a traditional Santo Aleixo puppeteer.

creation of Light (the sun and moon). After comic dialogue between Padre Chanca (a priest) and the Mestre Salas (the master of ceremonies), there follow a series of *autos* or scenes.[83] The biblical passages are followed by scenes with everyday subjects, such as *os balhinhos* (the little dances) where couples perform an animated salon dance, and a scene of a couple singing a *fado*, a typical Portuguese song. The two comic characters, Padre Chanca and Mestre Salas, appear throughout the show. The stage, a reproduction of a theatre stage in miniature, is made of a front curtain with an opening. The front stage is covered from top to bottom with vertical strings. Three tiny panels painted with decorative motifs enclose the stage, creating the background for the puppets. The puppets, made of wood and cork, are 20-40 centimeters in height and operated from above by rods. Many of the figures have articulated wooden arms moved by iron rods/wires or string.

As in Portugal, the cribs of Spain appear both as static and animated sets of figures, and as puppet theatre. By the eighteenth century, animated cribs were known as *maquinas reales* (royal machines) and again, like the Portuguese *presépio*, *maquinas reales* subsequently became a term to designate a puppet show.[84] In Catalunia, cribs were called *Pastorets.* A series of announcements appearing in late eighteenth century Barcelona newspapers indicate that the *Pastorets* were held in private houses and theatres. Some were mechanical cribs "with moving puppets, mills and water falls" while others were marionette performances.[85]

Two types of puppet theatre, which emerged from the cribs in Spain, are the *Tía Norica* (Cadiz) and the *Belén de Alcoy*. According to McCormick and Pratasik, *Tia Norica* combined crib-type puppets and marionettes. The marionettes were

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[83] Some *autos* presented in the traditional repertoire of *Bonecos de Santo Aleixo* were: *Auto da Criação do Mundo* (The Creation of the World); *Auto do Nascimento do Menino* (The Nativity); *Os Martírios do Senhor* (The Passion of Christ) (Passos, *Bonecos de Santo Aleixo* 192). But nowadays, the biblical passages represented are: the Creation, where Adam and Eve appear in a paradise full of animals, to all of which Adam gives names; the Temptation; and the Fall. In the Cain and Abel episode, the scene ends with the latter being carried to Heaven by angels, whilst Cain is plunged into Hell, full of joyful devils. We can observe the same structure as the Medieval cycle plays, in which the idea of salvation has to be preceded by the creation and fall of Man.

[84] McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppets*, 5. The authors give an example of a Spanish puppeteer "who built a 'machine' provided with figures to present the birth of Christ, but there were also figures that could draw swords, take off their hats and perform dance steps."

[85] Porras, *Titelles*, 96-7

operated from a high stage whilst the stick puppets were manipulated with the operators working in trenches in the stage floor. In regard to the contents of the text, the authors note: "The Tía Norica may represent a type of show which was widespread in lower Andalusia. It began with the fall of the angels and concluded with the centenarian figure, Tía Norica (Grandma Leonora) embarking on a steamer or a train to go bull-fighting". In the show, the biblical episodes were interspersed with farcical scenes.[86]

In the *Belén de Alcoy*, the central area of the stage was occupied by the crib, which was surrounded by a town with houses and a church. In the background, a higher level allowed for the appearance of the magi and Sint George, among others. The show was structured in four parts. The first showed Joseph and Mary being refused a room by the innkeeper (Tirisiti), and then moved to the crib where a cherub announces the birth of Christ. This was followed by the flight of the Holy Family. The second part was composed of a series of farcical encounters with Tirisiti as the central figure.[87] The comic part was followed by a procession of Moors and Christians crossing the stage, and the appearance of St George (the patron of the city). The show ended with the re-entrance of Tirisiti and his departure in a little balloon.[88]

By analysing the repertoires of some eighteenth century Lisbon puppet theatre companies (*Presépio do Bairro Alto; Presépios da Mouraria*); the Alentejan *Bonecos de Santo Aleixo* and the Spanish *Tia Norica*, we observe the same pattern appeared in *Jeu d'Adam*, that is, the idea of salvation (the Saviour's birth) had to be preceded by the creation and fall of Man. In some of the plays described by Passos, and in the actual

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[86] McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppets*, 100. As described by the authors, the first scene showed a dialogue between Saint Michael and Lucifer, followed by a scene with the devil in the Garden of Eden, the Temptation and the Fall. The third scene shows a priest reading the epistle in front of an altar and this is followed by a scene with the fat mayor, Cucharón, "who may well have evoked Don Cristobal", two shepherds and a soldier reading the edict of Caesar Augustus. After comes a scene with Joseph at the inn and the innkeeper stumbling "to indicate the tradition that he has lost an eye as divine retribution for his inhospitableness". After comes the little boy, Bastillo, involved in a few farcical scenes, followed by the adoration of the Christ child. The show ends with a comic scene where Tia Norica "who had fared badly in the bull-fight" is attended by a doctor. (Ibid., 164).

[87] It shows Tereseta, Tirisiti's wife, caught by her husband flirting with the sacristan of the church, the bad-tempered old men, the night-watchman, the priest, "trying to shove recalcitrant parishioners into church", and the escape of the bull who butts Tirisiti. (McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppets*, 165).

[88] Ibid.

show of Bonecos de Santo Aleixo, the Genesis episode became more popular than the Nativity passage itself, with the first being part of the constant repertoire, and the latter tending to disappear. It seems that the same process occurred in Brazil. As can be seen in Querino's description of the speaking crib, the nativity episode did not appear.

2.5 – The European Profane Puppet Traditions: The Commedia dell'Arte and the Origins of Pulcinella

In the seventeenth century, Commedia dell'Arte companies travelled over most of Western Europe. The influence of ravelling artists was prevalent in European theatre in general, and Italian puppeteers had a strong, unifying effect on the development of the puppet theatre in many countries.

Many actors of the Commedia dell'Arte were also puppeteers, or at least had begun their careers as such.[89] Early Commedia pieces were performed on the same stage as puppets and sometimes in the same show. Many times puppets were used as an attraction to call the audience's attention over to the actors' performances, and could also be shown in the intervals between the acts of the plays. However, there were many Italian puppet companies, often consisting of only one puppeteer, who travelled from country to country performing just with puppets. Some of them settled in one foreign country, others kept up the wandering life.[90]

The technical superiority of many Italian puppeteers, and their use of the popular characters of the Commedia dell'Arte, contributed to a general rise of interest in puppet theatre. The results of such influence were the international ascendancy of the puppet Pulcinella and the popularisation of the marionette or string-puppet technique. There is an extensive discussion among artists and scholars as to whether Pulcinella first appeared as a stock character of the Italian Commedia or as a puppet. Although it is more commonly accepted that Pulcinella made his debut as a regular

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[89] Ryan Howard, 'Puppets and the Commedia dell'Arte in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries,' *The Puppet Year Book* 1 (1995): 18.

[90] Such as Pietro Resoniero and Francesco Bernardone remained in Vienna, Giovanni Briocci in Paris, Sebastiano di Scio in Berlin, Antonio de Voto in London. Others, like the Bolognese Pietro Gimonde and the Maltese Stefano Landolfi, kept travelling. (Ibid., 17).

mask in the Commedia dell'Arte in about 1600,[91] there is no doubt that it was as a puppet that he exerted most influence on the European theatre.

Pulcinella grew from the Neapolitan peasantry and was represented with the loose white shirt belted outside his trousers that was the daily costume of the sixteenth century Italian peasant. The next century, his figure became standardised with a high floppy pointed hat and mask with a big nose. Pulcinella travelled with the other characters of Commedia dell'Arte across the Alps. In the middle of the seventeenth century he was established in France as Polichinelle. In France there was a long folk tradition of hunchbacked fools that influenced the new look of the Pulcinella. Also, the elegant ruff and buttons down the front of his resplendent coat were the result of French influence: "the rough Italian peasant was developed into something more fantastic and Gallic."[92] The French character returned to Italy and had some influence upon his native originator. In Venice, particularly, he became hunchbacked with a tall, round, rigid hat.

The same mixture of foreign and regional elements as a dynamic process of recreation and transformation of the mask of Commedia dell'Arte, can be observed in the development of the puppet character, particularly the glove version. The Italian Pulcinella has been recognised by scholars and artists, as the 'father' of most European puppet theatre, since in many places where he was shown, he was adopted by popular tradition and naturalised. Bragaglia shows the extension of the Pulcinella influence over the European puppet theatre:

> From the Neapolitan Pulcinella and by direct exportation came the French Polichinelle, the Spanish Don Cristobal Pulchinela and the English Punch, an abbreviation of Pulchinello. At one remove are simple-minded characters, similar to Pulcinella, German Hanswurst (John Sausage, the glutton), Austrian Kasperle, Tonoelych, Dutch Pickelhäring, Russian Petruskha and even Turkish Karagöz.[93]

The first wave of Italian puppeteers' influence occurred in the early seventeenth century, when they travelled over most of Western Europe, taking their shows to

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[91] Speaight states that we cannot affirm if Pulcinella came first as a character of the Commedia Dell'Arte or as a puppet form. However he points out that Pulcinella seems to be first appeared in the "castello" (a medieval puppet stage). (Speaight, *The History*, 39).

[92] Ibid., 43.

[93] Bragaglia, *Pulcinella*, 481.

Germany, France, England, Austria, Belgium, Spain,[94] and also Portugal.[95] However, they had already been in England by 1573,[96] and in France by 1550.[97] By the early nineteenth century there was an upsurge of ebullience in the street theatre and a second wave of Italian puppeteers had reached Russia,[98] and also South and North America.[99]

It is difficult to give details of which type of puppet the companies used in their shows abroad (strings or glove). The references to the puppets of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are vague and it is often impossible to be certain which of the two types is meant. What can be said is that both puppeteers and marionettists travelled widely, influencing the European puppet theatre.

The acceptance of Pulcinella by foreign audiences and his transformation into so many different characters are a result of his variable temperament, which enable him to be adapted to local tastes. As remarked by Bragaglia, "the Neapolitan adjusts himself to the foreign countries better than the Jew."[100] In consequence of this adaptability, Pulcinella appeared as a luxurious character, such as the Turk Karagöz; as a cruel and amoral one, such as Mr. Punch and as a greedy Spanish nobleman such as Don Cristobal de Polichinela. The title *Don* and preposition *de* suggest membership of the nobility, "an unexpected social advance for a descendant of a peasant Pulcinella."[101] Another aspect of Pulcinella's adaptability is the capacity of the puppet theatre to deal with a foreign language through the common practice of having an "interpreter" in front of the stage to mediate between puppets and audience. This characteristic was kept in some of the puppet theatre derived from Pulcinella, such as in *Petrushka*, where a musician also plays the role of intermediary. As mentioned before, the same character appears in Northeast puppet theatre.

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[94] Ibid., 398- 421.

[95] Cardoso, *Teatro Dom Roberto*, 02-3.

[96] Speaight, *The History*, 55.

[97] Bragaglia, *Pulcinella,* 485.

[98] Kelly, *Petrushka* , 108-139.

[99] Paraná, São Paulo and Recife (Brazil); Buenos Aires (Argentina); Santiago (Chile). (Bragaglia, *Pulcinella,* 479-8).

[100] Ibid., 481.

[101] Howard, "Puppets and the Commedia", 22.

The new types of puppet theatre influenced by the Italian hero are a fusion of elements of Pulcinella and older regional comic characters. The English Mr Punch is understood by some scholars to be the result of the mixture of primitive clowns of the folk plays, such as the medieval mummers' plays and Pulcinella.[102] Petruska also, is the combination of Italian puppeteers and the minstrels and buffoons of Old Russia.[103] And we may think of Benedito and Simão as the result of the mixture of the local types, such as the Mateus and Benedito of the *Bumba-meu-Boi/Cavalo-Marinho*, and the Italian puppet characters.

Nevertheless, the similarities between various European hand puppet members of the Pulcinella family cannot be regarded solely the result of a common Italian ancestor. These may also be seen as the reflection of certain tendencies inherent in the popular theatre and in the hand-puppet show, and the continuation of a general European tradition going back at least to the fourteenth century, to which all of the puppet heroes, Pulcinella included, were heirs. The propensity of these characters to invert hierarchies and to play with the verbal expressions of the local culture, along with the puppets grotesque body and the constant references to sex, death, among others reflect the relationship of the puppet theatre to the carnivalesque culture of the Medieval Age. But from the close connection between the puppet theatre's protagonists it is clear that Pulcinella had spread his seeds in many countries. Like one of the scenes present in the Pulcinella puppet theatre repertoire, from a multitude of eggs laid by him, many little Pulcinellas were brought onto the puppet stage.[104]

2.6 – Mamulengo Sources: New Considerations

As previously mentioned, the first documented reference to the puppet theatre in Brazil is from Rio de Janeiro in the eighteenth century. From the description given by Luiz Edmundo, the three forms of puppet theatre practised (and documented) by that time (door puppet show, puppets in overcoat and living-room puppets), all of them profane forms of puppet theatre, were the same as those presented in Portugal and other European countries. The strict correspondence between them leads us to think that they were taken to Brazil by the European people. In the eighteenth century,

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[102] Michael Byrom, *Punch and Judy: Its origins and evolution* (Norwich: Da Silva, 1988), 11

[103] Kelly, *Petrushka,* 1.

[104] Pulcinella is a mix of human and a "chick, a cock, a hen, and a goose." (Pasqualino, "Marionette and glove puppet", 227).

many companies of *Teatro de Bonifrates* [105] and travelling puppeteers did not limit their artistic activities to Lisbon, but they travelled around Portugal and even performed in Brazil. Hence, we can suppose some of these companies, and solo puppeteers included in their itinerary Recife, since it was one of the most well developed Brazilian cities by that time.[106]

We can observe a correlation between the first documented puppet theatre in the Northeastern region, the *speaking crib*, and the crib puppet theatres of Iberian peninsular countries. As indicated above, in the Portuguese *Bonecos de Santo Aleixo*, and in the Spanish *Tia Norica*, the Nativity episode became less conspicuous than that of Genesis. Apart from the text, similarities (mainly to the *Bonecos de Santo Aleixo*) are also seen in the puppet figures and the stage. In this particular case, besides the speaking cribs, we can observe links with the indoor puppets described by Edmundo. To summarize, we can say the following: all these puppets are manipulated from above by iron rods and/or strings (some with articulated arms moved by iron rods or strings); the stage is a miniature reproduction of a theatre stage, consisting of a front curtain with an opening; and in the case of indoor puppets, like the *Bonecos de Santo Aleixo*, the stage opening is covered with vertical strings.

In regard to the connection between these puppet theatre traditions and Mamulengo, as research has shown, some of the scenarios that were part of Mamulengo shows until the 1960s, have links with the religious *autos* and consequently, with some of the episodes presented in the crib puppet theatre described before, including characters such as Saint Joseph and Mary. Regarding the types of figures, although glove puppets represent the majority appearing in Mamulengo, the number of stick puppets appearing in Mamulengo could also indicate influences from the crib puppet theatre. As pointed out before, stick puppets manipulated from below appeared in many of the crib puppet traditions.

From the evidence I have been referring to throughout this study, it seems probable that there is a link between the cribs and Mamulengo, if we consider 'cribs'

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[105] Bonifrates (*bonnus + frater*). A Portuguese word used to designate puppet theatre (Passos, *Bonecos de Santo Aleixo,* 104).

[106] In my field research, I did not find any document that could support this supposition, although I have found many documents that show the extensive number of European theatre companies performing in Recife from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards. Nevertheless, we have to consider the problem with documents related to popular culture.

in a broader sense, and not just as static installations or mechanical figures representing the scene of the birth of Christ. But then, the terminology seems too narrow to embrace the complexity of the dramatic forms arising from the Nativity cycles, including secular forms of puppet theatre. As research has shown, in the great majority of the written material about Mamulengo (books, articles, newspaper articles) the common notion of the crib (and here the majority refer to the static or mechanic set of figures) as the primary and incontestable source of Mamulengo has been repeated again and again.

Likewise, we have to consider the probable influences of puppet theatre traditions coming from the Commedia dell'Arte. The similarities between Mamulengo and the European glove-puppet members of the Italian Pulcinella family, already cited by Borba Filho (Punch, Pulcinella and Guignol), and I would add, the Portuguese Dom Roberto, are evident. Maria Helena Góis talks about travelling puppeteers "particularly in the north of Minas Gerais and the south of Bahia (. . .) with a repertoire of 'old little comedies', showing paternal authority, a love affair interrupted, and the fleeing of the lovers. Briguela /Brighella/ was the clever servant, and 'until today Briguela is commemorated in the sertões.'"[107]

We can observe a close connection between Góis' descriptions and the Italian Commedia dell'Arte, both in the plot and in the servant character, Briguela. Even today, we find in the Northeast popular puppet theatre characters with the name of Briguela or Briguelinha 108 an explicit reference to the Italian servant. Another reference to the Commedia dell'Arte is the name of the clown appearing in Mamulengo and João Redondo puppet theatre. He is known as Mateus or Arrelinquim, a reference to Italian Arlequim (Arlecchino). Moreover, paternal authority protecting the virginity of daughters is a recurrent theme appearing in many scenarios.

The similarities between the European glove-puppet theatres and Mamulengo can also be seen in the performance structure. Many scenarios consist of a series of encounters between the protagonists (representatives of the people)

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[107] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 64.

[108] This character appears in the puppet theatre of Chico Simões, a puppeteer from Brasilia. Briguelinha is the son of the protagonist character, Benedito, and, according to Simões, Briguelinha appeared in the puppet theatre of traditional mamulengueiros, such as Solon (1920-1987), from Pernambuco and Antonio de Babau (1917-?) from Paraiba. (Francisco Simões de O. Neto, Interview, Brasilia, DF, 2001).

and characters representative of the higher social classes - the doctor, the policeman, the priest, and also, the supernatural beings, Death and the devil. As pointed out before, this may also be seen as a reflection of certain tendencies inherent in popular glove-puppetry, since similar mechanisms can operate without any obvious link. However, through the striking correspondence of many Mamulengo scenes and those of traditional European glove- puppetry, we have strong evidence of close contact. To cite a few: the frequent quarrel scenes, with their inevitable beatings and the piles of corpses at the scene's end; the carrying of the coffin scenes; and the snake scene, which seems an adaptation of the crocodile figure which appears in Punch and Judy shows. Finally, as with European glove puppetry, the Mamulengo show is mostly performed by one puppeteer (even if some have helpers to move and to give voice to some puppets). Often the master puppeteer is responsible for the creation of the texts, construction, manipulation and the voices of the majority of the puppets.

To conclude, I would say all these European types of dramatic representation seem to be present in the first configurations of the northeastern Brazilian puppet theatre. We can suppose they were brought by 'professional' travelling popular puppeteers, as well as by common European people who went to Brazil during the period of its colonisation. As pointed out by Borba Filho: "Since puppets were extremely common all over Europe at the time of the discovery and colonisation of Brazil, it wouldn't be surprising if, among the thousands of people who came to Brazil, some were fond of marionettes."[109]

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[109] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 55.

3 – African Influences

Throughout this section I have been discussing the hypotheses of the origins of Mamulengo in the view of some Mamulengo scholars. For them, European culture seems to be the primary source of northeastern Brazilian puppet theatre. However, the hypotheses of some puppeteers present new possibilities and new ways of looking at this subject. For them, the primary source of the Mamulengo lies with the African slaves.

3.1 – The Puppeteers' Hypotheses

Research has shown four hypotheses, which point to the elements of the Mamulengo coming from the African people, who were taken to Brazil between the sixteenth century and the

nineteenth century. The first hypothesis is from the puppeteer Ginu - Januário de Oliveira:

> There used to be an owner of many slaves on a farm in the interior of our State (Pernambuco). He was rude and mean to his slaves. When one of them got sick, the master had him killed, saying that 'a sick slave does not work'. There was a very smart slave. His name was Tião. After being questioned for arriving late at work, the slave answered his master:
>
> - Master, I am late because my wife received the visit of the stork.
>
> - You silly Negro! My wife is the one who waits for the arrival of the stork. Your woman receives the visit of a vulture.
>
> - Master, it's not possible. We are human too.
>
> So the slave got beaten up and tied to the stocks. At night, when the black got to the slaves' quarters, he thought: the master seems to have no heart. He seems to have a stone instead of a heart. Even his face is made of wood. So quickly the slave sculptured a head out of wood and having covered it with rags, he started to play with the puppet, doing everything the master did during the day.[110]

Another version, very similar to the above, comes from a self-taught folklorist João Emílio de Lucena, who had heard this from the puppeteers of Paraiba:

> I think that the puppet theatre came from Europe, from Africa, and so on. But the puppet theatre we have in the northeast of Brazil was created during the time of the slaves. The

[110] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia,* 75-6.

owners of the sugar plantations (the slave owner) used to be dreadful at that time. They bought, sold and treated the slaves as if they were animals. The slaves worked very hard in the sugar plantation. There was so much injustice and the slaves understood everything, because among the black people who came to Brazil, there were very smart people. So the slaves started reacting in a way, creating those little plays, showing what was happening, occupying some spaces. It was a social issue, a way of giving the masters a lesson and making the black people prevail in the end. That is the reason the black character wants to marry (and often success) the white lady, the daughter of the landowner. Dancing, drinking and challenging everyone, he always wins. [111]

There is also an account by the puppeteer Manuel Francisco da Silva[112] relating that Mamulengo first appeared on a farm in the interior of Bahia, having being derived from a performance by a woman slave: "(. . .) the black woman created a great variety of puppets representing the human-beings and animals that live on the farm. She asked her master (the landowner) permission to present her show and to named it "João Redondo", the landowner's name as a homage to him"[113]

Chico Daniel, a puppeteer from Rio Grande do Norte reports another version of the hypothesis above. It was heard from his father, who was also a puppeteer:

> There was a farm . . . the landowner was an old man called João Redondo. He had two young black employees: Baltazar and Cassimiro-Côco.[114] The old man (João Redondo) decided to bring them up, since their parents had died. As time went by, the old man died, Baltazar and Cassimiro-Côco also died. Then, the people of the region decided to make some puppets to tell their story all around the world, and they did: they built João Redondo, Baltazar and Cassimiro-Côco, they built the ox, the female puppets, and so on. I don't know if it is true or not, but my father used to say he heard that from another puppeteer called Feliciano.[115]

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[111] Humberto Braga, "II Encontro de Mamulengos do Noredeste," *Mamulengo* 07 (1978): 28.

[112] Manoel Francisco da Silva, was born in 1928 on the northeastern state of Paraiba. His Mamulengo was called "Babau ispetaco comedio" (*Babau* Comedy Show). There is no information about the date of his death. (*Pimentel, O Mundo Mágico*, 41; Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 147).

[113] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 73.

[114] Baltazar is one of the protagonists of João Redondo puppet theatre of Rio Grande do Norte, while Cassimiro-Côco is the protagonist of the puppet theatre in Ceará, which borrows its name from the hero character.

[115] Chico Daniel, interview, Natal, Rio Grande do Norte, 13 March 2004.

As can be observed from the passages above, the plot of the history of the origin of the Mamulengo is being woven through the imagination of the puppeteers themselves, who look for explanations for the roots of their art. Those images are related to the historical context where the Mamulengo developed. As mentioned before, in that context, there was a strong hierarchical division between the masters (slave-owners) and the slaves.

While in the first two hypotheses the rise of Mamulengo is seen as a form of revenge, a way of resistance and a manner of survival, in the following one it appears as a type of conciliation between the two races and the two poles of Brazilian colonial society. The contradictions contained within these hypotheses bring to light the tension and constant displacement of the Mamulengo subjects that swing between subversion and conformity. If on the one hand it shows a corrosive and irreverent criticism of the dominant class institutions and representatives (e.g., church, government; landowners, policemen), on the other it reproduces and reinforces conservative values and ideas, such as the concepts of good and evil; vice and virtue; and prejudice regarding gender and race.

The puppeteers' hypotheses can be understood as symbolic representations of the importance of the Africans amongst the formative elements of Brazilian puppet theatre. Furthermore, bearing in mind the great number of Africans who were brought to Brazil and their enormous contribution to the development of Brazilian society and culture, we may also conceive of African puppetry as an important source of Mamulengo.

3.2 – African Puppetry and Mamulengo: Possible Links

The African influence on Mamulengo, although recognized by Mamulengo scholars, [116] has not yet been discussed. In regard to this topic, Santos argues that:

> The Africans did not bring to [Brazil] any particular form of popular puppetry. They were only an influence during the development of the Mamulengo (. . .). There is no doubt that the Mamulengo is full of interventions originating from the African culture: the victims, all the characters that are humiliated and who avenge the poor people are black Africans and have a great importance in the Mamulengo.[117]

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[116] Borba Filho (1987); Santos (1977); Magada Modesto (2002).

[117] Fernando Augusto dos Santos, "Perguntas e Respostas após Comunicação", in *Teatro de Bonecos: Tradição e Modernidade*, ed. C. Zurbach (Evora: Casa do Sul, 2002), 215.

Santos' argument seems to be logical and pertinent. There is no doubting the strong presence (and fundamental role) of African descendents in the Mamulengo characters. The mamulengueiros' hypotheses described above reinforce this. Moreover, there is no document indicating the presence of any particular form of African popular puppetry in Brazil. But how much do we know (in Brazil) about African popular puppetry?

The lack of discussion of the African influence on Mamulengo seems to be related mostly to the lack of information both about African puppet theatre,[118] and Mamulengo history itself. Consequently, to establish possible links between them is a difficult task. Nevertheless, a few recent ethnographic studies on African puppetry (carried out mainly in the last three decades of the twentieth century[119]) have brought to light aspects regarding the forms and functions of puppets in Africa, and their enormous variety amongst African nations and ethnic groups. Due to the lack of early documentation, these studies are mostly based on recently collected data. Consequently, some aspects of African puppetry mentioned by these studies may have already suffered the influence of European culture, and this may have included some puppet traditions.

However, Dagan argues that the lack of early documentation of African puppet theatre does not mean that puppetry did not exist in Africa before European colonisation: "Since early times, puppets have been used in a religious context as part of ritual drama throughout Africa. They transmit religious beliefs and moral values (. . .)[120]

Narratives of travellers who visited Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries inform us of the use of puppets in diverse contexts.[121] Nidzgorski points out that, even before that period, there is evidence of the presence of puppets in Africa: "In the fourteenth-century, the Arabian traveller and geographer Ibn Battuta, admires the presence of puppets in the court of the sultan, where they appear in company

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[118] The lack of information about African puppets is particularly evident in Brazil, since no publication on this subject is available in the Portuguese language.

[119] Scheinberg (1977); Proschan (1980); Arnoldi (1995); Nidzgorski and Nidzgorski (1998); Witte (2001); Den Otter and Kéïta (2002).

[120] E.A Dagan, *Emotions in Motion: Theatrical Puppets and Masks from Black Africa* (Montreal: Galerie Amrad African Arts, 1990), 30.

[121] Paul Soleillet (1881); Talbot (1906).

of poets (. . .). In the seventeenth century Congo, Diego Da Caltanisetta has remarked that two wooden statuettes, very well manipulated, were used to throw curses."[122]

As is well known today, puppets in Africa were (and still are) widely used and serve many different functions: in divinations; in the process of curing illnesses; in religious ceremonies (for example, the initiation process, cult of the dead, etc) and finally, as entertainment, such as the formalized, elaborate dramatic or dance performances. Moreover, puppets occupy an important place in African myths. In Nigeria, puppets are perceived as coming from the underground world, the land of the dead, and also from the land of the witches. In Congo, a woman originating from the forest offered her puppets to the chief. In Mali, a fisherman who was kidnapped by the spirits of the forest had learned with them the art of the puppets. In Africa the "puppet is never an innocent object."[123]

Bearing in mind these different contexts, we can establish a connection between the Congolese myth and the hypothesis that Mamulengo originated from a female slave. Like the Congolese woman, the slave offered the puppets and the puppet show created by her as homage to her master.

Brazilian ethnographers and folklorists have pointed out the influence of African fetishist cults in Brazil, in which figures are seen as having magical powers, or as being inhabited by a spirit. Even today, figures are used in the curing process, for example in the ex-voto statuettes (on which I shall elaborate below). In the Pernambucan dramatic dance, Maracatu, a female puppet (Calunga or Catita) appears as one of the sacred elements. Even today, the Calunga is part of the Maracatu ritual and, like so many other sacred objects (axés), embodies the strength of the group's ancestors. As Andrade notes, the Calunga puppet is probably reminiscent of African fetishist cults.[124]

To carry out a comparative examination the wide use of puppets in Africa, and their transfer, degree of continuity and transformation experienced on contact with European and Amerindian indigenous cultures in the Brazil, would certainly be a fascinating field of study. The aim of this study, however, is much more modest,

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[122] Olenka Dardowska Nidsgorski, *Marionettes en Territoire Africain* (Charleville-Mézières: Editions Institut International de la Marionnette, 1991), 06.

[123] Ibid., 78.

[124] Mário de Andrade, "A Calunga dos Maracatus," in *Novos Estudos Afro-Brasileiros* , ed. G. Freyre (Recife: Massangana, 1988), 46.

though no less important. In looking at possible influences of African puppets on Mamulengo, I will limit myself to examining the links between the puppets used in dramatic performance. Moreover, due to the parameters of this study, and keeping in mind the methodological difficulties in cross-Atlantic comparative ethnographic studies, which would involve an analysis of the form and function of the puppets, I will limit myself to point out "their superficial commonalities and similarities."[125] Hence, the references here are mostly related to formal procedures (for example, the puppets' visual representation, subjects and music), rather than the cosmological beliefs that may lie beneath them. Nevertheless, in the latter part of this section, I will make brief comments about the way in which some mamulengueiros regard their puppets, and the probable connection with African puppeteers' beliefs and practices.

Sexual Matters

Sex is one of the main subjects of Mamulengo, and one of the main sources of its humour. Sexual content is expressed in the puppets' visual representations (exposure of genitals), movements (parodies of sexual intercourse) and in many textual references (both obvious and subtle). In contrast to the Brazilian puppet tradition, sexuality was seldom a central part of the performances of European puppetry.[126] Yet sexual exposure is very common in African puppetry, appearing in the puppets' visual presentation, and in scene content and subjects. In his essay "*Ekon* Society Puppets", Scheinberg[127] explains that this traditional Nigerian puppet theatre was

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[125] Frank Proschan, "The Puppetry Traditions of Sub-Saharan Africa: Descriptions and Definitions" (Master diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 1980), 02.

[126] McCormick and Pratasik (1998:111) mention this characteristic referring to the nineteenth century traditional European puppet theatre. Pasqualino refers to sexual comedy in Pulcinella puppet theatre. Nevertheless, the sexual exposure mentioned by the author is never as clearly expressed as it is in Mamulengo and in African puppetry. Moreover, Françoise Gründ in her essay "El Sexo de Los Titeres" (Puck, n°03, 1992, p.67-73) mentions many world puppet traditions, in which the genitals of the puppets are often exposed, such as in *Yoke Tai Tabin* puppets of Birmania; *Hun Krabok* puppets of Thailand, *Karagoize* of Turkey; and the African puppets of Mali (*Bozo*) and Benin and Nigeria (*Gelede*). As can be noted, no reference to European puppet tradition is made.

[127] Alfred L Scheinberg, *Ekon Society Puppets* (New York: Tribal Arts Gallery, 1977). Scheinberg's issue is based mostly on Amaury P. Talbot's research carried out in 1906, and published in his book *Life in Southern Nigeria, the Magic, Beliefs and Customs of the Ibibio Tribe* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1923).

organised by a drama society [*Ekon* (*Ekong*) Society] once widespread and influential among the Ibibio people of southern Nigeria. *Ekon* performers operated within the strictures of the society's social codes, such as respecting certain food taboos and refraining from sex the night before a performance, among others, but, above all, guarding the secrets of the society. The author notes: "Talbot wrote that if a puppet was dropped and exposed its hidden mechanism, the village would kill the entire *Ekon* troupe. Occasionally, only the offending puppeteer was slain and the rest of the performers sold into slavery".[128]

The plays referred to "current topics of local or more general interest", and the figures were shaped as idealized representations of social types important to the community.[129] *Ekon* puppets were a source of public entertainment and instruction, and also were used as agents of control. Scheinberg notes: "The *Ekon* plays employed humor (often sexual) and public criticism within a ritualized context to influence social attitudes and to expose wrongs which, although not necessarily illegal, could threaten the equilibrium of the Ibibio community."[130] One scene described by Talbot depicts a sexual encounter between the puppet representing the father, and his daughter-in-law. According to Scheinberg, "although this incident was presented as a sexual burlesque, the situation portrayed would be very serious if it actually occurred in village life."[131]

As discussed in chapter IV, many types of comic exposures in Mamulengo (including the sexual ones) may act as a form of social control. Moreover, we find various links between the sexual representations in the puppet figures and movements appearing in Mamulengo and in some African puppet traditions, such as in *Gelede* puppets. In the festival of the *Gelede/Efe* society of the Yoruba people of Nigeria and Benin, articulated puppets often appear mounted on the top of the masks used in the daytime ceremony. As observed by Brand, the term "*ere*" is used to designate both a mask and a statuette among the Yoruba people.[132] These puppets, known as *Gelede* puppets, are often moved by means of strings or wires manipulated from below,

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[128] Ibid., 6.

[129] Ibid., 2.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Ibid., 7.

[132] Roger Brand, "Statuettes articulées Yoruba," Anthropos 66 (1971): 14, quoted in Proschan, "The Puppetry Traditions", 23. Witte remarks that the term "ere" means "machine magic." Hans Witte, *World in Motion: Gelede puppets of the Anago Yoruba* (Berg en Dal: Afrika Museum, 2001), 70.

facilitating the puppets' repetitive movements. They depict scenes related to social and work activities, and portray characters such as thieves, adulteresses and foreigners, including Muslim clerics and repatriated Afro-Brazilians.[133]

The festival is organised by the *Gelede* society which includes both males and females, but is actually run by women. Witte argues that the function of the *Gelede/Efe* festival is to regulate the female powers of witches in order to protect the community against their dangerous influence.[134] However, Thompson claims that its intention is "to discover the positive moral qualities embedded in witchcraft so that the whole of mankind can benefit from such powers."[135] The festival consists of two parts. The first (*Efe* ceremony) starts at night time and is mostly performed with *Efe* masks, which do not include puppets. In the second part (*Gelede* ceremony), which is mostly performed with *Gelede* masks/puppets, the focus is on dancing and entertainment and takes place during the day. Brand describes a sexual-intercourse scene played by two puppets in the *Gelede* ceremony: "(. . .) the second [puppet] was a woman who removed her dress during the dance and simulated coitus with the third puppet, a man with an articulated penis which pushed its way out of his loin cloth to engage in coitus. (. . .) The puppets were wood, manoeuvred from below by means of wire or string".[136]

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[133] With the end of Brazilian slavery many former slaves returned to Africa. See Kim D. Buttler, "Africa in the Reivention of Nineteenth-Century Afro-Bahian Identity," in *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil*, ed. K. Mann and E. Bay (London : Frank Cass, 2001), 136-7.

[134] Witte, *World in Motion,* 69.

[135] Robert F.Thompson, *African Art in Motion,* (San Francisco: University of California Press, 1974), 200 quoted in Proschan, "The Puppetry Traditions", 22.

[136] Ibid.





Fig. 2.6 – The Hausa group's puppet theatre's figures often have Disproportional phallus and are called *diyan dabo* (the sons of the magic). After performing their scenes, each puppet is stuck in the ground facing the stage.

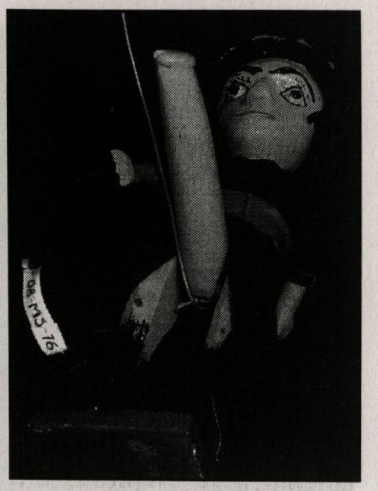

Fig.2.7 – A lascivious priest with a huge penis. Puppet made by Solon.

A figure appearing with similar characteristics to the male puppet described above is the priest figure. One example present in the Mamulengo Museum shows a priest dressed in a long black tunic. Inside the tunic, a long, articulated phallus is placed vertically between the legs of the puppet. A string is attached at the base of the phallus, and by pulling it down the phallus comes out of the tunic, causing a surprise effect. The disproportion between the puppet and the phallus size is striking, which remind us of the big phallus of Karagöz, and also some of the puppets appearing in Africa. In the Hausa ethnic group of Niger, puppet figures often have a disproportional phallus.

Witte also referring to Yoruba *Gelede* puppets provides plenty of details of the humorously depicted sexual intercourse scenes, including the erect phallus and even scenes of 'sodomy'. Similar types of puppets depicting sexual intercourse (including scenes of sodomy and group sex) appear in the *Museu do Homem.* The figures are mounted on a type of gun and are moved by pulling the gun's trigger, allowing for repetitive and rhythmic movement. The figures of the *Museu do Homem* collection were made by Sauba, a puppeteer and sculptor from Pernambuco. Sauba explained these puppets were used in short comic interludes, and were often considered "pornographic". As he notes, "that seems the reason for its disappearance from the Mamulengo scenes."[137] In fact, in the shows attended in Zona da Mata, this type of figure did not appear.

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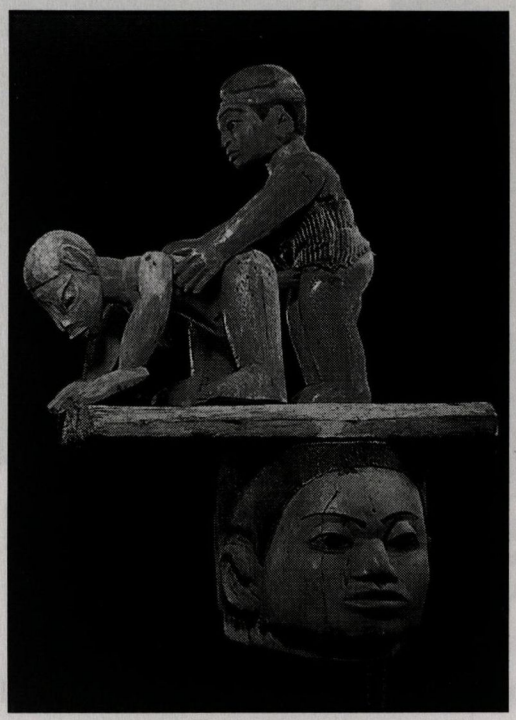
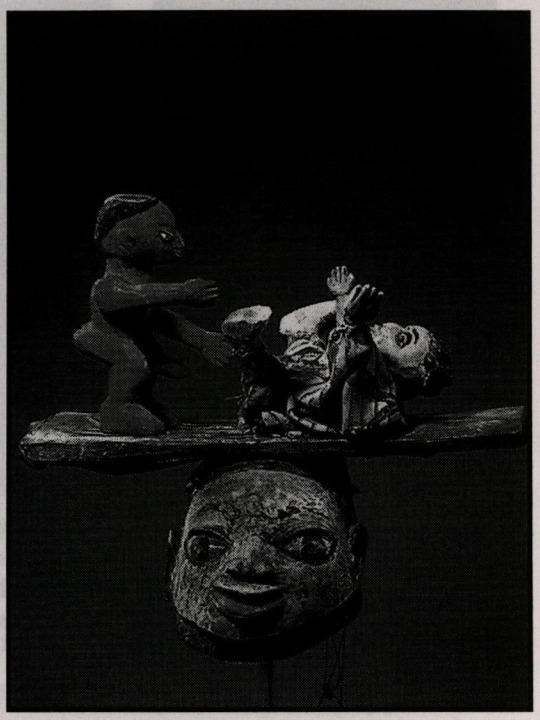
[137] Sauba, Interview, Carpina, Pernambuco, 18 January 2004.





Figs. 2.8 and 2.9 – Gelede masks with articulated puppets moved by strings manipulated from below. The puppets depict copulation scenes, in which a naked woman is being penetrated by a man with an enormous penis. The male figures can move back and forth.



Fig. 2.10 – Scene of "sodomy" involving three male figures. The puppets are made of wood and cloth. The trunks of the standing figures are made of cloth allowing for the articulation. When the gun trigger is pulled, the figures can move back and forth. Puppet made by Sauba.

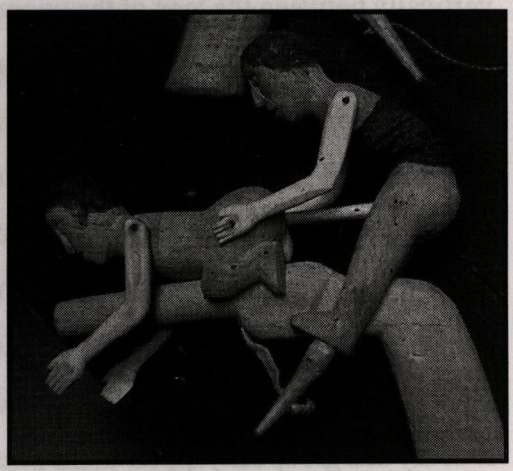


Fig. 2.11 – Another version of copulation scene with a man and a woman. Puppet made by Sauba.

Work activities and everyday life scenes

In her essay on Mamulengo, Magda Modesto points out that scenes depicting working activities, so common in Mamulengo, seem to show an African influence. expressions of the work of the Africans, they are also expression of the Indians' work." Without doubt, Mamulengo expresses its context and, in its first configurations, represented mainly life in the rural northeast. Nevertheless, Modesto's

remarks should be more carefully examined before being refuted. The links Modesto pointed out relate not only to working activities as subjects, but also to the similarities in the technical aspects of puppet construction, control points and articulation, as I shall demonstrate below. Moreover, apart from the figures appearing in the animated cribs, puppets showing working activities are not known in European puppetry, which could also indicate influences from Africa.

Some the puppets appearing in Mamulengo are very similar to *Gelede* figures, such as *Pisa-Pilão* (grinding grains). Moreover, *Chica-do Cuscuz* (a couscous-maker) and the *Tapioqueira* (a tapioca maker) appear frequently in Mamulengo scenes to sell their goods. Also, we have to take into account the *casa-de-farinha* puppets that like *Gelege* figures make repetitive movements, producing a special sound and bringing a special rhythm to the scene. The grain-grinding puppets are a very good example of this.

Another possible link between Mamulengo and *Gelede* puppets are the bird figures. Although they appear with different meanings, they are widely used in both traditions, often appearing with an articulated beak moved by means of strings attached to its lower part. In *Gelede* tradition, birds often symbolized the cosmic power of female witches, while in Mamulengo they often represent the animal itself. Nevertheless, the bird Jacu, a common figure in the Mamulengo of Zona da Mata, appears as a miraculous bird, laying an enormous egg that has dozens of yolks.

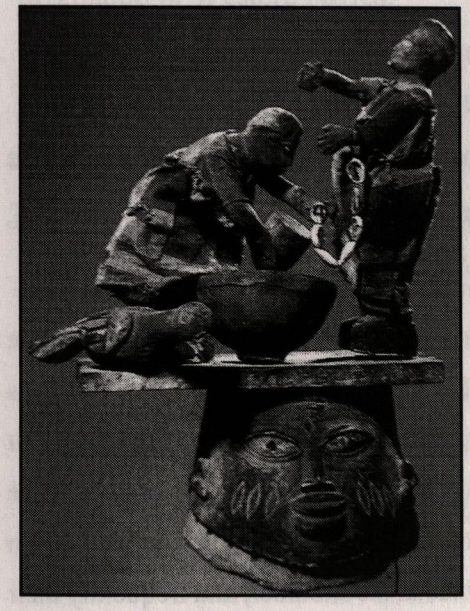


Fig. 2.12 – Gelede masks with articulated puppets depicts daily life activities. Both figures can bend and stay upright. The puppet on the left side fills a pot from a larger basin and offers to the other figure.



Fig. 2.13 – A smith hammers continuously a piece of iron, while his assistant operates the bellows. The bellow and arms of the smith figure move up and down when the string is pulled.

Although Witte doesn't indicate the period in which Gelede puppets first appeared, by their relation with Anago Yoruba mythology[138] we can suppose them to be more than two centuries old. The area covered by the Anago Yoruba people (Nigeria and Benin) was, in the eighteenth century, an area of intensive traffic of slaves to the New Word, including Brazil.[139] From the indications shown above, there is a strong suggestion that the African Anago Yoruba slaves might have taken their puppet tradition to Brazil.

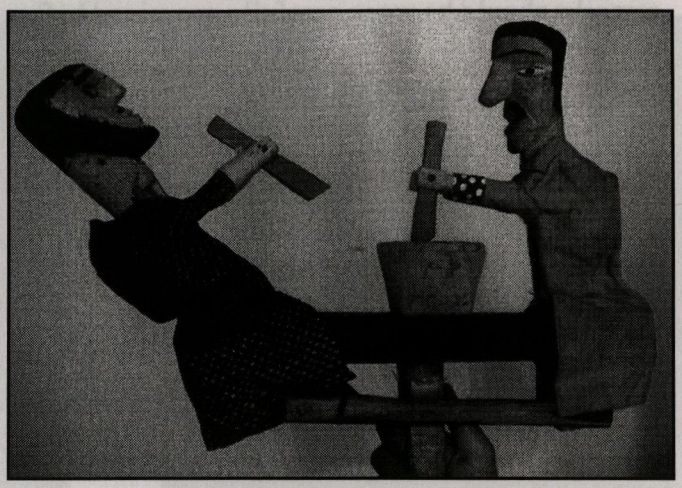


Fig.2.14 – Pisa Pilão. The figures make repetitive movements "grinding de corn."

Rod puppets made entirely of wood

The Ekon puppets already mentioned have the same characteristics as the entirely wooden puppets of Mamulengo. Scheinberg describes them as "joined, painted wood puppets" used in satirical plays. Moreover he explains that:

> [The puppets] vary from one to three feet high and are carved from the light wood of the *ukot* tree. (. . .) Representing both sexes and all ages and social groups, *Ekon* puppets are distinguishable from the joined wood figures made for other purposes (e.g., toys, cult figures) by the handle projecting a foot or two below the feet of the carving. The puppeteer held the puppet by his hand and extended the figure over his head when performing. All puppets have moveable arms joined at the shoulder, and frequently their right hand is adapted to hold props.[140]

From the description above, some differences can be observed. In Mamulengo, there is no female puppet with an entirely wooden body, and no figure appears with hands shaped to clasp objects. But, apart from these distinctions, the figures appearing in *Ekon* and in Mamulengo, present close similarities. In Mamulengo, as in *Ekon* puppets, the figures

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[138] Witte, *World in Motion*, 77.

[139] Gilberto Freyre, *Casa Grande e Senzala* (São Paulo: Vozes Editora, 1999), 143.

[140] Scheinberg, *Ekon Society,* 02.

can be fixed over a wooden platform, or can be held directly by the operator's hand. In most of the human figures, the only point of articulation is at the shoulder, allowing for movement of the arms.

Nevertheless, we may also link the wholly wood figures appearing in Mamulengo with the carved wooden figures used for votive purpose. The *ex-votos* tradition appears all over Brazil mainly in the Northeast region. The human statuettes appearing in the *ex-votos* present similarities to the wooden body puppets.[141] But in the *ex-voto,* the figures always represent a sickness that the devout want to be cured, or even a sickness already cured. Hence, they function as material expressions of a desirable miracle, or a realised miracle. As mentioned by Baccaro "the *ex-voto* is a type of talisman that reveals a general problem. The *santeiro* [figure-maker] collects the pain and the sickness, concentrating them in these figures, which are the proof of the miracles".[142] For Vieira, this type of vow appearing in Brazil seems to have originated in Western Africa.[143]

In terms of the performance structure, Scheinberg remarks that the *Ekon* puppets' limited flexibility makes them suitable for short performances only and they are "usually employed in programs of several short skits, each running from fifteen to thirty minutes". One example of these skits described by Scheinberg was as follow:

> The puppet portraying the father entered during an animated discussion between the various rival factions of the household: his eldest son and daughter, his second and his wife. After shaking a wooden sword and telling the assemblage to be quiet, the father mournfully sang his marriage woes:
>
> 'Formerly I had plenty of yams. Now my wife has eaten them all and run away to another man.'(Talbot, 1906, p.78) [144]

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141 As we can see from the quotation cited before, Scheinberg also pointed out similarities between the figures used for entertainment (*Ekon* puppets) and the ones used for religious purpose among the Ibibio people.

142 Giuseppe Baccaro, "Uma Coleçao de Milagres," in *Ex-votos do nordeste*, ed. L. Saia (Rio de Janeiro: Museu de Arte Moderna, 1965), 6.

143 José GeraldoVieira, "Ex-Votos," in *Ex-votos do nordeste*, 3.

144 Scheinberg, *Ekon Society*, 2. Bearing in mind the average time of a puppet theatre show, we may question what reference Scheinberg is using when he remarks that a show made up of "several short skits, each running from fifteen to thirty minutes" represents a "short performance".

As noted before, most of the Mamulengo shows are composed of small scenes. Although this particularity is also observed in many crib theatre performances and in Northeast folguedos, such as *Cavalo-Marinho* and *Bumba-meu-Boi* (which I think have greatly influenced Mamulengo, as I shall elaborate further) we could also conceive this characteristic as further evidence of the African influence on the Northeast puppet theatre. In many Mamulengo scenarios, which Santos calls "pretext scenes",[145] the puppets come to the stage without 'logical' justification, mostly to crack jokes or indulge in wordplay and comical actions.

As indicated above, *Ekon* performers operated within the strictures of the society's social codes, and if the puppeteers broke the secrets of the society, they would be killed or sold into slavery. As with the Anago Yoruba people in Nigeria and Benin, the area covered by the Ibibio people of southern Nigeria was a region of intensive slave traffic to Brazil.[146]





Figs.2.15 and 2.16 – Two African entirely wooden puppets. On the left, a female puppet of Ibibio people from Nigeria. On the right, a "boxer" from Ivory Coast. Both figures have articulated arms.

[145] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 142.

[146] Freyre, *Casa Grande e Senzala*, 143.



Fig. 2.17 – A group of policemen puppets made entirely of wood and with articulated arms. Museu do Mamulengo.

Music

The African influence in Brazilian musical culture is indisputable. Moreover, we observe the same emphasis on music (the type of instruments and functions) in some puppet traditions in Africa. In the Kirango Bamana Masquerades of the Segou Region in Central Mali, the performance is accompanied by music throughout, played by an orchestra mostly composed of drums and sung by songstresses. Each character has a particular song associated with it and each of these songs has a distinct melody.[147] Another African puppetry tradition in which music has the same function is the one of the Tiv ethnic group of Nigeria. Peggy Harper describes a performance she attended in 1968, and explains that each figure appearing on the stage was introduced by a song with a characteristic rhythm to which the puppet dances.[148]

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[147] Mary Jo Arnoldi, *Playing with Time: Art and Performance in Central Mali* (Indiana: University Press, 1995), 43-55.

[148] Quoted Prochan, "The Puppetry Traditions", 27-8.

While the presence of the Tiv ethnic group was never recorded in Brazil, the geographic location of this group stands very near the location of other ethnic groups in Nigeria which travelled *en masse* to the Northeast of Brazil. From the descriptions above, we observe a close connection between the characters' specifics and introductory songs present in both African traditions, and the *baianos* of the Mamulengo characters.

The Mamulengueiros' Beliefs

There is no doubt that the puppeteers see their Mamulengo shows as entertainment and as a manner of earning their living, be it their exclusive income, or a supplementary one. Nevertheless, as research has shown, some of the mamulengueiros truly believe they experience a kind of 'possession by some entity' when they present their puppets. According to some puppeteers, this manifestation happens during the whole show, whilst others believe that this 'possession' happens only during certain scenes, those related to Afro-Brazilian cults, such as in *Xangô* scene.

Master Ginu says: "When I die all my puppets should be burned. And something will happen to the one who doesn't let this happen!" Ginu's explanation for this request is based on his belief that "the puppets were given to me as a kind of mission, received by me from spiritual entities". Therefore, "they must leave this world together with me." Ginu says that when he enters the booth he is not "himself" anymore. Only when the spectacle ends does he become "himself" again. Ginu tells us that he used to participate in *Umbanda* cults for more than twenty years. This fact leads us to believe that his vision of the supernatural powers he receives during the performance may be linked to the embodiment of spiritual entities, which are the basis of this Afro-Brazilian cult.

Zé Lopes, who also used to participate in *Xangô* cults, says that when he is presenting the *Xangô* scene, he can feel the presence of many entities (spirits) inside the booth. According to him, some of these spirits use the puppets as a way to manifest themselves. As a natural consequence, often he cannot clearly remember what happened or what he said during the presentation of the scene.[149]

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[149] Zé Lopes, interview, Glória de Goitá, Pernambuco, 14 February, 2004.

Borba Filho referring to the puppeteer José Petronilho Dutra, remarks that: "The evening he performs, he does not sleep. The puppets keep provoking his imagination and he keeps walking the whole night."[150]

These notions of the puppeteer as a mediator between two universes (transcendental and earthly), and of the puppets as objects which embody spiritual entities, believed in by some traditional puppeteers from the Northeast, evokes the functions that the puppeteers have in many African traditions.[151] Just to cite two examples, Talbot refers to a performance of *Ekon* puppeteers and notes: "as each fresh manikin [puppet] appeared, a black cock was lifted up to touch it, in order, so it was explained, to confer upon it the power of speech and movement."[152] In another performance he attended, three men who stood before the stage beat the stage cloths with brushes of palm fibre. Talbot's Ibibio informants claimed the men "were serving a 'broom juju', necessary for the manifestation of the spirits of the play". However, Talbot also observed this devise disguised the movements of the puppeteers inside the booth.[153]

To conclude, I would say that even if the African puppets were not physically taken to Brazil as material objects, or as a particular form of popular puppetry, they nevertheless were kept alive in the slaves' memories. Finding a niche for them in the new society, African people found a way to continue playing with their puppets. The puppet figures and performances surely were transformed by the contact with European and Amerindian indigenous cultures.

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[150] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 151.

[151] The puppeteer's spiritual beliefs may also be related to those of Brazilian Indians.

[152] Talbot, *Life in Southern Nigeria,* 76-7, quoted in Proschan, "The Puppetry Traditions", 24.

[153] Talbot, *Life in Southern Nigeria,* quoted in Scheinberg, *Ekon Society*, 6.

4 – Indian Influences

Indian influences in Mamulengo seem to be much less visible than those of Europe and Africa. Again, this may be a reflection of the lack of studies on the use of puppets in a dramatic context by the Brazilian Indians. As far as research has shown, this has been an area neglected by anthropologists.

As mentioned before, Magda Modesto argues that the *'Maracás'* were the first puppets to appear in Brazil. This musical instrument, she argues, was used in a dramatic context by the *pajés* (shamans).[154] Whether or not the *Maracás* constituted a puppet used in a dramatic context deserves deeper examination. This examination should proceed using analytical categories that take into account the differences between the investigator's understanding of the object being studied (in this case, the puppet used in a dramatic context), and the understanding of the people who produced and used such an object. Hence, what we may include or exclude as a puppet (used in a dramatic context) has to be based mainly on the studied group practice, and the meaning it acquires within this particular group. Bearing in mind these considerations, and proceeding on to a detailed investigation, we may agree (or not) with Modesto.

Remaining aware of the limits, of such research, the *Caboclinhos* scene appearing in Mamulengo seems to be the most visible influence of Indian culture in Mamulengo. As shall be elaborated upon further in a more detailed manner, the *Caboclinhos* is a dramatic dance representing the dance and songs of the Indian tribes. Although it seems to have been influenced by the Jesuits' religious *autos*, the *Caboclinhos* is the Northeast *folguedo* (dramatic dance) that displays the closest link to Indian traditions.

Nevertheless, Indian presence in Northeast culture is not limited to *Caboclinhos*. Influences also appear in many other *folguedos,* which are also present in the Mamulengo puppet theatre. Hence, Indian influence operates in an indirect manner through these *folguedos*. Camarotti sees the use of whistles, which appears in many Brazilian *folguedos*, and also in the puppet theatre, as a probable influence from the Indian and the African cultures: "Whistles are elements, which were much used among the American Indians and Africans with the magic religious functions of calling up the benefits or exorcising harm".[155]

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[154] Modesto, *A Arte do titere*, 53.

[155] Camarotti , *Resistência e Voz,* 80.

PART II – The Influence of the Northeast Traditional and Popular Expressions

The first region colonised by the Portuguese, the Northeast had (and still has) a strong popular cultural tradition produced by the popular classes of both the rural and urban areas. These popular traditions, deeply rooted in traditional patters of life, were developed and maintained in this region, even while they had declined or even disappeared in other regions of the country.[1]

Several patterns of north-eastern culture were established in Brazil by the Portuguese colonisers. There, they incorporated aboriginal elements from the Brazilian Indians and Africans. Soon, they acquired new features due to the peculiarities of the new country and of the new society that was arising. The constitution and consolidation of Northeast popular culture are the result of centuries of social and cultural exchange between white, Indian and black populations.

As mentioned before, the Northeast had its territory organised from the early days of colonisation on the basis of plantation system production, and after, on farming. The patterns of rural life that emerged as a result of these relatively isolated communities existing on a base of collective forms of work and social relations embodied their own particular cultural expressions and therefore, they were an integral and inseparable element of a particular way of life. Parallel to the rural expressions, there were the ones arising in the first cities. With the expansion of urban life, these popular traditions acquired distinct contours influenced by the rhythm and dynamics of urban life. In both urban and rural contexts, they flourished and expanded. Crafts, music, literature, dance, dance drama and puppet theatre were natural practices of the popular classes and an affirmation of their vision of the world, and of their specific cultural identity. Numerous sources were assimilated by the collective mind, reshaped to its own needs, and handed on as part of the community's patrimony, thereby serving to reinforce the values and customs.

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[1] As has been discussed by many scholars, this seems to be the result of the Northeast lesser development if compared with the centre-south regions. As mentioned earlier, with the beginning of the decrease the sugar production at the end of the eighteenth century there was a growth in the political, economic and cultural influence of the states of the Centre-South, and consequently, a decline in the Northeast region.

Towards the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, these popular art forms began also to represent an alternative means of earning a living for the peasant and the urban poor population, mostly as a form of supplementary income. Borba Filho points out that, for the great majority of the puppeteers, the puppet theatre, beyond its other significances, represented a financial resource.[2] Until the end of the 70s (and in some areas until the 80s) these popular art forms represented the only mode of entertainment for the poor people, particularly those living in the rural areas and small villages. There have undoubtedly been many losses and a steady decline in the Northeast popular traditions. The groups that have survived have had to struggle hard to keep themselves alive. However, the decadence that Mário de Andrade pointed out, in the 1940s, [3] and which led him to foresee the probable death of the popular traditions of the Northeast, has never been sufficiently strong to annihilate them. As a historical phenomenon, the popular traditions have suffered many changes that both reflect and inform the transformations operating in Northeastern society and today, there are still many active amateur and professional groups (and individuals) engaged in producing these popular and traditional expressions.

The diversity of the popular traditions present in the Northeast is impressive. There are many forms of craft; songs; collective dances, such as *ciranda* and *forró*; popular ballad and poetry, first oral, and then in printed cheap pamphlets (*Cordel)*; poetic duels of improvised verses between two poets *(desafio)*; popular circus, and finally, the dance-dramas, such as *Bumba-meu-Boi, Cavalo-Marinho, Caboclinhos, Pastoril, Maracatu,* among others.

Dance- drama, the popular art form that combines in its structures elements of music (melody and lyrics), dance and themes (central and peripheral plots), is commonly referred to by the popular artists, and their audience as *brinquedo* or *brincadeira*, that is, a playful action. Brazilian folk scholars called them *folguedo,* among other terminologies.[4] The term *folguedo* may be translated as "frolic", and is used here to refer to the popular expressions that present dramatic elements.

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[2] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 118

[3] Andrade, *Danças Dramáticas,* 19

[4] Other terminologies used by Brazilian scholars to designate *folguedos* are: dance drama (Mário de Andrade,1932); folk manifestations (Renato Almeida,1942); popular spectacles (Borba Filho,1966); folk theatre or people's theatre (Camarotti, 2003), among others.

Some of these *folguedos* have probably been played since the early period of colonisation and have strong dramatic expression that reflects the culture of the whole region. They are the result of the mixture of religious and profane subjects, and of the Brazilian miscegenation process. As Camarotti notes, "their leading characteristics are humour, improvisation, obscenity, music, dance, and slapstick, and are directly shaped by audience participation. The traditional audience is always interfering in the action, talking to and inciting the actors."[5]

The puppet theatre, as part of this whole cultural experience, is in a constant dynamic of interchange with the *folguedos* practised by and within the community of the rural and urban areas of Northeast region. Consequently, we can observe their strong influence on the constitution of Mamulengo. For Santos, in the puppet theatre there can be perceived a major agglutination of the many *folguedos*.[6] The elements coming from the traditional cultural repertoire, being part of a 'long memory' deep rooted in communal practices, are incorporated in the Mamulengo shows by many generations of puppeteers. Roberto Benjamin understands this process of incorporation to be a result of the portrayals that the popular artists make of the cultural practices present in their community. Benjamin calls this 'meta-folklore', and remarks that, its occurrence is more visible in the folk dramatic forms due to their intrinsic representational nature. [7]

The process of absorption can be verified in the many elements that constitute the puppet theatre (plots, characters, music, visual and kinetic elements) as well as in the performance context (forms of contract, money collection, participation of the audience, and so forth). Sometimes, beyond just incorporating some of the elements, the puppeteers may 'reproduce' the entire folguedo with puppets. Two examples can illustrate this process.

Francisquinho (Francisco Ferreira Sobrinho), a puppeteer from Passa e Fica, Rio Grande do Norte, besides being a puppeteer, used to be a master (organiser) of the *Boi de Reis* (King's Ox), a variation of *Bumba-meu-Boi* (discussed below), which requires a great number of performers. With the difficulties he found in presenting his

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[5] Marco Camarotti, *Resistência e Voz o teatro do povo do Nordeste* (Recife: ARTELIVRO, 2003), 40.

[6] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 144.

[7] Roberto Câmara Benjamin, "O Urso do Carnaval: Narrativas Metafolclóricas," *Comunicação/Encontro Nacional ANPOLL* (Campinas: Editora Unicamp, 1998), 05.

Boi de Reis, Francisquinho decided to present it with puppets. As he notes, "to present the *Boi de Reis* with the puppets is not the same, but at least I can keep presenting it, although I prefer doing it with people [living actors]."[8] Unfortunately I could not see his performance of *Boi de Reis* with the puppets. However, by analysing the figures used in the show, we observed that not all the characters traditionally present in the *folguedo* had their counterpart in the puppet theatre. This demonstrates how the puppeteer treats these incorporations with a liberal hand.

Dadi (Maria de Lourdes da Silva), a puppeteer from Rio Grande do Norte staged a religious *Pastoril*[9] with puppets. Dadi explains that this was a long-held dream of hers, since in her view "the *Pastoril* is one of most beautiful *folguedos.*" Dadi based her show on many *Pastoril* performances she attended throughout her life, and also used a written version as a complementary source.[10] She constructed about 20 puppets in a very detailed manner to represent the characters present in the religious *Pastoril*. The figures are about 30 centimetres high and are manipulated from above by means of strings and small iron rods. Dadi's set of *Pastoril* puppets is part of the *Museu do Mamulengo* collection.

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[8] Francisco Ferreira Sobrinho, interview, Passa e Fica, Paraiba, 16 March 2004. The main difficulties the task presented to Francisquinho were financial. He explains that the expenses with the costumes, the payment for the performers (musician and actors) and the food for feeding them during the rehearsals and performances 'were too high compared to the payment received to present the *Boi de Reis.*

[9] As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, *Pastoril* is a Brazilian shepherding dramatic representation.

[10] Maria de Lourdes da Silva, Interview, Olinda, Pernambuco, 06 March 2004. Mestre Dadi was fifty years old when she started performing with puppets. She is one of the few female puppeteers who play João Redondo. In: Folder of Mamulengo Museum, (Olinda: n.d.), 07.

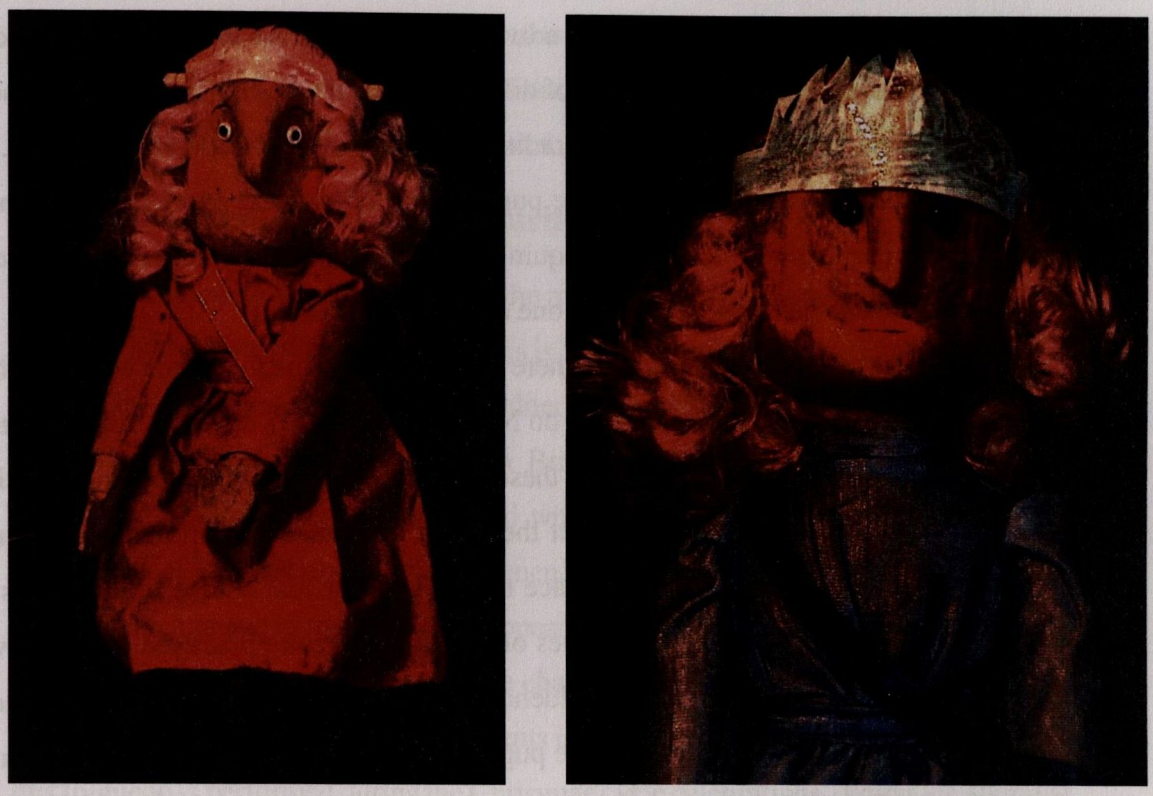

Fig. 2.18 – Set of figures of a religious Pastoril made by the puppeteer Dadi. From left to right in the upper line: Mestra Pastora and Contra-Mestra. In the lower line: Angel and Diana. The puppets are made out of wood and cloth, have a rod attached on the head and strings on the hands, and are operated from above.



Research has shown that the individual elements from the *folguedos* present variations in the Mamulengo shows of different puppeteers. This indicates that their incorporation, while part of a shared tradition, is also the result of personal choices. In my view, this is mostly related to the puppeteer's affinity and previous experience with a specific *folguedo*. Like Francisquinho, the majority of the traditional puppeteers participate (or used to participate) in one or more *folguedos*.

In some Northeastern states where the presence of the *folguedos* was, and still is very strong, such as in Rio Grande do Norte and Paraiba,[11] research demonstrates that the puppet theatre practised in these two states shows less influence of the *folguedos* than is found in the puppet theatre of Pernambuco, particularly the one practised in the Zona da Mata. To trace the reasons for that distinction deserves a deeper examination, and further studies of the puppet theatre practised in these two states. Even in Pernambuco, the se influences operate at different levels. The presence of the *folguedos* is more visible in the puppet theatre of the interior than in the one practised in Recife. It is in the Mamulengo originating in the small villages and rural areas that the interrelation between puppet theatre and the *folguedos* can be clearly perceived. In this case, research has shown that the duration of the performance is much longer than the show where this influence is less evident. In the farms and small cities, the performance lasts for up to six hours. Therefore, the lesser evidence of the influence of the *folguedos* practised in Recife can be understood as a process of selection made by the puppeteer working in the city and attempting to adapt to the rhythm of urban life. The different timing imposed by the work- life balance led to the shortening of the performance.

To investigate the history of these *folguedos* in the puppet theatre is a complex task. The lack of documents relating to this subject means that a deeper, more specific, study is required to complete this task. So, reference to this particular aspect will be made only occasionally. The emphasis of this study is to point out their influence on the puppet theatre and, whenever possible, to indicate the places where this practice is more visible. First, will be examined the major influences coming from four *folguedos* that present in their structure elements of music, dance and themes. They are: *Bumba-meu-Boi/Cavalo-Marinho; Pastoril; Caboclinhos; and Maracatu*. After there will be

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[11] In his study of the puppet theatre of Paraiba, Pimentel demonstrates that the majority of the puppeteers participate in other *folguedos*. (Pimentel, *O Mundo Mágico*).

an analysis of the influence of the Popular Circus followed by the *Cordel* and the *Desafio*, and finally, there will be an assessment in the influence coming from two types of dance, that is, *Ciranda*, and *Forró*.

1 – Bumba-meu-Boi / Cavalo-Marinho

The *Bumba-meu-Boi*[12] is one of the many folk traditions that enact the cycle of the death and revival of a sacred bull. This is a remnant of the ancient cults of the Bulls that can be traced back to the archaic Mediterranean cultures, and that appears as stock material in many different cultures. In Brazil, the 'Ox' appears in many regions, receiving different names and presented with different regional characteristics.[13] In some areas of Pernambuco the Bumba-meu-Boi is also called *Cavalo-Marinho* (Sea Horse), which is one of the characters appearing in the *Bumba-meu-Boi*. Even within the same state, it can acquire distinctive characteristics that are a result of the cross-fertilization with other *folguedos* and events in everyday life. Depending on the region, this folguedo is performed during the Christmas cycle celebrations, during the Carnival and also, during the June cycle festival - St. John, St. Anthony and St. Peter's days.

With regard to the changing of the performance structure and themes, José Possi Neto observes that:

> In parts of Brazil where life is relatively traditional and provincial, the Bumba-meu-Boi maintains its primary structure, main characters, and the basic theme of the Ox. Secondary themes are added and modified according to the place, the historical background and the contemporary setting of the performance. This depends mostly on the creative inspiration and the desires of the group that is performing.[14]

There are two main, central plots in the *Bumba-meu-Boi* appearing in different regions of Brazil. In some regions the two plots become mixed:

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[12] In some versions the term "bumba" is interpreted as the act of pushing the ox, so "Bumba-meu-Boi" would mean, "Push -my- Ox". In others, the term is understood as onomatopoeia of the sound produced by the drums, like 'boom, boom, boom.'

[13] The 'Ox' is the simplified term most used to refer to the different forms of *Bumba-meu-Boi*. *Boi-Bumbá* (The Bumbá Ox) in the Amazon; *Boi-de- Reis* (King's Ox) or *Boi de Calenga* (Calemba Ox) in the Rio Grande do Norte; *Boi de Surubim* (Surubim Ox) in Ceará; *Cavalo-Marinho* (Sea Horse) in Paraíba and Pernambuco; *Boi-de-mamão* (Papaya Ox) in Santa Catarina; *Boizinho* (Little Ox) in Rio Grande do Sul and finally, *Bumba-meu-Boi* in Maranhão and Pernambuco.

[14] José Possi Neto, "The Bumba-meu-Boi [Brazil]," *The Drama Review*, 21 (1977), 09.

1) A young shepherdess loses the Ox, which was in her protection, and goes off in search of the animal. During her search, she comes across numerous characters that appear in a sequence of small scenes. Later, she manages to find the Ox, but it is dead. In the end, the Ox is finally resurrected.[15]

2) The master asks the cowboy (his employee) to take care of his dearest Ox, but instead, the cowboy kills the animal. The reason for the killing varies: a) because of the excitement of the dance in which the cowboy and the ox are involved; b) because he was attacked by the Ox; c) to satisfy his wife (or girlfriend) Catirina, who was pregnant and developed a yearning for the tongue, or liver, of the prize bull. She convinces her husband (or boyfriend) to slaughter the bull and she eats the tongue.[16]

In both plots, before and after the Ox's sacrifice, there comes a succession of scenes without an apparent connection to the central plot. The sequence of the scenes and the characters appearing in the performance can vary even within a small region.[17] The richness of *Bumba-meu-Boi* is expressed by the great number of characters appearing in the performance[18] (showing their customs, speech and movements), the props and life size puppets, the music and its subjects. Câmara Cascudo describes it as follows:

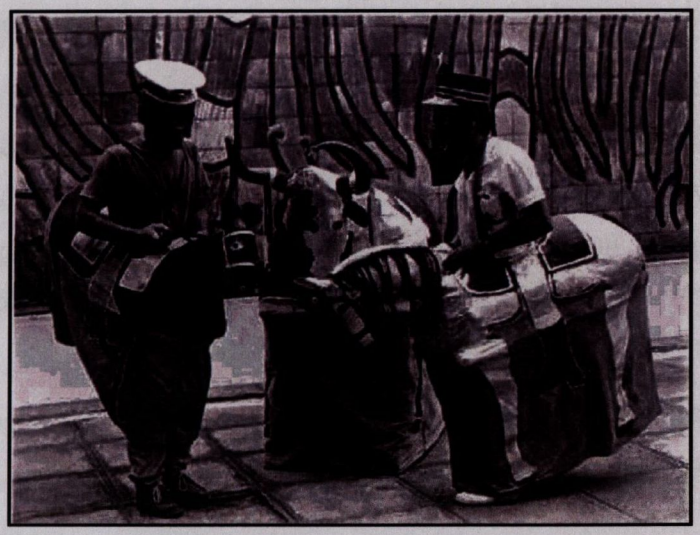

Fig. 2.19 – From left to right: Mateus, the Ox and Bastião.



Fig. 2.20 – A glove puppet portraying Bastião.

[15] Camarotti, *Resistência e Voz,* 68.

[16] Cascudo, *Literatura Oral*, 456.

[17] In the coastal areas of Pernambuco, for example, the Cavalo-Marinho from the north coast - Zona da Mata Norte - present a different feature to the south coast. (Alcure, *Mamulengo,* 110)

[18] According to Câmara Cascudo the number of characters can reach up to 76 (*Literatura Oral*, 456-7); and according to Camarotti they can be up to 40 (*Resistência e Voz,* 89).

In the scenes, many characters, such as animals, monsters and humans appear dancing, talking, and singing. From the primitive *auto*, some characters disappeared, while others survived, such as the doctor, the faith-healer (medicine man) and the priest, who show up to revive the animal. The resurrection is due to the administration of a 'classic' clyster, very close to the one present in the old *autos* and also, in Molière's comedies. (...) Around the main plot, little scenes revolve, showing diverse themes such as the pastoral life, the slave's life and general human behaviour and feelings like curiosity, jealousy and discords. Also appearing are the animals to suit the region, such as the *Ema* (a Brazilian ostrich), a *Burrinha Calu* (the little donkey) and the *Cavalo-Marinho* (the horse),[19] and fantastic characters such as the devil, the giant, and figures of Amerindian mythology, such as the *caipora*.[20] Finally, there is a group of 'respectable' and devout *Damas* and *Galantes* (ladies and gentlemen), figures present in the Portuguese Corpus Christ procession.[21]

The music plays a fundamental role in the *Bumba-meu-Boi* and is played throughout the performance. Besides giving the rhythm to the show, each character is introduced in the scene with a specific song in which information about the characters is revealed. In some areas, the songs are sung by women, the *Cantadeira*, while in other they are replaced by the *Toadeiros*, that is, two men who sing the *toadas* (songs). The number and type of instruments vary, but generally, the orchestra is composed of a deep drum, maracas and tambourine (Maranhão), or drum, tambourine, accordion or *rabeca* (in Pernambuco).

The performance takes place on the ground, inside an arena where the audience stands in a circle. As the show gets underway, the circle opens wider to allow for freer movement. The entire *Bumba-meu-Boi* performance lasts up to eight hours, occurring mainly at night. The Ox's resurrection happens in the early morning and is often followed by a collective dance in order to celebrate the cycle of life-death-life.[22] Unless the performance has been specially contracted for some

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[19] The *Burrinha Calu* and the *Cavalo Marinho* are types of hobby-horse.

[20] *Caipora*, from the Tupi 'caá-pora', that is 'the one who lives on the forest', a small elf of the forest who protects the animals against the massacre by cruel hunters and usually brings adversity.

[21] Cascudo, *Literatura Oral*, 456.

[22] With the changes that occurred in the last thirty years in the social context of the Northeast region, it is increasingly difficult to find a performance of the entire cycle of *Bumba-meu-Boi*. Often there is a simplification of the *auto*, with the group performing the main scenes (the entrance of the cowboys with the Ox, the killing of the Ox, the conflict between the master and the cowboys, the attempt to revive the Ox and finally, his resurrection.) However, mainly in the countryside, both on Christmas and Twelfth

particular occasion, the *brincantes* (players) receive payment by passing round the hat during the show.

The Human Characters

The show begins with the singers and musicians greeting the "donos-da-casa" (the owners of the house or the contractor of the show) and the audience. The characters of Mateus and Bastião are the first to appear. They are the cowboys (or cowherds) responsible for the ox, but, their role in the performance is very likely traditional clowns, making jokes and beating the audience with a bladder. They either use masks, or cover their faces with charcoal or a coloured mixture of flour and water to imitate a mask. Often, one of them appears riding a 'mule', a prop representing the animal. After Mateus and Bastião comes the Captain, the character representing the owner of the land, or political chief of the area. He commands the show through his speeches, his songs and dances, and uses a whistle to mark the time of the orchestra, and to indicate the beginning and end of each scene. He arrives on foot, but as the show progresses he mounts the *Cavalo- Marinho* (Sea Horse), a prop representing a horse. Catirina is a freed black woman who, in some shows, ends up as Mateus' wife. Catirina is the one who asks for the liver or the tongue of the bull. She appears dancing and making mockery of the audience members. As in most folk theatre, there are no women in a *Bumba-meu-Boi* presentation. Hence, Catirina and other female roles are usually played by men dressed as women.[23] From that beginning on, the number and sequence of the characters appearing in the scene varies. Besides the characters mentioned above, the most active human characters of the *Bumba-meu-Boi* could be outlined as follows.

The policeman is the oppressive element that serves the power. He enters to arrest Mateus and Bastião because they are performing the show without a licence (the permit for presenting the show). He ends by being expelled from the scene being beaten with the bladder. The Native Archer, or *Caboclo,* enters parodying the Indian

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Nights, the entire performance can still be seen. On Christmas night of 2003, I attended a *Cavalo-Marinho* performance in the 'Aliança Sugar Mill' in Pernambuco, which started at 9:00pm and finished at 5:00am with the resurrection of the Ox.

[23] Nowadays it is more common to find women performing in the *Bumba-meu-Boi.*

ritual archery dances and sings the lines of *Jurema*[24] in order to resurrect the Ox; the Priest tries to bring the Ox back to life through a prayer; the Doctor comes to examine the Ox and to apply the clysters to the animal that, finally, is revived. A very distinct group of characters are the *Damas* and *Galantes* (Ladies and Gentlemen). They are the elite representatives and appear to present a choreograph dance. Other human characters are the Engineer, *Mané Pequenino* (Little Mané) - a character using stilts-, the Inspector, the Master of the Loom, the Pilgrim, the Smoking Country Bumpkin, the Complainer, the Field Captain, the Barber, the Apothecary, John Sheep, and so on.

Animals and Fantastic Characters

Apart from the Ox, the other animals appearing in the *Bumba-meu-Boi* are the animals of the Northeast region. The most common are the horse, the mule, the snake, the vulture and the ostrich.

With regard to the fantastic characters, some are stock types present in the European medieval traditions, such as the Devil and the Dead-carrying- the-living.[25] Others are related to Indian mythology, such as the aforementioned *Caipora,* or were created within the folguedo itself, such as *Jaraguá.*

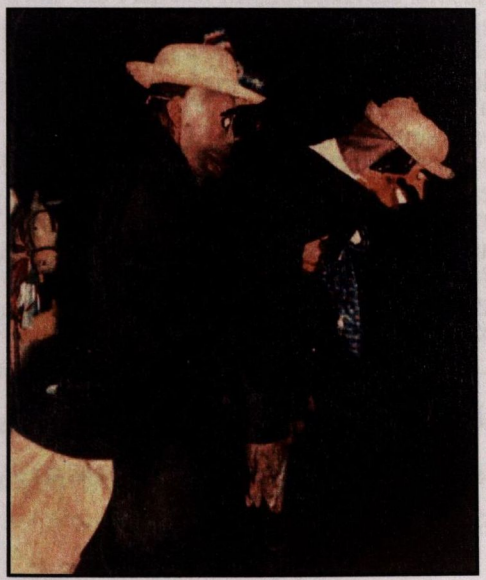

Fig.2.21 - Dead-carrying-the-living in the Cavalo-Marinho Recife. Carnival. 1975.

Besides the mule and the horse, that might be considered 'props', the animals and some of the fantastic characters are played by life-size puppets. Whilst the former function more as objects and as a complement to the human characters who ride them, the latter act independently and in accordance with their roles through their movements and sounds, and sometimes, their speeches. These characters are animated by adults or children hidden under their structure.

The majority of the life-size puppets construction is made of a framework of wood, bamboo, or wire, covered with cloth or

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[24] The 'lines of *Jurema*' refers to the lyrics of the ritual songs *Jurema* is a plant that grows in coastal regions. A hallucinogenic drink can be made from its bark, roots and fruit. *Jurema* drink is used in secret Indians rituals, an occasion to sing, dance and incorporate spirits.

[25] The same figure who appeared in many European popular traditions. See: Burke (1978) and Bakthin (1984)

painted paper. The Ox has its body and a head structure covered with papier maché and is dressed in coloured cotton or embroidered black velvet. The horns are decorated with coloured ribbons resembling the ox figure of the French *bouef violles*.[26] Jaraguá's head is often made of a real animal skull (generally a horse's), which is placed on the top of a long stick covered by cloth.

Historical Information

As pointed out before, the Bumba-meu-Boi has its origins in the old cults of the Bulls,[27] which are present in many cultures. In ancient Egypt, a sacred bull deity - Apis- was worshiped at Memphis. Apis was probably at first a fertility god but became associated with Ptah, the creator-god, and later with Osiris, the god of the dead. The Apis bull was a symbol of creation and death and so of reincarnation. In many of these cults, Bulls were sacrificial victims and their blood was believed to fertilize the earth and was associated with the death of winter and the return of spring, so representing the cycle of life-death-life. The same notion appears in Christian mythology through the death and resurrection of Jesus. In the Irish legendary epic Táin Bó Cúalnge (Cattle-Raid of Cooley) the bull appears as the centre of conflict between two regional powers. The epic, considered to be the Irish "Illiad" both in plot and renown, describes a series of myths and legends in which mortal superheroes and immortal gods influence the outcome of a war between Ulster and Connacht.[28]

The characteristics of the ancient fertility cults, such as feasting, dancing, singing, animal disguises, among others, that celebrated the cycle of life-death-life, appear as stock material in folk traditions all over the world. In the Mummers' Plays of England and Ireland, a character (generally a champion) is dead in a battle and is restored to life by a doctor through an extraction of a tooth, or by an application of an air injection.[29] Like the Mummer's Play, in the Bumba-meu-Boi the Ox is revived due to the application of a clyster by the doctor.

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[26] The *bouef violles* was a French medieval tradition held during the Carnival season. The ox was led in solemn procession accompanied by the plying of violas, from where it derives its name, *bouef violles*. (Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 202).

[27] Cascudo, *Literatura Oral*, 455.

[28] Joseph Dunn, *The Ancient Irish Epic Tale Táin Bó Cúalnge* (London: David Nutt, 1914).

[29] E.T. Kirby, "The Origin of the Mummer's Play," *Journal of American Folklore* 84 (1971): 278. Nevertheless, Kirby contests the idea of the ancient fertility cults as the unique source of the folk drama

Cascudo suggests that the playful characteristic of the Brazilian Ox, such as its dancing and constant attacks on the audience, seems to have originated from the Portuguese *Tourinhas* (little bulls). The *Tourinhas* was a popular game in the region of Minho, northern Portugal that imitated the bullfight: "the fake bull's body structure was made of wicker covered with cloth. The head was a real bull's head, and it simulated an attack on the people in the street." Cascudo suggests the *Bumba-meu-Boi* has also suffered the influence of the *autos* (the processional characteristic and the great number of scenes); Moliére's comedies (the use of 'classic' clyster); and the Italian comedies (the use of masks, stock characters, comic effect and the utilisation of the bladder). Of course Cascudo could also add the bladder was used by the medieval fools; and the Turkish clowns, among others.

According to Borba Filho, although the *Bumba-meu-Boi* has Iberian and European origins, it became essentially Brazilian, and this can be perceived in its structure, its subject, its characters, and finally, in the music played during the show.[30] For Camarotti, the distinctness of the Brazilian Ox is the result of the Indian and African influence, since, besides the incorporation of the elements from the Indian culture, "it embodied elements from the African magic festivals specially the sensuality and the sense of revelry which became strong cultural features of the Brazilian people".[31]

In the Northeast region, the *Bumba-meu-Boi* seems to have first appeared in the sugar plantations and cattle farms of colonial Brazil.[32] For Mário de Andrade the rise of the *Bumba-meu-Boi* is mostly related to the "symbolic, mystical, religious and sometimes even esoteric values" that the ox acquired in such context, which was strongly marked by religious practice.[33] Camarotti, although recognising the ox's

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developed in many cultures. For the author, the shamanistic rituals found in all cultures may be the considered as the embryonic form of the theatre or proto-theatre. E.T.Kirby, *Ur-Drama*, p.xiii, quoted in Camarotti, *The Nature, roots and relevance,* 37.

[30] Hermilo Borba Filho, *Espetáculos Populares do Nordeste* (São Paulo: São Paulo Editora S.A, 1966), 15.

[31] Camarotti, *Resistência e Voz*, 80

[32] Cascudo (1952); Borba Filho (1966); Pereira da Costa (1908); Camarotti (2003). According to Cascudo in earlier times, the cowboys appeared as slaves. In this feature, after the bull died, they escaped. The master asked for the *Capitão-do-Mato* (the Field Captain), the farm worker responsible for the capture of the fugitive slaves to capture them. Instead, it was the cowboys who came to the scene with the Field -Captain tied up, to the delight of the audience. (Cascudo, *Literatura Oral*, 460). We can observe here a symbolic hierarchy inversion.

[33] Andrade, *Danças Dramáticas*, 24.

symbolic importance, finds in the everyday life of the north-eastern country people the main reason for the Bull's significance, existing since colonial times until now:

> (...) it would be surprising if the bull had not become so important in a region so predominantly rural. In such a context, besides being the guarantee of food supply (meat, milk and derivatives), the bull is responsible for the stock of leather, a material of great importance for country people, since it is used to make shoes, clothes, furniture, etc. Furthermore, the bull was the main source of power to run the equipment to crush the cane in the sugar mill. As a popular saying goes, 'from the bull every part is used, the only thing that is lost is its bellow'.[34]

Following Camarotti suggestions of a possible African influence in *Bumba-meu-Boi*, I found in the masquerades festivals of the Segou Region in Central Mali, studied by Arnoldi (1995), many similarities to the Brazilian folguedo. The masquerades are annual theatrical performances with limited time span and a defined place and occasion of performance. They are public events and involve a designated set of performers and audience-members. Although they present variations (presentational style and dramatic content) across villages of the Segou region, they exhibit several common features. They all present elements of music, song, dance and parody and are performed by dancers (masked or not) and life-size puppets. The masquerades are widespread in the Segou region and extend in time from the precolonial era to the present. Some communities date the drama's emergence to a mythical ancestral past, whilst others tie it to the formation of the precolonial states, such as Bamana Empire of the eighteenth century.

One of the festivals described by Arnoldi is the "Masquerade Theatre Festival" held in the Bamana quarter in the village of Kirango. Resuming briefly the detailed description made by Arnoldi we could say the performance went something like this:

The drummers enter, the young girls begin to sing and within a big circle a scene called *Dòkan* (talk, begins) re-enacts a pre-colonial ceremony that took place just prior to battles. After a procession of several elderly men and women, there comes a men's acrobatic competition in which young men demonstrate their acrobatic skills. Following this comes a sequence of scenes with the entrance of characters representing animals of the region (e.g., baboons; hyena; giraffe, antelope); humans (e.g., Yayaroba, a beautiful woman; Jobali, a Bozo woman; Madame Sarata, an

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[34] Camarotti, *Resistência e Voz* , 136.

amorous woman; hunters) and fantastic figures (e.g., Sumusonin, little sorceress). Each character has its own specific scene where it appears playing with the audience and dancing following the rhythm of the drums. [35]

With regard to the animal characters Arnoldi notes that the dancers who represent them draw their inspiration "from observations of the animal's behaviour and movements in nature", stressing the 'imitative' quality of the animal representation. The human characters' movements are drawn from "a shared understanding of appropriate demeanour and comportment and are grounded in everyday life."[36] The performance is accompanied by music throughout, played by an orchestra mostly composed of drums and sung by women. Since the Masquerades are voiceless, the songs become the medium of verbal communication between the characters and the audience. Each character has a particular song associated with it and each of these songs has a distinct melody.

We can trace many parallels between the Brazilian and African traditions. Both present the same processional structure with an extensive number of characters representing humans, animals and supernatural beings. Arnoldi (1995:55) points out that the numbers of characters appearing in the Masquerades can vary considerably from one village to the other, and also, from one year to the other within the same village. However, she notes that in one single performance there can be up to 55. As mentioned before, the number of characters in the Bumba-meu-Boi varies from 40 to up to 76.

Regarding the music, we note that it has the same function. In both *Bumba-meu-Boi* and Masquerade theatre, the music is played throughout the performance and each character has its own song, which is sung before the character shows up in the cycle. Moreover, the women are responsible for the singing.

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[35] Arnoldi, *Playing with Time*, 9-17.

[36] Ibid., 89.

Resemblances can also be found in the construction, features and manipulation of the life-size puppets. As Arnoldi explains, the majority of the Masquerade's puppets are made of a framework of wood or bamboo and are covered by cloth and/or straw, the same process used in the construction of some puppets in the *Bumba-meu-Boi*. Also, some of the puppets have similar features, such as the Ox of the *Bumba-meu Boi*, and the Antelope of the Masquerades. Finally, like the *Bumba-meu-Boi* life-size puppets, the figures in the African masquerades are manipulated with the operators hidden underneath. From this evidence, we could also consider a link between the African masquerade and the *Bumba-meu-Boi*.

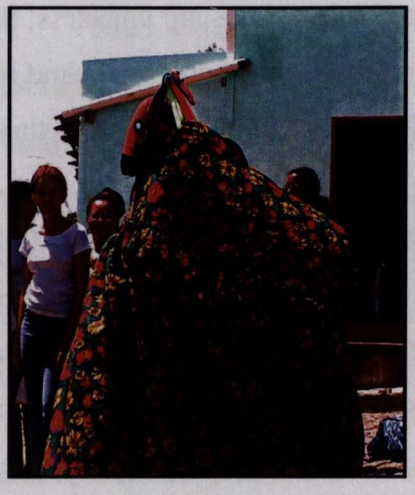

Fig. 2.22 – The Ox figure in the Boi-de-Reis. Natal, Rio Grande do Norte, 2004.



Fig. 2.23 – Antilope figure of the "Masquerade Theatre Festival" of Bamanan, Village of Kirango, Mali.

1.1 – The Influence of Bumba-meu-Boi / Cavalo-Marinho in the Mamulengo

The similarities between these two popular Northeast traditions are specially seen in the Zona da Mata region of Pernambuco. The resemblance between the Mamulengo practised in that region and the *Cavalo-Marinho*, a local version of *Bumba-meu-Boi* is striking. Because of the correspondence in their structures, in terms of the number and types of characters, the central plot of many scenes, the visual aspects (considering the difference in their fundamental specificity: the *Cavalo-Marinho* performed with live actors and life size puppets, and the Mamulengo with smaller puppets - glove, rods, rods and strings, etc.) lead to the surmise that these two popular traditions have been influencing one another for a long period of time.

In regard to the structure of the show, both are made of a sequence of short scenes that are interconnected with music. One person/character commands the entire

show through the use of a whistle, with which he marks the time of the orchestra and the beginning and end of each scene. In the Mamulengo, this role is played by the Master puppeteer, who stays inside the booth. In the *Cavalo-Marinho*, it is the character of the Captain who commands the show. When presented in traditional contexts, both Mamulengo and *Cavalo-Marinho* performances can last up to 8 hours and are held mostly at night. Money collection (*quête*) is made throughout the show and is the main source of payment.

In Mamulengo the text plays a more fundamental role than in *Cavalo-Marinho*, since whilst in the puppet theatre verbal communication is the centre of the performance, in the *Cavalo-Marinho* it resides mainly in the characters' movement and dancing. Moreover, whilst *Cavalo-Marinho* presents one central plot (the death and resurrection of the ox), the Mamulengo text is made of a series of plots that are presented and developed within each scene. Apart from these distinctions, we may trace parallels between them. They are oral sketches made up of little scenes with no apparent connection. In both, the plots range from religious issues combined with Brazilian myths and superstitions and to everyday life subjects in which hierarchy inversion appears as a crucial aspect and as one of the major sources of humour.

The music presents the same function in both. It is played throughout the show giving the rhythm to the performance. Also, the most important characters have their own songs to announce their entrance, or their leaving. Finally, the orchestra featured is almost the same, composed of a drum, a tambourine, a ganzá (shaker) and an accordion or a *rabeca* (primitive violin).

The Characters

The characters represent humans, animals and fantastic, and many of them appear in both traditions. The human group can be divided into two major groups: the dominant (elite representatives) and the subordinate (poor people). I shall proceed now in the discussion of the most important characters appearing both Mamulengo and *Cavalo-Marinho*.

Mateus

In Mamulengo Mateus is the name given to the intermediary, a mixture of a clown and master of ceremonies who as a link between the puppets and the audience He is the one who opens the show, attracting the attention of the audience and often has his face painted white.

In *Cavalo-Marinho* Mateus is a mixture of cowboy and clown, who often opens the show. He is accompanied by Bastião, a character who has almost the same function. Mateus often uses a black mask, but sometimes he appears with his face painted with charcoal. Mateus and Bastião are the employees of the Captain and represent the dominated/oppressed poor people, who show a constant 'tension' with the characters representative of the dominant class (the Captain, the Doctor, the Priest, the Policemen, and so on). Mateus and Bastião are the 'people's heroes', and their cleverness always makes the dominant character ridiculous. Needless to say, in the Mamulengo this function is brought out not by Mateus (the live actor) but by the protagonists, the 'heroes'.

To sum up, the *Cavalo-Marinho* character of Mateus figures in the Mamulengo in two ways: as the master of ceremonies/interpreter, performed by a live actor, from whom he borrows the name and the mask, and as a 'popular hero' who appears through the puppet characters mentioned above.

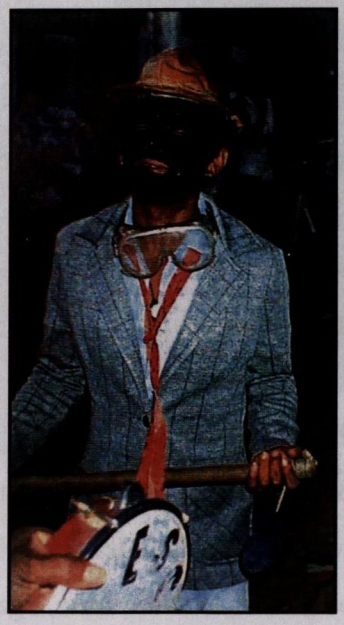

Fig. 2.4 – Puppet Mateus of the Cavalo-Marinho. The character has the face painted with a charcoal, and holds a bladder. Carnival in João Pessoa, Paraiba.



Fig. 2.5 – Mateus of the Mamulengo often has his face painted in white. Caetano (Mateus) in the show of Zé Lopes, in Lagoa Queimada, Pernambuco, 14 December 2003.

The Captain

This character appears both in Mamulengo and *Cavalo-Marinho* as the landowner, the main representative of the dominant class. Whilst in the latter he is named only by the title "Captain", in the puppet theatre he receives different names depending on the region: Captain João Redondo, Colonel Mané Pacaru and Captain Manuel de Almeida, to mention a few.

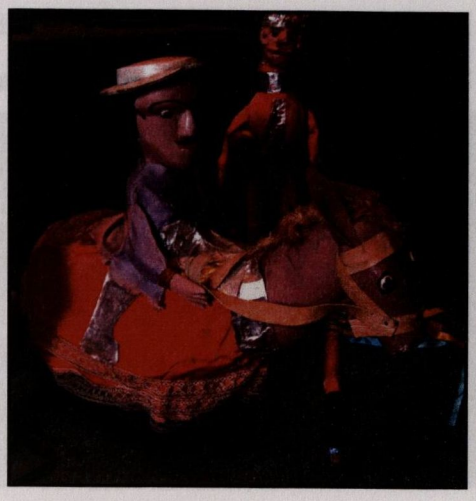

Fig. 2.26 – A rod puppet portraying the Captain of Cavalo-Marinho in the Mamulengo.



Fig. 2.27 – The Captain of the Cavalo-Marinho "Alumiara Zumbi", Olinda, 2003.

Catirina

Unlike the *Cavalo-Marinho* where she features as one of the most important characters, in Mamulengo Catirina is a subsidiary one. In Zona da Mata of Pernambuco, she appears as a wife of Caroquinha, and they are the puppets that generally open the Mamulengo show.

Other Human Characters

The Policemen, the Doctor, the Priest, the Lawyer, the Inspector, and so on, are always present in both traditions showing almost the same function. Together with the figure of the Captain, these characters are used to display the arrogance of the dominant group. The inversion of hierarchy is mostly shown through the ridiculousness of their actions, their speeches and their names. The policeman arrests the protagonists because they are performing the show without the required licence. The Doctor is always shown as a charlatan, who never cures his patients. The Lawyer appears with suggestive names, such as 'Doutor Sabe Nada' (Doctor Knows Nothing). The Inspector is portrayed as a corrupt man. The Priest is shown as a lascivious character or as having dubious morals, and so on.

The Animals

The number and types of animal characters appearing in both traditions are very similar. These include the ox, the snake, horses, donkeys, foxes, dogs, pigs and birds, including the vulture. The Ox is the very heart of the *Bumba-meu-Boi/ Cavalo-Marinho* and an important character in many Northeast puppet theatres. In this case,

the Ox frequently appears as the companion of the 'hero', with whom he dances and plays.[37] Nevertheless, as mentioned before, in the Mamulengo of Zona da Mata the Ox does not have the same importance. The ox's visual representation is very similar in both traditions: it is



Fig. 2.28 – The Ox of the Bumba-meu-Boi. Detail of the face. Recife, 1999.



Fig. 2.29 – The Ox in the Mamulengo. The figure is carved on wood and covered with black fabric. A small rod placed in the base of the body allow for fast movements. Puppet from Maximiniano Dantas.

in coloured cotton, and with the horns decorated with coloured ribbons.

The snake appears in both *Bumba-meu-Boi* and Mamulengo, pursuing the characters. The snake scenes are full of movement and comic jokes. In the current Mamulengo of Zona da Mata, the snake is more in evidence than the ox.

Fantastic

The Devil presents a similar function in both traditions. He often appears to tempt the humans and to carry the 'sinful' to hell. These include lascivious women, ungrateful sons, and so on. Jaraguá, a popular character of *Cavalo-Marinho* seldom appears in Mamulengo. Nevertheless, he is present in the same capacity in both traditions. He is a ghost, whose frightening figure tends to be 'deconstructed' by his funny actions, since he plays many jokes on other characters and audience members. As mentioned before, in *Cavalo-Marinho* the puppet's head is often made of horse's skull, whilst in Mamulengo, it is made of a dog's skull.

The Scenes

Apart from the similarities of the scenes where the characters outlined above appear, two scenes performed in the Mamulengo shows of Zona da Mata are directly linked with two traditional scenes appearing in the Cavalo-Marinho, they are:

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[37] For some example of this scene see: Pimentel, *O Mundo Mágico,* 38-39; Santos, *Mamulengo*, 173.

Passagem do Boi (The Ox scene) and *Vila Nova, Paiaça e Cavaleiro* (Vila Nova, the Clown and the Horse-man), and are as follow:[38]

Passagem do Boi

This scene represents the death and 'sharing' of the ox. In the majority of rural Mamulengo, this is one of the last scenes performed and generally closes the show. The ox enters followed by the *Baiana* (a dancer) and the *topador de boi*.[39] They became involved in a dance with the ox. Afterwards, four horsemen enter to lasso the brave ox. They sing:

> "Levanta maninha que é de madrugada/ pra tirar o leite, oh maninha/
> da vaca malhada. /Maria Bela, olha o boi / oooh boi da Maria Bela."
> [Get up, little sister, because it is already dawn / to get the milk, oh, little sister/ from the black and white cow/ Maria Bela, look at the ox / oooh ox of Maria Bela]

While the ox attacks the horsemen, the puppeteers sing the song of the ox beating the rhythm with their feet on a wooden box:

> "Oia o boi bravo, boi manso/ rio cheio que dá remanso. /Boi bravo, boi manso/ rio cheio que dà remanso."
>
> [Look at the brave ox, the calm ox/ the full river you can row. / Brave ox, calm ox/ the full river you can row.]

After this, the *Baiana* recites the following loa:

> "Estrela Dalva é tão bonita/ quando vem rompendo a aurora./ As àrvores do meu canto choram/ os passarinhos cantam o grito: soldado, cobre a cabeça / corre pra noite no céu.
>
> A estrela Dalva é bonita/ quando vem rompendo a aurora."
>
> [The morning star is so beautiful/ when it comes with the dawn. / My song makes the trees cry / the birds sing their cry: soldier, cover your head / look at the night sky /
>
> The morning star is so beautiful/when it comes with the dawn.]

After many dances, the ox is finally killed by the *Topador* and divided among the audience.[40]

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[38] In order to keep the rhyme in the final lines of the verses, in the translation process some words presented in the original were changed. Nevertheless, we try to keep the 'spirit' of the verses.

[39] *Topador de boi* is the man responsible for pushing (*topar*) the ox through the land.

[40] Scene transcribed by Santos based on Antonio Biló Mamulengo.(Santos, *Mamulengo,* 100)

Zé de Vina explains that the division of the Ox is represented by improvised verses sung by the master puppeteer, in which the parts of the ox body are "offered" to the components of the group and to audience members. Below are some examples of the verses made by Zé de Vina:

> Esse boi é teu, esse boi é meu/ vou tirar a pança pra dar o Mateus./ Esse boi é bom, de manhã, esse boi è bom. / Eu matei o boi, as coisa mudou/ eu vou dar a coxa ao tocador. /Esse boi é bom, de manha, esse boi é bom. / O meu boi é bom, eu trouxe do sul/ o mocotò vou dar pra Raul/ Esse boi é bom, de manha, esse boi é bom.
>
> [This ox is yours, this ox is mine/ the belly goes to Mateus in paradise. / This ox is good, in the morning, this ox is good. /I killed the ox, it's my will / the thigh goes to the drum player standing still / This ox is good, in the morning, this ox is good. /My ox is good, I brought from the south/ the ankle goes to my friend Ruth / This ox is good, in the morning, this ox is good.]

According to Zé de Vina sometimes the ox is not killed. Instead, the scene ends with the animal dancing together with the B*aiana,* the *Cavaleiro* and the *Topador de boi.* In some versions, the latter is replaced by *Paiaça* (clown).[41] Zé de Vina also remarks that this scene would end the Mamulengo show (when presented in its 'entire'[42] version), appearing at five o'clock in the morning.

Vila Nova, Paiaça e Cavaleiro

This scene has no plot in the strict sense of the word. It comprises three puppets coming onstage to present verses and to dance. *Vila Nova* is a street sweeper who sings a song where the names of the cities of Pernambuco appear at the end of each verse. While *Vila Nova* 'sweeps' the streets and sings, *Paiaça* makes funny movements, dancing with his loose legs. The *Cavaleiro* (horseman) enters riding a horse (like the Captain of the Cavalo-Marinho) dancing. *Vila Nova*'s song goes like this:

> "Se na não seu capitão, ferreiro tem boa t*enda* / primeiro de tudo vou varrer Lagoa de Ita*enga.*
>
> Oia cidade, oia a cidade, oia a cidade, oia a cidade sem varrer/ oia Vila Nova cidade/ vila da necessidade.

---

[41]Paiaça is a corruption of "palhaço"- clown. Interesting to note that 'paiaça' is commonly used in Europe to designate a puppet clown, such as Pagliaccio and Pagliacci.

[42] The number of scenes appearing in one Mamulengo show varies greatly depending on the performance context. Hence, to establish what an 'entire' show means is complex, since there are many variations. But, I understand that for Zé de Vina the 'entire' show refers to the performances that last all night long.

Se na não seu capitão/ vou tirar a minha pr*osa* /varri Lagoa de Itaenga/ falta varrer Feira N*ova*

Oia cidade, oia a cidade, oia a cidade, oia a cidade sem varrer/ oia Vila Nova cidade/ vila da necessidade."

[If not Captain/ the iron man has a good stool / I will sweep *Lagoa de Itaenga* to look cool.

Look at the city, look at the city, look at the city that is not swept / look Vila Nova the city/ village of the needy.

If not Captain/ I will make my final verse / I swept Lagoa de Itaenga that now is missing *Feira Nova.*]

The scene follows with a sequence of diverse city names. As can be observed, this scene functions as a type of homage the puppeteer makes to the cities of the region where he is performing.

All these elements confirm that there is no doubt about the strong connection between the *Cavalo- Marinho* and the Mamulengo.

2 – Pastoril

As mentioned in the previous part of this study, *Pastoril* (Pastoral) is a Brazilian dramatic dance performed at Christmas time, based on the dances and songs of the shepherdesses. Two choirs of shepherdesses, one choir dressed in red, the other in blue, praise the Christ-child and allude to the events connected with his birth. As time went by, jocular dialogues and comic characters were introduced into the representation, such as the Old Man, a lecherous clown. The role of the shepherdesses became more and more sensual and provocative. The manger disappeared from the scenery and the *Pastoril* lost its hieratic and lyrical sense, being transformed into a popular entertainment.

The Characters and the Structure of the Profane Pastoral

Within the structure of the *auto*, the two choirs of shepherdesses with their tambourines or maracas sing and dance, accompanied by the sound of a string and wind orchestra:[43]

Boa-noite, meus senhores todos	Good evening to all the gentlemen
Boa-noite, senhoras também;	Good evening ladies too;

[43] New instruments can be added, since the structure of the group varies depending on the group's financial resources.

Somos pastoras	We are shepherdesses
Pastorinhas belas	Pretty little shepherdesses
Que alegremente	Who are happily
Vamos a Belém.	On our way to Bethlehem

Each choir of shepherdesses is led by the Mistress (in the blue line) and the Forewoman (in the red line). Between them is Diana, who is dressed half in red, half in blue. The Mistress sings:

Sou a Mestra	I am the Mistress
Do cordão azul	Of the Blue line
O meu cordão	I know how to dominate
Eu sei dominar	My line
Eu peço palmas	I ask for applause
Peço riso e flores	I ask for smiles and flowers
Ao partidário	And to our supporters
Eu peço proteção.	I ask protection.

Then, comes the Forewoman:

Sou a contramestra	I am the Forewoman
Do Cordão encarnado	Of the Red Line
O meu partido	I know how to dominate
Eu sei dominar	My group
Com minhas danças	With my dances
Minhas cantorias	With my songs
Senhores todos	Ladies and Gentlemen
Queiram desculpar	I ask your forgiveness

Diana, while she is the mediator, sings:

Sou a Diana, não tenho partido	I am Diana, I have no group
O meu partido são os dois cordões,	My group is the two lines
Eu peço palmas, fitas e flores	I ask for applause, ribbons and
Oh, meus senhores e senhoras	Flowers, and ladies and gentlemen,
a sua proteção.44	I ask your protection.

---

[44] Transcribed by Marcia Sena from a show of *Pastoril da Familia Ramos* performed in Olinda, Pernambuco, 5 December 2003.

The songs, followed by choreographed dance appear one after the other, with no dialogue or texts to link them, except for when the Old Man irreverently interferes in the proceedings with his improvisations, to stimulate the public, or to receive any tips that might be thrown to him.

Amongst the characters of the Profane Pastoral, there are to be found the Angel, the Star of the North and the Gypsy. Moreover, others can be added, depending on the particular region.

2.1 – Pastoril in the Mamulengo

The scene representing the *Pastoril* can be found in many Mamulengo shows, mainly in Pernambuco. This can be verified by the considerable number of puppets devoted to this scene that exist in the collections of both the *Museu do Mamulengo* and *Museu do Homem.* Moreover, we can also find allusions to the *Pastoril* in the studies of Santos (1977) and Borba Filho (1987).

Santos points out that in the Mamulengo of Antonio Bilo, the *Pastoril* scene is represented by the two choirs of shepherdess puppets - blue and red - who come onto the stage to dance and sing *marchinhas* (little marches) pertaining to the *Pastoril.* Between them comes the Old Man who commands the *jornadas* (the shepherdess' songs) and proceeds with much improvisation. According to Santos, "the Old Man is responsible for the vitality of the scene. Hence, its duration depends on how much laughter he can provoke in the audience." [45]

Commenting on the scenery, Santos explains that before the entrance of the shepherdesses, artificial flowers and coloured paper fan garlands are tied to the stage, 'creating a festive atmosphere'. He explains that in the *Pastoril* scene, the puppeteer can collect a good amount in tips since the Old Man 'offers' the shepherdesses to the male audience, holding a type of auction.

Zé de Vina, who used to perform with the puppeteer Antonio Bilo cited by Santos above, gives more details about the Pastoril scene he used to performed:

> Before, when I performed the Pastoril scene, I used two female puppets dressed in blue, two dressed in red nd the Diana dressed with both colours. Together with them there was the clown called Velho Palmeira (Old Palmeira). The five female puppets entered singing and dancing. After, the old man greeted the five puppets and the audience making many

[45] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 146.

'hot' jokes. The clown was a big puppet mounted on a rod and had loose legs and arms, a big nose and a wig, just like the old clowns. The audience enjoyed this scene a lot! The women because they liked seeing the female puppets dancing and the men because were delighted with the clown's spicy jokes.[46]

Zé de Vina said he stopped performing the Pastoril scene about 15 years ago. When I asked him the reason for suppressing this scene, he blamed the reduction of the duration of the puppet show, and the reduction of number of the helpers due to financial difficulties.



Fig. 2.30 – Pastoril with young girls. Recife, 1965.

Borba Filho referring to the puppeteer José Petronilo Dutra notes that he had a very distinct Mamulengo: "all of it was sung and danced, indicating a strong influence of the *Pastoril.* In more than three hours of performance there was just one short spoken scene, where a tough guy, after he has killed 'half the world', piled all the corpses up."[47] From the description made by the scholar, we can observe that in Petronilo Dutra's Mamulengo, the *Pastoril* did not appear just as one scene, but was most of the whole structure of the show. Dengoso, a puppeteer from Recife, presents the pastoril using four female puppets and the old man. The latter is represented by Benedito, the protagonist of Dengoso Mamulengo.[48] Also, we have to cite again Dadi's Religious Pastoril performed entirely with puppets.

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[46] Zé de Vina, interview, 24 March 2004.

[47] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia,* 148. José Petronilo Dutra (1858-?), was a puppeteer from Lagoa Nova, Pernambuco.

[48] Dutra, "Trajetórias de Criação", 35



Figs. 2.31 – Set of pastoril puppets. On the back left side, there is the old man, often appearing as a lecherous clown. The figures are placed on a wooden platform and can be operated just by one person. Puppets made by Solon.



Figs. 2.32 – Pastoril figures. From left to right, Mestra Pastora, Diana and Contra-Mestra. Unlike the Pastoril set of figures, these puppets have articulation on the arms and are operated individually. Puppets from Luiz da Serra (left and central) and Pedro Rosa (right).

Research has indicated that the *Pastoril* scene seems to be disappearing from contemporary Mamulengo shows. In the performances I attended during my fieldwork I did not see any reference to this scene. Nevertheless, one of the dance scenes present in the Mamulengo of Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes, "The Quitérias", may represent a reduction of the Pastoril scene that used to be played. This can be particularly observed in regard to the role played by the female puppets. The scene is composed of three or four female rod puppets that come onstage to dance. The puppets have articulated hips, which allow for sensual movements. Due to the puppets' provocative manners, in general the participation of the male members of the audience during the scene is very active and often they offer "reward" money to the puppeteer make the "Quitérias" dance. During one performance of Zé Lopes', male spectators made spicy comments on the puppets' provocative movements.[49] This is precisely reflective of the male audience reaction towards the profane Pastoril.

As can be seen the puppeteers constantly adapt their show. Some scenes disappear, or are transformed, whilst other are created.

[49] See discussion on this scene on page 361.

3 – Caboclinhos

Of all the *folguedos*, *Caboclinho* displays the closest links to Indian traditions. It can be summarised as follows:

A group of men and women enters, dressed in wonderful head-dresses decorated with ostrich and peacock feathers, with short skirts also decorated with feathers, and arm and leg bands (also of feathers) and necklaces. They parade in two columns, performing a wealth of dances to the sound of the dry snap of the *preacas* (a small device incorporating the bow and the arrow, which produces the characteristic sound of the caboclinhos when the arrow is struck against the bow). They lower themselves to the floor, they jump back up with such agility, it would seem as though they had springs in place of legs. At the same time they whirl around on the points of their toes and heels.[50]

Caboclinhos folguedo can mainly be seen during the Carnival. We can find *Caboclinhos* groups in a large number of cities in Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Norte and Paraiba, some of them going back to the nineteenth century, such as the *Caboclinhos Canidés*, founded in 1897 and the *Caboclinhos Carijós*, founded in 1899.[51]

The researcher Roberto Benjamin points out that the *Caboclinhos* goes back to the sixteenth century when it was already enchanting the Jesuit priest Fernão Cardim. Although he does not completely clarify the emergence of *Caboclinho*, he states that, as shown by its name, *Caboclinho*[52] was the result of miscegenation:

> This mixed race of people probably elaborated this dance representing the village life of native tribes, with elements of the Jesuit catechism *autos*, together with visual and literary elements of native romanticism, as well as traces of native culture derived from the music and their religious dances. They also seem to have used semi-secret rituals and even added elements from the African culture.[53]

Many folklore scholars Mário de Andrade (1932), Renato Almeida (1942), Guerra Peixe (1981), Katarina Real (1990), among others, have studied and written

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[50] Leonardo Dantas Silva e Mário Souto Maior, *Antologia do Carnaval do Recife* (Recife: Editora Massangana, 1991), 76.

[51] Folder of *Casa de Cultura Recife*. Cidade do Recife, 2003.

[52] *Caboclinhos* (Little Caboclo). The word originates from *Caboclo,* who is a mixed race of Brazilian native Indian and white (European).

[53] Roberto Benjamin, *Folguedos e Danças em Pernambuco* (Recife: Fundação de Cultura do Recife, 1989), 45.

about *Caboclinhos* (popularly called 'cabocolinhos'). They all mention certain distinguishing features that were essential to the old forms of the *folguedo*: the war dance, the characteristic religious thanks for a good harvest or hunt, and the recitation of heroic or native verses, to mention a few. As time has passed, many changes have occurred in the textual structure, music and visual aspects. In recent times the recitations have disappeared while the beautiful choreography has remained.

Sometimes, the *Caboclinhos* appeared closer to a ritual, at others it acquired more stylised features. During my research in Pernambuco, I was able to attend a performance, put on by an Indian tribe called "Funie". In this, even if it was closer to a performance than a ritual, I observed an organic integration of the participants as with the *folguedo*. It could be seen in the choreography, the music and the instruments played (which, according to the customs, are made with natural coconut palm fibre). In another performance I attended during the Carnival in Nazaré da Mata, a small city of Pernambuco, I observed many *Caboclinhos* groups where it was clear that any connection with the 'ritual' was completely lost. In this, the perception was that they were doing something 'folkloric'.

The traditional characters of the *Caboclinhos* are: the *Cacique* (the tribal leader); the Queen; the *Matroa* (an elderly *caboclo*); the captain; the lieutenant; the guide; the fore-guide; the *piramingú* or *perós* (an young *caboclo*); the flag bearers; the *caboclinhos* (a group of male *caboclos*); the *caboclinhas* (a group of female *caboclos*); the witch doctor; the hunting *Caboclinhos*; the princesses; and the healer.

The orchestra is made up of the pipes (made of a kind of bamboo called *taquara*) *caracaxás* (a kind of rattle or maraca), and drums. Concerning the musical elements, Roberto Benjamin informs us that "...they were extracted from native ritual cults, which have survived semi-secretly, despite the persecution that the magic-religious manifestations have suffered"[54].

[54] Ibid., 51



Fig. 2.33 – Caboclinhos group "Tribo Tabajaras" in the Carnival. Olinda, Pernambuco.



Fig. 2.34 – Group of *Caboclos* glove puppets. Luiz da Serra.

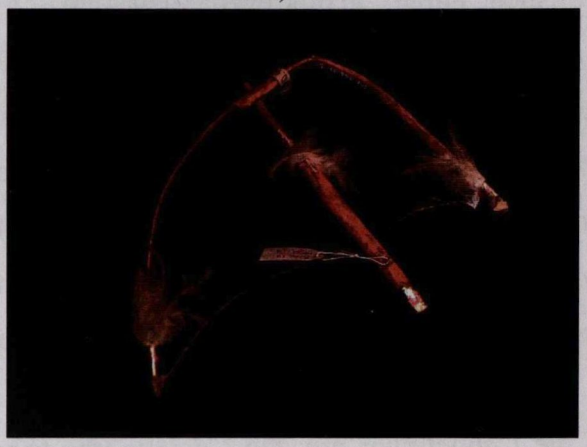

Fig. 2.35 – A *preaca* used in the Caboclinho scene in Pedro Rosa's Mamulengo. When the arrow is stuck against the bow it produces a particular sound. The prop measures 15 x 10 centimetres.

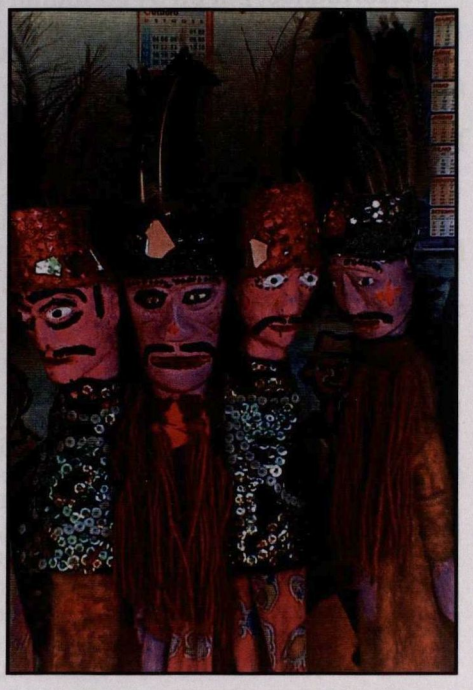

Fig. 2.36 – Four Caboclinhos puppets by Zé de Vina

3.1 – The Caboclinhos in the Mamulengo

The caboclinhos scene appears in many Mamulengo shows. As reported by Zé de Vina, this is a traditional scene present in puppet theatre since long ago, and used to be performed about midnight, "because this is the hour that divided the night". Zé de Vina's information can be verified by the impressive number of these characters in the collection of the Museum of Mamulengo, where we can see *Caboclo* puppets from old masters, such as Luiz da Serra (1908-1986) and Pedro Rosa (1895-1970). Also, a good collection of objects used in the *Caboclinho*, such as *preacas*, can be seen in the Museum.

In the Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes performances, the *Caboclinho* scene unfolds as follows:

Four puppets dressed and painted as Indians come onto the stage singing a song and performing a synchronised choreography. They go forward, then back, turn to the left, to the right and so on. The orchestra accompanies the puppets' dance, playing music

similar to Indian melodies. When the music stops, the *Caboclos*, also called *Caboclos de Arubà* (or *Orubà*), stand still and recite their *loas* in rhymed verses. The number of the verses varies from one puppeteer to another, and also from one show to another. One of the verses presented by Zé de Vina Caboclinhos is as follows:

> "Diz no ato da eternidade, perante Deus poderoso
> eu acho muito custoso, deu formar outra idade,
> outra vaidade, outra geração, outro sol, outra lua,
> outra Eva, e outro Adão."
> [It's said in the eternity act, before the powerful God
> I think it'll cost too much for me to have another age,
> another vanity, another generation, another sun, another moon,
> another Eve, and another Adam.]

Unlike from the majority of the scenes present in the Mamulengo shows, the *Caboclinhos* is not, per se, a comic scene. The puppets' movements and verses imitate Indian rituals, which could be interpreted as a sign of respect. Nevertheless, some of the verses present comic elements, thus breaking the scene's initial ritualised feature.

As with other traditional scenes, the *Caboclinho* scene has suffered transformations throughout time. Zé de Vina says that the scene performed nowadays is a shortened version of the entire scene performed before. According to account of the old scene, the verses spoken by the *Caboclos* could reach up to ten. Nowadays, generally he presents only two.

4 – Maracatu

Maracatu is a folguedo performed during the Carnival in Pernambuco and is divided into two forms: *Nação Maracatu* (Nation *Maracatu*) from Recife, and *Maracatu Rural* (Rural *Maracatu*), from the interior areas.

4.1 – Nação Maracatu

This form of *Maracatu* originates in the already mentioned old coronation of the kings of the Congo and Angola, a common practice among the slaves taken from these two African nations to Pernambuco. The black kings, especially the king of the Congo, who maintained a hierarchical position over the other African nations of the region, appeared at the religious celebrations protected by a large round parasol and surrounded by numerous dignitaries from their respective courts. They were accompanied by percussion instruments, which were not always to the taste of the white population. The coronation of the kings often drew the attention of the press. During the festivals of Our Lady of Prazeres and of the Rosary of Saint Anthony, the local newspaper, *Diário de Pernambuco,* in its issue of 20 October 1851, noted:

> (...) they were passing through the streets of the city during the afternoon, divided into nations, each with its own respective king at the head of the procession, protected by a large multi-coloured parasol. On this particular occasion, according to police reports, all went off peacefully and tranquilly. However, according to our sources, the police have in the past, laid the blame for any disturbances in their jurisdiction at the feet of the universal sovereignty of the African Nations, and consequently, as on this occasion, were keeping a watchful eye on the proceedings.[55]

In another article from the *Diário de Pernambuco,* dated 15 March 1843, it is noted that "(...) a number of these parasols have appeared in these black people's *batuques* on days of Our Lady of the Rosary, protecting the character known as the king of the Congo."[56]

The description of a carnival *Maracatu* from the beginning of the twentieth century comes from Pereira da Costa who, in 1908, described the court procession in his book *Folk-Lore Pernambucano*:

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[55] *Diário de Pernambuco,* 20 October 1851, p.3.

[56] *Diário de Pernambuco,* 15 March 1843, p. 2.

A standard breaks out at the head of the procession, with archers on either side, and following this, in two rows, are beautifully adorned women with their turbans ornamented with multi-coloured strips of material, sequins and many other decorations. Featuring in the middle of these two rows, we are able to see numerous other characters, such as those who conduct the religious charms - the wooden cockerel, a straw alligator and a doll dressed in white with a blue cape. After this, moving in columns, we see the dignitaries of the court who close the king and queen's royal procession. These two characters displaying the royal insignias, such as the crown and the sceptre, and with long capes being held by trainbearers, march under an enormous protective parasol, guarded on either side by archers. At the rear of the procession come the instruments: drums, horns and others of African aspect, which accompany the marching songs and diverse dances with a horrible din.[57]

As pointed out before, one of the sacred elements of the *Maracatu* is the doll, called *Calunga.* This element was always present in the courts of the African nations, from which originated the *Maracatu. Calunga* ritual is still practised by traditional *Maracatu* groups. Sacred songs are sung in honour of the *Calunga* at the meeting place of the group. At this moment the *Calunga* is taken down from the altar by the female dance leader. It is then passed to the hands of the queen, who then passes it to the nearest *Baiana*[58] woman. And thus, it is passed round from hand to hand, until it returns to the hands of the female sovereign.

The music is a fundamental part of the *Maracatu.* The orchestra is composed of the *tarol* (a type of tambourine), *zabumbas* (bongos), a deep bass drum and the *meião* (a medium-sized, deep sounding drum).

4.2 – Maracatu Rural

In the interior areas of Pernambuco can be found a variation of the *Maracatu* from Recife. Borrowing elements from various *folguedos*, the *Maracatu Rural*, also known as *Maracatu do Baque Solto,* is a good example of the dynamics of popular culture. Katarina Real attributes the appearance of the Rural *Maracatu* to "a fusion of

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[57] Costa, *Folk-Lore*, 345.

[58] Broadly speaking, *Baiana* is a woman who originates from Bahia, and is a commonly used female carnival symbol. These women wear the traditional African costume still to be found in Salvador, Bahia.

various, already existent popular carnival revelries from the interior of the state of Pernambuco: the pastoral, the *baianas*, the *Cavalo-Marinho* and the *Caboclinhos.*"[59]

Maracatu Rural, like the *Nação Maracatu*, is a type of a parade formed by many sections with its specific characters. The first figures to appear at the head of the parade are Mateus, Catirina, Catita (a small marsupial), the mule, and the Hunter. As we can observe, these are the same characters appearing in the *Bumba-meu-Boi/ Cavalo-Marinho*, and are the comic characters of the Rural Maracatu. After them come the spear-carrying *Caboclos* in two columns, being led and encouraged by the *Caboclo* master. Each column obeys the command of the front *Caboclo*, who carries out the movements ordered by the master. After this section comes the symbol of the group, generally represented by an animal (the lion, eagle and fish are common). This is followed by the feathered *Caboclos* (also known as *Reamá* or *Tuxau)* and the lines of *Baianas*. Amongst these women is the Godmother (or the doll lady), who consecrated and baptised the doll (a variation on the *Calunga*)[60] in the previous ceremony. In the midst of the columns of *baianas* are positioned the following groups: in first place, the flag bearer, carrying the flag or standard; in second place, the royal court - the king, queen, valet and lady-in-waiting, all protected by two large parasols; and in third place, the music master and his assistant, followed by the orchestra which is composed of drum, gong, *cuíca*[61], trombone and tuba.

As with the *Nação Maracatu,* the *Maracatu Rural* also presents religious aspects. In order to assure a successful procession, the opening moments involve supernatural manifestations, in which protecting entities are evoked through *Umbanda*[62] rituals. During this process, the *Calunga* is "*calçada*", the name given to the process of consecration and baptism with prayers. Those burning incense and the *Caboclos* drink the potions made from the *jurema* (a hallucinogen plant), and act almost trance-like, as if possessed.

In an interview with the *Caboclo* Master of *Maracatu Estrela do Paraíso,* Gerson Santos, from Nazaré da Mata, Pernambuco, he explained parts of the ritual:

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[59] Katarina Real, *O Folclore no Carnaval do Recife* , 2nd. ed. (Recife: Editora Massangana, 1990), 205.

60 The *Calunga* of Rural *Maracatu*, differing from the one previously mentioned in the National Maracatu, is made of wood and has its own particular rites.

61 A drum-like instrument that makes a squeaking sound.

62 An afro-Brazilian religion.

> Three days before the beginning of Carnival I go to a forest close to my house. During these days, I do not speak to anyone and I sleep, lying down directly on the earth so the earth takes all the bad things out of my body. On the Saturday of Carnival (the first official day) I go through a ritualised protection ceremony with the other *Caboclos* and the God-Mother of our *Maracatu* to close our bodies from any outside negative influence during the carnival.'[63]

During the arrival ceremony, as all the components of the court begin to arrive at the meeting place before the performance, the music master begins to call them in turn and in verse. Each spear-carrying or feathered *Caboclo* is mentioned and received by the others, who are moving around in a type of war dance. The ceremony normally lasts for around three or four hours. At this point, when the group is complete, the farewell ceremony is initiated and they begin to take their leave to present their *Maracatu*.[64]

The *Maracatu* groups perform in many different cities during the four days of Carnival. They follow a route of parades that always includes more than ten small cities.[65] They all pile into the waiting transport - two, three or four buses - and go off in search of the so-called 'Federations', in the cities where they have made contracts. In each city and on every stage, crowds gather to hear the music and to see the *Maracatu* in lively and colourful procession.

4.3 – Maracatu in the Mamulengo

The *Maracatu* does not have as evident an influence on the Mamulengo practised nowadays as the *Bumba-meu-Boi/ Cavalo-Marinho*. In the shows I attended there was no reference to this *folguedo*. Nevertheless, the absence of the *Maracatu* seems to be a more recent phenomenon.

Santos argues that the presence of *Maracatu* in the Mamulengo is more obvious in the musical aspect than in the other elements, since the music of the Zona da Mata Mamulengo is very close to the *baque virado*, the rhythm of Rural *Maracatu*. He also stresses that the term 'Maracatu' in the context of Mamulengo is more likely to

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63 Gerson Santos, Interview, Nazaré da Mata, Pernambuco, 15 February 2004.

64 During the Carnival of 2004 I was invited by the Caboclo Master of Maracatu Estrela do Paraiso to watch their opening ceremony, where I witnessed the events narrated.

65 Collected data from interviews: Eduardo Gonçalves and Gerson Santos (Maracatu Estrela do Paraiso), Nazaré da Mata, Pernambuco, 15 February 2004;) and Mestre Samuel (Maracatu Leão Encantado), Olinda, Pernambuco, 28 January 2004.

be used by the puppeteers to refer to a broader concept of the carnival festivities than to the *Maracatu folguedo* itself. He explains that "the mamulengueiros are not worried about showing the strict figures and the dances that appear in the *Maracatu*, but rather the spirit of the Carnival, (...) showing in the Mamulengo a remarkable fusion of many carnivalesque traditions." One example given by Santos is in the Mamulengo of Antonio Biló, where Simão appears singing a song from the Rural *Maracatu*, carrying a standard on which is written 'Maracatu de Simão'. As pointed out by Santos, "after him, comes La Ursa (the bear) pulled by 'the Italian', both figures from a very old tradition of the Carnival of Pernambuco known as 'La Ursa' or 'Ursos do Carnaval' that does not pertain to the *Maracatu*."[66]

Zé de Vina mentions that, like Antonio Biló, he also used to perform the scene 'Maracatu de Simão', in which the character Simão appears as a leader of a *Maracatu* Group. But, unlike Santos' observations regarding Biló's *Maracatu* scene, in Zé de Vina' scene the characters appearing were the same main characters of the *Maracatu* folguedo, obviously in a reduced version. He explains the scene was performed with at least thirteen puppets representing the *Maracatu* parade and the crowd watching it. The latter (about eight figures) were mounted on rods that were fixed on a flat wood platform of 80 centimetres width and 40 centimetres depth. The platform was moved following the rhythm of the music. These figures represented the carnival crowd and were used as background for the more important characters, which were manipulated directly by the operators' hands. The main group was composed by Simão, who held the standard; the *Caboclo* master and two feathered *Caboclos*; and two *Baianas*. The scene was entirely sung and danced, with the main puppets imitating the Maracatu dancing, while the background figures represented the carnival crowd movements.

As Zé de Vina explains, this scene required at least four operators: one with Simão and the standard; one with the two *Baianas*; one with the platform, and himself with the three *Caboclos*. Again, for the reasons already pointed out the puppeteer suppressed this scene from his current Mamulengo show.

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[66] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 148-9.

In the collection of *Museu do Homem* there is a Maracatu standard which bears the title, 'S. Leão de Simão - 1965', made by the puppeteer Luiz da Serra (1906-1986). As previously mentioned, each *Maracatu* group has a symbol generally depicting an animal. In this example, the *Leão* (Lion) might be the symbol of the *Maracatu* represented by the puppeteer. Luiz da Serra was from the same region as Zé de Vina and Antonio Biló and we observe that the three puppeteers use almost the same title, 'S. Leão de Simão' and 'Maracatu de Simão'. We know there is a lineage of puppeteers from this region. Zé de Vina used to perform with Antonio Biló, who in turn performed with Luiz da Serra. This fact leads us to deduce that this scene has been performed at least since the 1960s, if not even earlier, passing from one puppeteer to another.

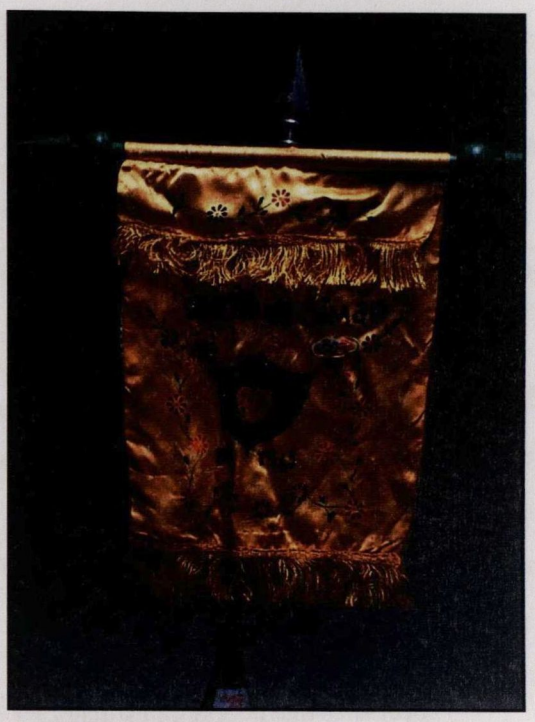

Fig. 2.37 – Standard made by Luiz da Serra. The prop measures about 30x15 centimetres.

5 – The Popular Circus

Regina H. Duarte in her study on the circus in Minas Gerais, a southern state of Brazil, argues that since the middle of the eighteenth century there is some mention of a "type" of circus activity in Brazil: "It was small, poor and improvised 'circus' performed by traveling showmen."[67] Nevertheless, according to Camarotti, the first concrete reference to a circus performance in Brazil dates from 1830 and refers to the Circus Bragassi, from Italy".[68] For more than a century, the popular circus represented one of the most important forms of popular entertainment for the poor

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[67] Regina H. Duarte, *Noites circenses: Espetáculos de Circo e Teatro em Minas Gerais no Século XIX* (Campinas: UNICAMP, 1995), 82.

[68] Marco Camarotti, *O Palco no Picadeiro: na Trilha do Circo-Teatro* (Recife: Fundação de Cultura do Recife, 2004), 44.

people in Brazil. Antônio Torres notes that together with the parts played by magicians, jugglers, trapeze artists and the like, small dramas were performed regularly in the circus:

> The dramas were approximately one hour in length and presented traditional plots, ranging from unfortunate families who lose everything on gambling or drinking, to broken marriages caused by betrayal, illness brought about by punishment from God, the unexpected appearance of an illegitimate son, a forbidden love on grounds of race, different social classes, and so on.[69]

Mário de Andrade, in an article published in 1926 about a farce presented by Piolin, a famous clown from Paraiba, titled *Do Brasil ao Far West* (From Brazil to the Far West), notes that:

> The drama circus and the *Teatro de Revista* (Theatre of Varieties) are the theatrical spectacles that people can still attend in Brazil, since these are the only ones where some creativity can still be found. This is not to say the authors of such *Teatro de Revista* and the farces present in the circus know what creativity is or conserve effectively any national tradition. However, the unrestricted liberty of these dramatic forms allows their creators the biggest extravagances. Therefore, they create without laws or imported traditions, moved only by the artistic needs of the moment and of the genre they represent. Above all, their primary motive is to please the audience. All that leads to true originality and genuine creation.[70]

Mário de Andrade's comments on the drama circus are rather contradictory, since on the one hand he says that the authors of the theatre performed in the circus do not know what creativity is, on the other hand he stresses the freedom at the base of the artists' creative process that led to original performances. Nevertheless, Andrade recognizes the great importance of these types of theatre at that time in Brazil, where, according to him, most of the theatrical spectacles were simply copies of the "imported tradition", that is, European theatre. Hence, he suggests that the circus

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[69] Antônio Torres, *O Circo no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Atrações, 1998), 21. Torres remarks that dramas such as *O Ebrio* (The Drunk), *O Filho Perdido* (The Lost Son) and *A Louca do Jardim* (The Mad Woman of the Garden), were part of the obligatory repertoire of the circuses that toured in and around the capital and the interior of Northeast Brazil until the 1970's. Today, however, it is rare to encounter a performance of Circus Drama. It has been replaced by shows with popular singers of romantic music.

[70] Mário de Andrade, "Do Brasil ao Far west," *Terra roxa e outras terras* 3 (1926): 15.



Fig. 2.38 – A puppet in stilts



Fig. 2.39 – An acrobat puppet

drama and the Variety Shows represented, at that moment, what could be seen as a "Brazilian type of theatre".

5.1 – The Circus in the Mamulengo

According to Santos and Borba Filho, the circus greatly influenced the Mamulengo both in the presence of circus characters and the performance structures. Santos points out that "from the circus, the Mamulengo borrowed some characters such as the acrobats and the wooden-legs/stilts, but above all, the spirit of the circus and its structure, since the Mamulengo, like the circus, is a type of theatre of varieties".[71] Borba Filho recognises the circus influence saying that some mamulengueiros presented a show very close to the circus and music-hall performances "with a succession of gymnastics, comics and dancers (...)."[72]

Regarding the circus characters appearing in the puppet theatre, the observations of Santos and Borba Filho can be confirmed by the extensive number of these types of puppets in the collection of the Museu do Mamulengo and Museu do Homem, such as the aforementioned acrobats and the wooden-legs.

Another aspect in which we can observe the influence of the circus is in the texts of Mamulengo, however, this influence is mostly perceived in the Mamulengo of the puppeteers of Recife, such as Babau and Cheiroso. By analysing both the titles and the (few) descriptions made by Borba Filho of the plays of Babau and Cheiroso, we

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[71] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 150.

[72] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 234

can observe a connection between the puppeteer's plays and the old circus repertoire. Referring to the 'small plays' performed by Babau, Borba Filho pointed out that:

> Doutor Babau had a big repertoire and more than 70 puppets. (...) The plays were based on popular motifs, showing fights, magic and heroic plots: *Engole Fogo* (Swallow Fire), *Duzentos Metros de Fita na Barriga* (Two Hundred Metres in the Belly), *O Mastigador de Vidros* (The Glass Chewer), *Ver para Crer* (Seeing is Believing), *Corto uma cabeça de passarinho e apresento vivo voando* (I cut a bird's head off and show it flying alive); *O Sedutor Apaixonado* (The Seducer in Love) *A Flor Roubada* (The Stolen Flower).[73]

We are not in a position to definitely verify their genre, since Borba Filho does not give additional information about Babau's plays, but analysing some of the titles, we can say they are almost descriptions of common parts of circus repertoire: "Two Hundred Metres in the Belly", "I cut a bird's head off and show it flying alive" and "The Glass Chewer" can be related to common tricks performed by magicians. "The Seducer in Love" and 'The Stolen Flower" may be linked to the circus dramas mentioned by Torres.

On Cheiroso, Borba Filho describes how "in a meeting in Recife, Cheiroso began representing a series of 'dramas'. He got inside his booth and started performing small plays, such as *Ismael, o filho amaldiçoado* (Ismael, the Cursed Son); *O Recruta* (The Recruit) and *O Drama do Circo* (The Circus Drama)". Referring to "The Circus Drama", Borba Filho points out that, "it has nothing to do with the circus since the play is about a young man who has been betrayed by his girlfriend, then sends his servant to take a poisoned cake to the unfaithful woman. (...) The servant eats the cake, dies and is carried away by a vulture."[74]

In my view, Borba Filho did not capture the intention of the puppeteer when referring to the expression 'Circus Drama'. It seems that Cheiroso was applying the term in a broader sense, that is, the small plays appearing in the Circus, and in this particular example a typical farce. In his observation, Borba Filho seems to have missed the "dramas" as an important part of the Circus repertoire.

Needless to say the subjects (and genres) present in the Mamulengo plays outlined above cannot be regard exclusively as coming from the circus repertoire. In the European glove puppet theatre farce was either the centre of the companies'

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[73] Ibid., 80

[74] Ibid., 82-3

repertoires, or else, it was firmly woven into it. The indoor puppet theatre's performance described by Edmundo and mentioned at the beginning of this chapter is a typical farce. If some of the puppet theatre companies (or showmen) went to Recife, which seems a probability, we may suppose they might have been chosen by the Mamulengueiros because of their association with the puppet theatre, and not only because of the circus spectacles.

An obvious influence from the circus is the presence of many jokes that are part of the clown's circus repertoire. Some of these jokes appear as part of the puppets' speeches, such as the guessing jokes presented by Simão in Zé Lopes' Mamulengo. Others are closely connected with the jokes made by the clowns using the spectators. One example of the latter is the joke made by Mateus and Simão using some members of the audience performed in Zé de Vina Mamulengo.[75] Moreover, Zé Lopes Simão's pronunciation stresses the 'r', rolling the tongue when pronouncing the letter. This is common device used by the Brazilian's clowns. Zé Lopes, who besides being a puppeteer is also a clown known as 'Goiabinha", owned for many years a *circo de lona* that is, a modest and popular version of the circus. This once more demonstrates that the puppeteer's affinity and previous experience has a great influence on the incorporation of one or another element in their puppet shows.

Finally, the figure of the clown itself can be found in the Mamulengo of many puppeteers. The character of *Paiaça* appearing in Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes mentioned before; the *Palhaço Belezinha* (Pretty Little Clown) of João Galego/Marlene Silva; the *Palhaço Pimpão* of Master Otílio,[76] among others.

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[75] See the description of the game on Chapter Four.

[76] Magda Modesto, *Convivendo com Bonequeiros: Mestre Otílio-Magia e Melodia* (Caruaru, 1987), 29. (Unpublished).

6 – Cordel

Cordel is a type of popular literature published in the form of small, cheap books, or pamphlets. This popular poetry is written, illustrated, printed, sold and read aloud by members of the popular classes both in the interior and capitals of the Northeast states.

The origins of the *cordel* can be traced back to the epic poetry that was common in many parts of medieval Europe. These long, narrative eulogies of the exploits of chivalrous heroes gradually evolved into short ballads, more immediate and tailored for a wider audience, which were passed on orally. They were constantly refashioned through a process of addition and omission, to suit the purpose of their audience, and from that, developed a popular poetic tradition. By the sixteenth century, this popular poetry was being transcribed into simple printed leaflets in many parts of Europe, including Portugal and Spain, thus, establishing a dynamic and enduring tradition. This tradition was taken to Brazil and was easily adapted to the new context. In the nineteenth century in Northeast Brazil there were already small print shops producing cheap pamphlets of local ballads. The *cordel* was thus established as an enduring written form of popular poetry and ballads.

Stories from Portugal and Spain, such as *Donzela Teodora* and *Roberto do Diabo,*[77] among others, were appropriated by Brazil's rural and urban populations and modified through the years in terms of content, versification and dialect, in accordance with local tastes.[78] In parallel, stories directly related to the Northeast people's life and imaginative world became recurrent themes, and were founded in the ballads composed by the *vaqueiros* (cowherds) based on their experiences tending the herds. The themes, interwoven with myth, fable, popular history, anecdote and critical commentary, are written in verse form and illustrated with wood prints. The

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[77] *Robert the Devil* is a legend of medieval origins, that spread to many parts of Europe and became very popular in Spain and Portugal. Robert is the devil's own child, for his mother, despairing of heaven's aid in order to obtain a son, has addressed herself to the devil. The legend was turned into the famous opera, *Robert le Diable* written by Jakob Meyerbeer in 1831. It was a great success, which proved both brilliant and lasting in the nineteenth century Paris Opera. The opera was adapted to the puppet stage by many companies of Márionettes, such as Quai Saint-Antoine theatre (France); The Monticelli (Italy), among others.

[78] On this subject see: Cascudo (*Litaratura Oral*, 1953); Jerusa Pires Ferreira, *Cavalaria em Cordel* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1979).

considerable length of the plots demonstrates the variety of sources from which the poets take their inspiration for their creation (and re-creation) and offers a penetrating insight into the perceptions and social experiences of the people of the Northeast, and a wonderful example of interconnection between oral and written literature, and between popular and high culture.

Many studies have been done in order to classify the subjects present in the *cordel*.[79] To present an exhaustive survey of these classifications is beyond the scope of this study. However, I will point out the general classifications used in some scholarly analyses. The majority of thematic analyses of the *cordel* have established a basic distinction between 'traditional themes' and 'events and facts'. The traditional themes, most of which can be traced back to Iberian Romances which flourished in Medieval Europe, constantly recur in new forms by placing the stories in the context of the Northeast. They are classified as follows:

1) Religious stories - all such work serves to extol the Christian faith and values and condemn what is perceived as immoral behaviour and profanity. They relate:
   a) the lives of Christ, the Virgin and the Saints; miracles and moralities;
   b) poems of local miracles, such as the one done by the Padre Cícero;[80]
   c) tales of misdemeanours punished by divine intervention, such as *'Os Sinais do Fim do Mundo'* (The Signs of the End of the World).
2) Romantic stories
   a) chivalric tales extolling the valour and loyalty of medieval knights. Tales such as *Carlos Magno e os seus Doze Pares* (Charlemagne and his Twelve Peers)[81] and *A Batalha de Oliveiros com Ferrabrás* (The Battle of Oliveiros with Ferrabras) are the most common examples;[82]

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[79] Origenes Lessa (1955), Ariano Suassuna (1974), Roberto Camara Benjamin (s.d.), Manuel Diegues Junior (1987).

[80] Padre Cícero Romão Batista (Father Cícero) (1844 -1934), although not yet canonised by the Vatican, is the 'saint' who is object of the most extreme devotion in Northeast Brazil, and to whom is attributed a strong miraculous power. The enormous number of pilgrims annually to Padre Cícero's town, Juazeiro do Norte in the state of Ceará, shows the popularity of this priest within this region. Padre Cícero is considered the patron saint of the puppeteers. Note that in Portugal Saint Aleixo has the same role.

[81] "Charlemagne and his Twelve Peers" was the very centre of the Sicilian *opera dei pupi.*

b) stories of love, fidelity and infidelity, such as *A História da Donzela Teodora* (The Story of the Maiden Teodora), *Roberto do Diabo* (Roberto the Devil) and *As Bravuras de Cipriano e os Amores de Jacira* (The Bravery of Cipriano and The Lovers of Jacira).

3) Marvellous stories

a) fantasy based, such as *Aladim e a Princesa de Bagda* (Aladin and the Princess of Baghdad);

b) history based , such as *Os Últimos dias de Pompéia* (The Last Days of Pompeii).

4) Popular hero stories - the exploits of numerous popular heroes are narrated in pamphlet verse. The picaresque tradition of sixteenth century Iberian literature has provided the popular poet with sources for the creation of many Brazilian heroes, generally poor and weak, who triumph over adversity and enemies through cunning and trickery, such as in the *As Presepadas the Pedro Malazartes* (The Tricks of Pedro Malazartes). The victory of the heroes, invariably over those of greater wealth and social status, avenges the poor for the abuses suffered, and their deception is seen as a justifiable strategy for those who have no other means to defend their dignity in a world of greed and dishonesty. However, the heroic 'battle' can even go beyond the limits of the earth, as in *A Chegada de Lampião no Inferno* (The Arrival of Lampião in Hell), where the hero defeats the devil.

5) Animal stories - these are related to fables, presenting animals with supernatural powers, such as *O Boi Misterioso* (The Mysterious Ox), *O Papagaio Misterioso* (The Mysterious Parrot) and *A Vaca Misteriosa que falou profetizando* (The Mysterious Cow who Talks and Makes Prophecies).

6) Events and facts- these are concerned with events (natural and social) and personalities that have captured the imagination of the masses of the Northeast, or with issues and problems that are confronted in daily life:

a) Natural events - floods, drought, earthquakes, among others.

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[82] In many Cordel pamphlets, the world of kingdoms, kings and vassals become associated with the domination and subordination of the poor people in the rural Northeast. The traditional ethos of the good knight battling against, and eventually overcoming the forces of darkness and evil, is similarly linked to the activities of the popular bandits, the *cangaceiros*, who raided the large farms of the Northeast in the early decades of this century.

b) Social events – wars, famine, immigration, festivities, competitions (artistic and sporting), urban and rural life, social and political critiques, radio and TV soap-operas, man landing on the moon, and so on.

c) Personalities - national and international (Brazilian ex-presidents, Mussolini, Hitler, regional personalities, including popular heroes (Zumbi dos Palmares and Lampião), religious/ mystical figures (Padre Cicero, Antonio Conselheiro), and artists (Luiz Gonzaga).

The sale of the *cordel* was, and still is, a social activity. The poets recited their pamphlet in the market place, crucial for attracting customers. The peasants (usually from the countryside) who purchased a copy would take it back to their villages, where a literate member of the community would read it aloud to a group of villagers. This was a common practice until recently. However, with the advent of mass media, most significantly the television, this practice is becoming a rarity. It still can be found in the interior, however mainly in the villages where social relations have not changed to such a degree as to break up traditional customs.

6.1 – The Influence of Cordel in Mamulengo

By analysing the thematic content of *cordel* literature, it is clear that there is a close correlation with the subject matter and the plots of popular puppet theatre tradition. This correlation can be observed mainly in the following categories:

1) Popular heroes - this is the very basis of Mamulengo subject material. As discussed before, the heroes of the puppet theatre, as part of a lineage of popular heroes, are poor and weak, but invariably win over those of greater wealth and social status. Pimentel understands the character of Benedito, the hero of the puppet theatre of the state of Paraiba, as a type of "popular hero risen from the north easterner's unconscious non-conformity. (...) Revolting against injustice, making his own justice with his own hands, he symbolises the revolt of the oppressed against any form of oppression."[83]

2) Moralities - this is a frequent subject appearing either as the central plot or as a secondary one in many Mamulengo plays or scenes. One example of the first is *Ismael, o filho amaldiçoado* (Ismael, the Cursed Son) of the puppeteer Cheiroso. As described by Borba Filho, the play is about an inveterate drunk son who always mistreated and beat his mother. Having been cursed by her, the drunk is knocked

[83] Pimentel, *O Mundo Mágico*, 07

down dead by an ambulance, and in the end, carried off by the Devil.[84] Ginu's play *O Filho Amaldiçoado* (The Cursed Son), which seems directly based on Cheiroso's play[85], and *Zangô* scene[86] present in the Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes shows are other examples.

3) Social events, stories of love (fidelity/infidelity) and personalities - these are plots consistently appearing in the Mamulengo. The stories of infidelity are present in all puppeteer repertoires, presenting the infidelity of the Captain's wife with his employee, such as Quitéria, Colonel Pacaru's wife, and Simão.

But again, we can not assert these subjects were chosen by the puppeteers because of their availability in the *cordel* literature. As mentioned before, the Mamulengo popular heroes are closely connected with the European glove puppets heroes; moralities appear in many religious and secular puppet traditions; and social events and stories of love are widespread themes appearing in many forms of popular expression. As research has shown so far, the only clear link between Mamulengo and Cordel literature is Ginu's play, *A Chegada de Tiridá no Inferno* (The Arrival of Tiridá in Hell).[87] The play is a clear adaptation of the famous pamphlet, *A Chegada de Lampião no Inferno* (The Arrival of Lampião in Hell). In Ginu's adaptation the epic is turned into a comical episode and the famous Northeastern bandit Lampião is replaced by Ginu's most famous character, Tiridá, a typical puppet theatre hero. Characters from literature being replaced by puppet theatre protagonists were a common feature of the nineteenth-century European puppet theatre.[88]

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[84] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 82

[85] Borba Filho does not describe Ginu's play. Nevertheless, considering the similarity of the titles of both plays, and the fact that Cheiroso was one of Ginu's masters, we can suppose Ginu's play was based on Cheiroso's.

[86] See transcription of the scene on appendix one.

[87] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia,* 85

[88] For more some examples see: McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Theatre*, 167-191.

7 – Desafio

Desafio is a poetic duel of improvised verse between two poets presented both indoors (bars or private houses) and outdoors (fairgrounds, streets and so on). Many *desafio* festivals are organised by private or public institutions all over the Northeast region. The poetic duel can be presented with slight variations, receiving different names, including *peleja* and *disputa*. The verses are sung in a tonal melody and accompanied by guitars or tambourine, played by the poets themselves. The *desafio* takes the form of a musical competition and some of these popular poets have achieved fame in the region through their composition skills. The theme for the *desafio* can be predetermined or it can be given by the audience at the moment of the performance. The thematic content ranges from traditional themes, such as the old *romanceiros,* a type of epic poetry, to everyday life events.

As can be seem, the *desafio* is a variation of the recitation made by the popular poets referred to before and seems to be an old practice between poets. Câmara Cascudo traces the origins of duels verse back to the Greek shepherds' singing (*amabeu* singing). According to the author, this was an improvised duel between shepherds, in which they sang alternately, compelling answers to the questions of the adversary. Moreover, Cascudo notes:

> The *amabeu* singing technique was used by Homer (Iliad, I, 604, Odyssey, CCIV, 60). Horace alludes to a dispute between the buffoons Sarmentus and Messius Cicerus (Satires, I, V). It might have been well known by the agricultural populations since Virgil certifies its vitality in this region. It passes to the Middle Ages, reappearing in Europe with the troubadours, where the dispute was often accompanied by *alaúdes* or the arc viola.[89]

According to Nilza Megale, in the *Cancioneiro Português* published by Teófilo Braga in 1881, there is a fragment of a fifteenth century poetical duel.[90] In the Portuguese puppet theatre the *Bonecos de Santo Aleixo*, a poetic duel between the sun and the moon is presented in the prologue. The duel is composed by rimed verses in which each one of the characters tries to prove its greater importance than the other.[91]

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[89] Cascudo, *Dicionário*, 192.

[90] Nilza B. Megale, *Folclore Brasileiro* (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 1999), 35.

[91] Manuscript of Bonecos de Santo Aleixo (Evora: Cendrev, n.d.).

Mark Dinneen understands the establishment and enduring of the poetic duel in the Northeast region as one of the alternatives the popular poets found to live by their poetry skills. Besides the selling of the cheap pamphlets, verse competitions complete the poets' income through the donations they collect from the public performances. This practice influenced the gradual emergence of fully professional poets.[92]

7.1 – The Desafio in the Mamulengo

In the puppet theatre, the *desafio* is presented in a scene where two puppets come on stage and have a competition of a verse or sung dialogue. Two good examples are the *Glosadores*, a scene present in the Mamulengo of Zé de Vina, and the *Violeiros* of Zé Lopes. The term *glosadores* is related to *glosa*, a type of verse. The scene represents a *Glosa de aguardente* (Verses of brandy), which is a versed dispute held by men in the bars while drinking.[93] In the Zé de Vina scene, the two characters known as Tapada da Cachoeira and Cachoeira da Tapada, come onstage holding an *aguardente* bottle, which they drink throughout the scene. The themes used in the verses touch on many different subjects, often containing nonsense language just to make the rhyme in the final line. Often, the last line of the verses is completed by Mateus, the intermediary.



Fig. 2.40 – The "Violeiros" (guitar player) in Zé Lopes' show.

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[92] Mark Dinneen, *Ariano Suassuna*, 10.

[93] Alcure, *Mamulengos*, 54

In Zé Lopes' scene, *Violeiros* (Guitar players), one of the puppets comes onstage with a guitar and the other, who is already drunk, enters holding a bottle. The verses are sung, with the sober one getting the better results. However, as the scene develops, the inebriated puppet gives the *aguardente* to the sober one and in the end, both are completely drunk. The scene ends with one of the puppets vomiting over the audience[94] and finally, with the arrival of the police. Both characters are arrested.

As shown by research, the *Desafio* scene has been performed at least since the 1930s primarily by Zé Grande, who died in 1963.[95] Zé de Vina reports he had learned this scene with Zé Grande, who was one of his masters and who performed it from the time he started presenting his Mamulengo in the 1930s.

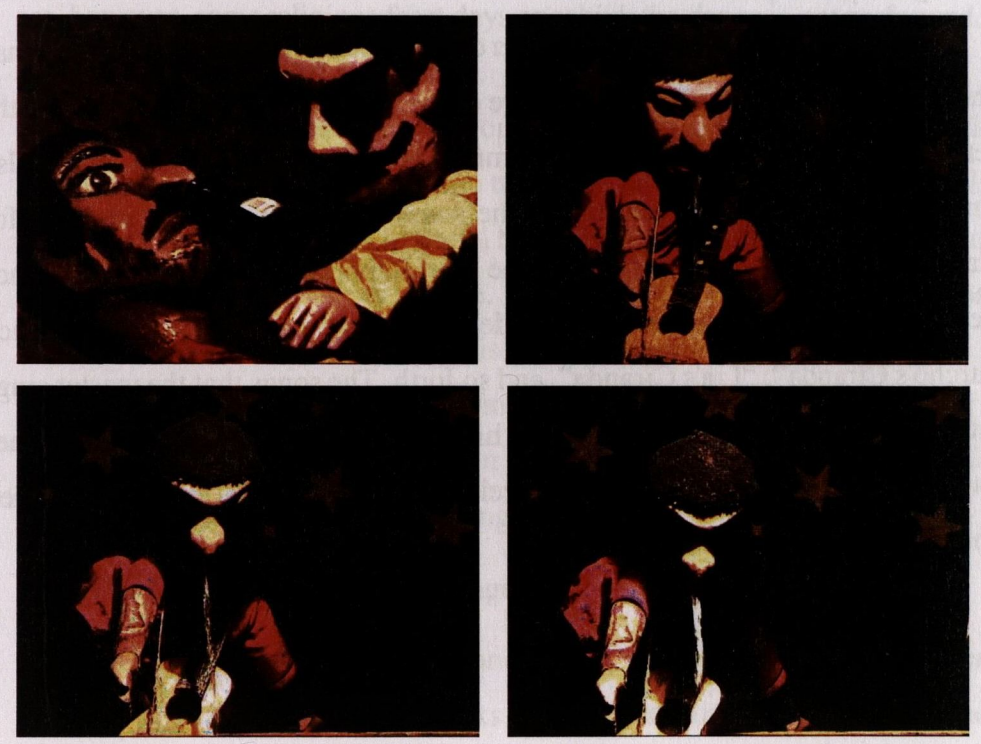

Fig. 2.41-44 – The vomit of the guitar-player in Zé Lopes' show.

[94] The vomit is made through a mechanism where water comes out of the puppet's mouth.

[95] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 83.

8 – Ciranda

Ciranda is a round dance appearing in many regions of Brazil.[96] In Pernambuco, it was primarily danced on the beaches, especially the beaches situated in the north of the state. It is principally danced by adults, but children are never excluded should they desire to enter the 'ring'. The *ciranda* is communal and free-spirited dance, with no limit to the number of people who can participate. Generally, the dance begins with a small circle of just a few people, which steadily grows as other people begin to join in. These "late-comers", without any kind of special ceremony, merely insert themselves into the ring by separating and holding the hands of the original participants.

Besides the *cirandeiros* (the *ciranda* dancer), there are the master, the foreman and the musicians, who all stay in the centre of the ring. It is the responsibility of the master to begin the dance and to give commands during its execution. He is also responsible for the songs and for playing the *ganzá* (a kind of maraca), and also for maintaining order when necessary. He is the most important participant in the dance and very often his (or her) name serves to identify the particular *ciranda* group, such as "Barcho's Ciranda"; "Lia's Ciranda", and so forth. The songs that the master sings can either be already established songs (of his/her own composition or that of other masters), improvisations or even popular, well-known commercial songs transformed into the rhythm of *ciranda*.[97]

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[96] Cascudo, *Dicionário*, 141.

[97] From the 1970s, many *cirandas* began to be performed in and around the tourist areas of Recife, such as St Peter's Square and Casa da Cultura (an old prison converted into a massive handicraft market). In this context, the dance became a kind of spectator show. Consequently, some transformations were inevitable: the musicians, the master and the foreman, for example, no longer stay in the centre of the ring, but stand outside the circle. Very often they use a microphone and loudspeakers. Also, under such 'show like' circumstances, there is often a time limit for the dance duration, mostly one hour or two. Information taken from: Folder of the Casa da Cultura, Recife, 2004, and my own observations from the performance of *Ciranda* of Lia de Itamaracá attended on 21 February 2004. Lia de Itamaracá is one of the best known *ciranda* 'masters'.

There is no traditional costume for this particular dance and the dancers are free to use any kind of clothing they wish. It is also possible to find this dance taking place at any time of the year, since there are no determined dates. There are, however, some religious feast days on which the dance is *not* performed, such as Ash Wednesday and All Saints' Day.



Fig. 2.45 – "Os Cirandeiros" (the Ciranda dancers) made by Baixa Guarda

The word "ciranda" seems to originate from the Spanish word *Zaranda*, which is a utensil for sifting flour, which in turn evolved from an Arabic word - *Harand*.[98] *Ciranda* probably was taken to Brazil by the European colonizers, since round dance was current in early modern Europe. As pointed out by Burke "dances for groups seem to have been dominant in this period, especially the round-dance and the weapon-dance." In regard to round dances Burke cites the Dalmatian *Kolo* or 'wheel', appearing in Bulgaria as *horo* and in Romania as *hora*; the Catalans *sardana*; the French *branle*, or, *carmagnole*; among others.[99]

8.1 – The Ciranda in the Mamulengo

The *ciranda* shows up as a dance scene, where the puppets are presented in a round circle, dancing. Santos remarks that, as in the original *ciranda*, in the puppet theatre there are no specific characters, nor specific costumes to play the *ciranda.* Hence, any puppet can be used to perform the choreography.[100] However, in the *Museu do Homem* collection, there is a group of puppets called "Cirandeiros" made by the puppeteer Baixa Guarda[101] that seems to be used for this specific scene. The puppets, eight in all, measure about 15 centimetres and are made of cloth. The figures have their hands tied to one another and are fixed on small sticks.

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[98] Caldas Aulete, *Dicionário Contemporâneo da Lingua Portuguesa*, 803.

[99] Burke, *Popular Culture*, 116-7.

[100] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 150.

[101] There is no documentation about this puppeteer.

Asking Zé de Vina about these figures, he explained they were fixed over a wooden round box and were operated by one single string that when pulled (from below) made the figures move forward and back, giving the idea of the *ciranda* dance (See plate). He said it was a speechless scene, with the puppets moving and following a *ciranda* song. According to Zé de Vina the scene appeared between more developed scenes but was not frequently used, appearing in performances of only a few puppeteers.[102] Like other traditional scenes, *ciranda* seems to be disappearing from the contemporary Mamulengo.

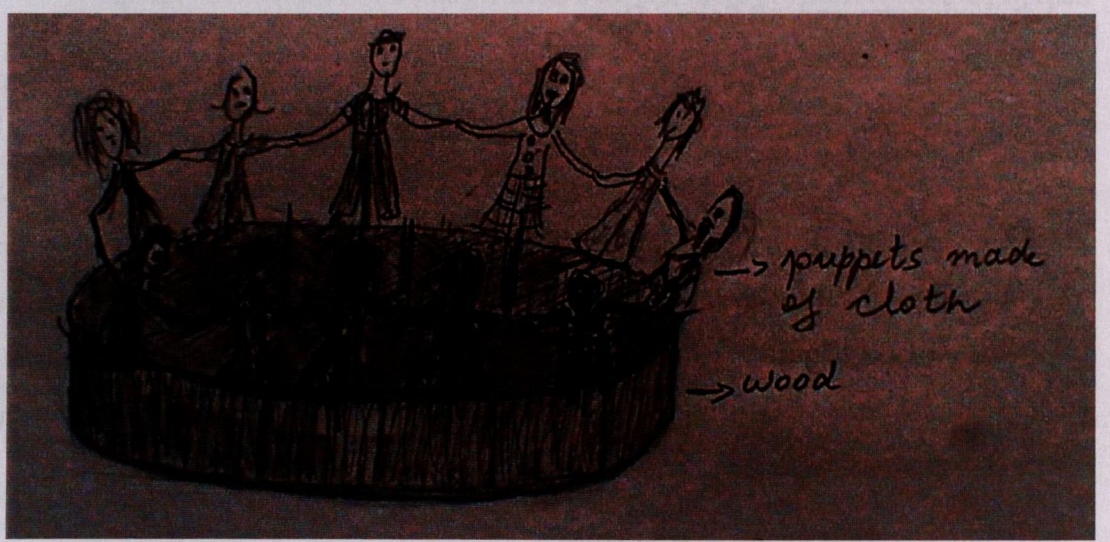

Fig. 2.46- Diagram of the ciranda box according to Zé de Vina's description.

[102] Zé de Vina, interview, Lagoa de Itaenga, Pernambuco, 25 March 2003.

9 – Forró, Xote and Baião: Musical Rhythms and 'Salon' Dances

Even for the people of the Northeast, it is a difficult task to classify the numerous musical rhythms accompanied by specific dances that are in existence, especially those found during the June festivities. *Forró*, *xote*, *baião*, *xaxado*, among others, could be different types of music, rhythms and dances, or variations of just one theme. As time went by, there was a tendency to classify these various rhythms and dances under one single term, *forró*. Given this, we consider them within this wider category, that is, the musical rhythms performed mainly to accompany certain North-eastern 'salon' dances, where one partner holds both arms tightly around the waist of the other partner, dancing in a very sensual manner.[103]

Originally, these north-eastern rhythms did not have any kind of fixed instruments, or a determined quantity of musicians. The *rabeca* (a kind of a primitive violin), the guitar, the accordion, and various percussion instruments were either played together or alternated, with liberty within the musical construction. These rhythms and dances are a constant presence throughout the entire year in all the states of the Northeast region, and other Brazilian regions. But, it is during the period of the June festivities that they really come into their own. They are the most played and the most requested rhythms during the festivities of St. John, St. Peter and St. Anthony.

9.1 – The Forró in the Mamulengo

The *forró* appears both as a musical rhythm played during the Mamulengo show and as a specific type of dance. In the dance, the male puppet holds the female puppet very sensually and they often dance what could be considered as an 'obscene' choreography. The dance appears either as part of more developed scenes, or as an independent scene, where a pair (or several pairs) of puppets appears just to dance.

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[103] It is important to make clear that these types of music can also be performed just to be listened to. However, they are mostly accompanied by dancing.

Whilst the latter is less frequent, examples of the former abound, appearing in almost all Mamulengo shows and many times during the same show. The most frequent is in the scenes when a black character (e.g. Benedito, Goiaba, Joaquim Bozó) arrives in the party of the Captain (the landowner) and dances with the Captain's daughter or another female character. Often, the dance ends with the couple parodying sexual intercourse. This fact leads to a series of conflicts involving the black protagonist and various adversaries.







Figs. 2.47, 2.48 and 2.49 – The brave black Goiaba dances *forró* with the Colonel's daughter, Carolina in Zé Lopes' Mamulengo.

As has been seen throughout this study, the Mamulengo puppet theatre absorbs the various elements from the folguedos, from the dances and from the oral and written popular poetry present in the Northeast of Brazil. The puppeteers rearrange, transfigure and adapt the elements so that they fit in the miniature space of their theater. In its physical smallness the Mamulengo expresses the greatness of the cultural universe of the north-eastern people.

CHAPTER THREE

THE LANGUAGE OF MAMULENGO: STUDY AND ANALYSIS OF ELEMENTS

Introduction

It is Christmas night. The moon is up, the place is full. Food, beverages, fire-works, merry-go-round . . . A mixture of people and sounds: the accordion, the children crying, the poet's voice:

> Estrela Dalva é tão bonita/ quando vem rompendo a aurora./ As àrvores do meu canto choram/ os passarinhos cantam o grito: soldado cobre a cabeça / corre pra noite no céu.A estrela Dalva é bonita/ quando vem rompendo a aurora.
>
> [The morning star is so beautiful/ when it comes with the dawn. / My song makes the trees cry / the birds sing their cry: soldier, cover your head / look at the night sky/
>
> The morning star is so beautiful/when it comes with the dawn.]

In the middle of the market there is a colourful booth. Hidden inside it, a puppeteer presents his Mamulengo show. Three musicians play for the puppets to dance. They come onto the small stage and present themselves to Mateus and the audience. The public laugh, sometimes just at the puppet figure, such as Janeiro, a big puppet that moves his neck up and down. At other times, the laughter arises because of the way the puppets speak, such as when Caroca, a tiny, funny, black puppet, presents himself using nonsense language:

> "Chegou Mateus velho do rosário/ com dois cancão na gaiola/ um na parte de dentro/ o outro da parte de fora./ Que diabo é nove que dez não ganha./ Bateu na jaca do velho mendonha,/ cabelo ruim de estoupa seu pai na carreira e tua madrinha, no sufoco."
>
> [Here comes old Mateus of the rosary/ with two birds in the cage/ one locked inside/ the other free outside./ What the hell is nine, that never gets a ten. I hit the jack fruit of the old ugly man / with hideous hair, your father is in a hurry, your good mother in despair.]

Staging of Mamulengo

The Mamulengo puppet theatre is made up of various elements that are created, selected and combined according to a set of rules in order to create the theatrical event and to communicate with an audience. The elements employed by the puppeteers and the other artists (e.g., musicians, the intermediary; puppet sculptors, etc.) can be divided into two sign systems, the visual and the auditory.[1] The visual signs comprise the puppets' physical appearance and movements, booth, scenery, props and lightening. The auditory signs cover the linguistic codes, which include the text (memorized or improvised) and lyrics of the songs, and are transmitted through the puppets/ intermediary speeches and voice quality, music, and sound.

As a traditional puppet theatre, most of the elements employed by the puppeteers are dictated by tradition, and thus may be created, selected and ordered within conventional rules. Nevertheless, as a living phenomenon, Mamulengo is compelled to change when its context changes and also emerges from the creativity of the puppeteers and their relationship with their audience. With the passing of time, variations in the structure, subjects and technical procedures of the performances can be observed.

The show is made up of a combination of many scenarios presented without "apparent connection" between them. Some of these passages have a complete, developed story, while others are short interludes composed of one single action, which are performed between the more developed scenes.

The traditional scenes[2] have their own internal rules, which the puppeteers may follow in a more or less accurate away. Each scene (it may be just a dance scene) has a specific plot played out by a certain number of conventional characters (principals and subsidiaries). As such, each character presents a particular typology (physical and psychological attributes) and may act in accordance with their role in the story line, including the relationship with other characters. The characters have a certain number of particular movements and gestures. Also, they have stereotyped speeches, which include their formulaic introductory speech (*loa*), stereotyped phrases and dialogues. The latter, may

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[1] Thomas A. Green and W. J. Pepicello, "Semiotic interrelationships in the puppet play," *Semiotica* 47 (1983): 147-8.

[2] Traditional scenes are those that are part of the traditional Mamulengo repertoire. As such, they have been performed for a certain period of time, and are passed down directly from one generation of puppeteers to another.

be developed with other puppet characters, Mateus or a member of the audience. The most important characters have their own specific music (*baiano*) which is played just before the character appears onstage, and perhaps, when he/she leaves. Besides the *baianos*, the passages have a certain number of tunes that are played at different moments.

All other elements described above are passed down directly from one puppeteer to another. Generally speaking, the process of learning is based on a long-term relationship between master and apprentice. Before becoming a master puppeteer, often the mamulengueiro worked as a helper of one or more master puppeteers from whom he learned most of his craft. The scenarios, *loas* (introductory speeches), stereotyped phrases, jokes, and so on, are like notes recorded in a commonplace book, the commonplace book being the puppeteer's memory. The material 'written down' in the memory is constantly reshaped and enriched by the puppeteer's life experience and the constant contact with other puppeteers and the audience. Thus, the Mamulengo show might be described as the result of a recreation process, even if new creations are observed.

The production of the Mamulengo show may be explained as a series of choices the puppeteer makes in selecting and sequencing the scenes. The options are primarily defined by the number of scenes the puppeteer is able to present (including the number of puppets in his box and the knowledge of the codes pertaining to each scene). The puppeteer improvises the dialogue, taking into account the rules for setting the scenes and the characters' typology, making wide use of stereotyped phrases and verbal jokes, a number of movements and gestures, sounds effects and music.

Mateus, the intermediary, has to have knowledge of the many elements that form the show. As mentioned before, he stays out of the booth and interacts with the puppets and audience throughout the show. He opens the show by attracting the attention of the audience; he calls their attention to prevent dispersion or commotion; he collects money. He also acts as the puppets' conscience, giving advice and reproving the puppet's actions; he repeats incomprehensible words and phrases spoken by some puppets, allowing the audience full comprehension of the puppets' speech. In addition, Mateus completes the final verse spoken by the puppets, so he has to know the puppets' rhyming speeches. As he sings the *baiano* together with the master puppeteer and musicians, he must know the songs. Like the puppets, Mateus' speech is full of stereotyped phrases and jokes. Due to the range of his functions, Mateus is much more than just another human presence in the performance, like, for instance,

the musicians. In fact, he is a character, the only one in Mamulengo played by a live actor. As pointed out by Zé de Vina, "Mateus gives the rhythm to the show. Consequently, a good Mateus is crucial to sustain the atmosphere of the show."[3]

Mateus's constant verbal and physical interplay with the puppets adds a paradoxical component to the show. On the one hand, his long conversations with the puppets (discussing trades, giving advice, reproving the puppet's actions and speeches) encourages the audience's belief in the puppets' human nature. On the other hand, his close proximity to the puppet figures, for instance when he touches or hits the puppets, emphasizes the puppets' small scale and therefore, their artificial nature, reminding the audience that they are just puppets. As shall be elaborated upon further, the audience's oscillation between these two perceptions (puppet as human and puppet as puppet) is the very basis of their enjoyment.

Like Mateus, the musicians stay outside the booth. They can be seated on a bench or be standing. The orchestra is generally composed of an accordion player; a drum player; and a triangle player. Mateus may also join the orchestra often playing the ganzá (shaker). The music is a fundamental element in the Mamulengo of Zona da Mata. Beyond its basic functions as a linking element between the scenes and as a support to the quarrel and dance scenes, it is a very important element in the characterisation of the main personages. These characters have specific songs (*baianos*), in which information about the characters is revealed.

Inside the booth stay the master puppeteer, the contra-mestre, and often one, or more, helpers. The contra-mestre is the master puppeteer's main helper and is an aspirant to become a master. Unlike the helper (s) that only move some figures, the contra-mestre lends his voice to some subsidiary characters that exchange dialogue with the protagonists manipulated by the master. The contra-mestre may also present an entire scene alone (generally a simple one). This allows for the master puppeteer to rest; at the same time permits to the contra-mestre to practice and test his apprenticeship.

The expressiveness and representativeness of the puppets, the knowledge and expertise of the elements that form the scenes, the capacity for improvisation by the master puppeteer and the intermediary, the skill of the *contra-mestre*,

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[3] Zé de Vina, Interview, Lagoa de Itaenga, 24 March 2004.

MAMULENGO ALEGRIA DO POVO - MASTER ZÉ DE VIVA

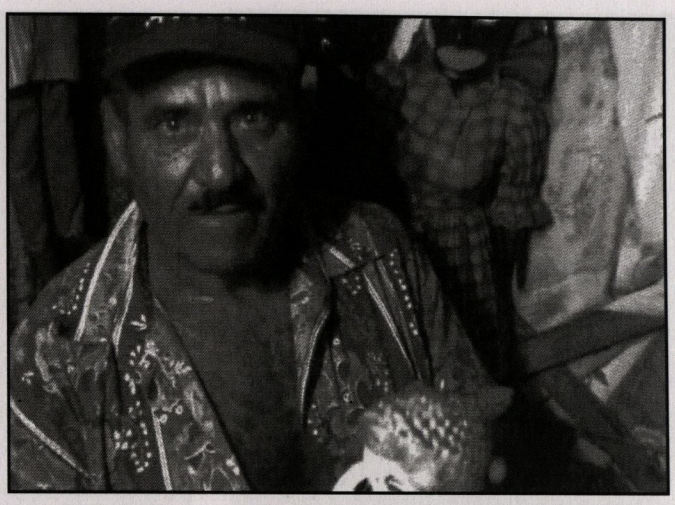

Fig. 3.1 - Master Zé de Vina

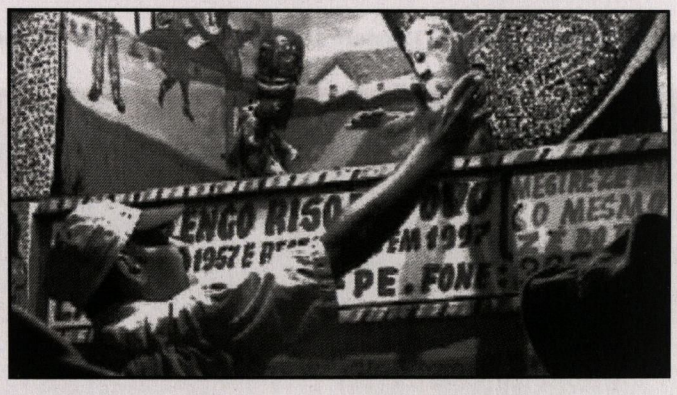

Fig. 3.2 - Mateus - Mário dos Santos (Zé de Vina'son)

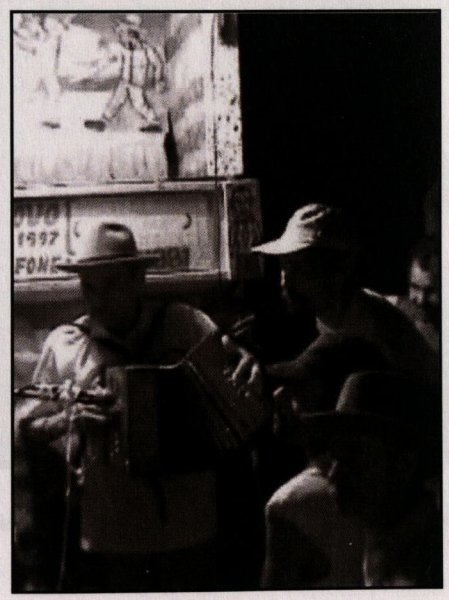

Fig. 3.3 - The Musicians: Francisco (accordion); Carlos (drums); and Seu Luiz (triangle).

MAMULENGO RISO DO POVO - MASTER ZÉ LOPES

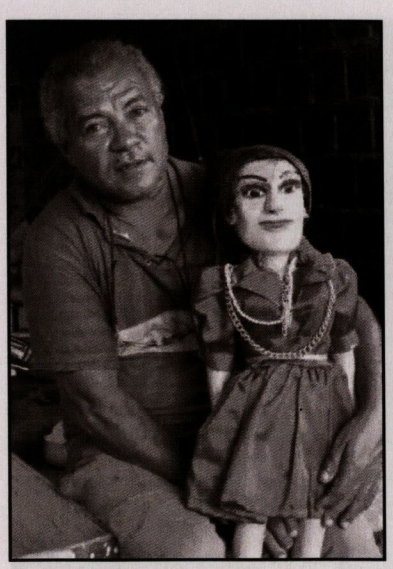

Fig. 3.4 - Zé Lopes and Quitéria.



Fig. 3.5 - Mateus (Tarcisio) and João Redondo da Alemanha



Fig. 3.6 - The musicians - Bilinga (accordeon); Amadeu (shaker); Seu Luiz (triangle); Zé Salo (drum)

MAMULENGO NOVA GERAÇÃO - JOÃO GALEGO and MARLENE SILVA



Fig. 3.7 - João Galego and Marlene Silva



Fig. 3.8 - The musicians - Léo (accordion); Roberto (drum); and Duda (triangle)

helper(s) and musicians, and finally, audience participation determine the quality and the success of the show.

The study and analysis of the elements that form the Mamulengo puppet theatre is dived into two parts. Part I, "The Theatrical Language of Mamulengo" examines the scenic space, the figures, the characters, and finally, the music, and the sound effects. Part II, "Mamulengo Text" examines the structure and content of the many scenarios, and the word playing.



Diagram 1- Front view of the interior of the booth.

PART I - The Theatrical Language of Mamulengo

1 - Booths and the Scenic Stage

1.1 - The Booths

The booths used nowadays are of two types. The simplest one (type 1) consists of no more than a four-sided screen to conceal the puppeteer. The other (type 2) has a proscenium-arch puppet-stage on top of it and a single, all-purpose background.

In the booth of the first type, the operators manipulate the puppets in a standing position. Since the stage is the entire upper area of the booth, the puppeteer can use the front and sides as scenic space, although the front is the most used. This allows the audience to watch the show from more than one position and not just from the front. The lack of a stage frame has a great impact on the way an audience perceives the puppets and props, since they are seen in contrast with the surrounding space. Consequently, figures and props are more likely to be perceived according to the human notion of scale, which emphasizes the puppets' and props' small sizes. As pointed out by McCormick and Pratasik, "the proscenium arch drew the audience's eye into the relatively narrow opening and helped it adapt to the scale".[4]

Due to its simplicity, this type of booth is easily assembled and packed. Consequently it is mostly used by travelling puppeteers who perform alone and in an urban context.[5] This type of booth is very close to the Portuguese Dom Roberto puppet stage[6] and an illustration of one type of booth used in the Russian Petrushka puppet theatre also presents similarities.[7]

Booth type 2 is much more sophisticated, with a more complex structure and diverse visual signs depicted on it. Due to the presence of the proscenium arch, backdrops, and a great variety of painted panels, it requires more time to be erected. This type of booth appears mostly in the interior areas of Pernambuco, mainly in the Zona da Mata region. Zé de Vina, Zé Lopes and João Galego, among others, use this sort of booth. Generally the booth measures about 2 metres 30 high, 2 metres wide and 1 metre 50 deep. The stage is located about 1 metre 60 above the floor. It is 70

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[4] McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppet*, 87.

[5] This is the case of Chico Daniel from Natal and Chico Simões from Brasília, among others.

[6] Cardoso, *Teatro Dom Roberto*, 12.

[7] Kelly, *Petrushka*, 66.

centimetres high and has the same width and depth as the booth. Decorative painted panels are fixed on the stage's wooden frame and in the lower part of the frontal side of the booth. Besides giving a visually exciting frame to the action, the panels may also be used to give additional information to the audience. In general, a panel containing information about the group (name, anniversary and the city of origin) and the master puppeteer's name is placed just below the play board.

The panels are made either of wood or recyclable metal (aluminum), and are painted with acrylic paint and are highly decorative. The large majority depicts Mamulengo characters, however non-figurative paintings also appear. João Nazário's booth is an extraordinary example of the richness of the details the panels can achieve. On the frontal lower side of the booth eleven panels, fixed to one another with wire, depict the figures of Simão, three "Quitérias", four policemen, and some decorative painting. In addition, the stage frame is painted showing some figures of Caboclinhos.



Like João Nazário, Zé Lopes' booth has panels placed both in the stage frame, and also below the play board. One panel gives information about the group, while others depict Mamulengo scenes, such as the Old woman and the bird Jacu, Simão and Quitéria, the snake, and so on.[8].

Fig. 3.9 - Detail of Zé lopes' booth front panel.

In Zé de Vina's booth, the panels are placed only in the stage frame and one (with information about the group) appears just below the play board. On the frontal side of the booth, instead of panels, the puppeteer uses a painted canvas, where the faces of the puppeteer and other members of the group are depicted together with Mamulengo figures. Zé de Vina reports that the canvas was painted by an artist as a gift to the group[9].

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[8] In the Sicilian pupi and in the Greek Karaghiozis, painted cloths also depicted scenes from the repertoires. See: McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppet*, 87.

[9] Zé de Vina, interview, Lagoa de Itaenga, Pernambuco, 07 March 2004.

By contrast with these, João Galego and Marlene Silva's booth has no panels. Like Zé de Vina, they use a painted canvas on the frontal part of the booth. On the cloth is written the name and the date of formation of the group, the puppeteers' names and illustrations of some Mamulengo figures.

1.2 - Scenery

Mamulengo often has no scenery in the strict sense used in live theatre. Some backdrops function as such, giving information about the place where the actions occur. But, as mentioned before, they are never changed during a single show and mostly depict not a specific place, but a general location. Backdrops may also portray Mamulengo figures and scenes.

Zé de Vina's background is made of six panels that are placed in the back and interior sides of the stage. The panels are made of thick fabric painted with acrylic and have red fringes. They are combined to form a country-side landscape with a house and some human figures. The figures depicted are two musicians (an accordion player and a tambourine player) and three men engaged in a fight. As Zé de Vina explains, the backdrops "depict the world of the Mamulengo".

Zé Lopes' background is made of a single cloth depicting a deep blue sky with stars and moon. In Solon's booth, a backdrop shows a street with buildings painted in perspective. In Solon's puppet theatre, traditional elements were interconnected with modern one[10], and Solon's particularity is also seen on his booth.

Backdrops may also have a dramatic function, creating a space for the puppets to enter and leave the stage. This is the case in Pedro Bezerra[11] and João Galego and Marlene Silva's booths. In Pedro Bezerra's a foldable panel with two doors is provided for the puppets to enter and leave the stage. The panel depicts diverse Mamulengo characters, like the Caboclinhos, a cowboy, a circus dancer, a man with gun and the Saci-Pererê, a popular figure of Brazilian mythology.

In João Galego and Marlene Silva's booth, a stiff backdrop made of cardboard covered with thick fabric shows two typical rural houses. One house has an open door allowing for the puppets to enter and leave. In the other a window is provided for the

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[10] Santos, *Mamulengo,* 115.

[11] A puppeteer from Caruaru, Pernambuco. The data were taken from the film, *João Redondo*, prod. and dir. Emanuel Cavalcanti, 19 min., 1979, 36mm.

puppets to look out. These types of backdrops allow the puppets a more dynamic use of the scenic space, and are largely used for the hiding and sudden appearance of the puppets. They also permit the puppets to interact with one another with one placed downstage, while the other remains behind the window.

Props as Scenery

The use of some specific props may also provide information about the place where the actions occur. The most common is the church used in the Priest scene. It may appear in a flat form or in three dimensions. An example of the former can be seen in the Museu do Mamulengo. It is made of wood and represents the front of a church with one "open" door and four "open" windows. The prop was fixed to the play board by two wooden pins located on its base. Chico Daniel has a similar prop, but instead of a church it is an altar with the figure of the Virgin and other saints. The altar has a small rod that can either be held by the operator, or else can be placed on the play board.

Magda Modesto informs us of a three dimensional wooden church made by Mestre Otilio. The church has a moveable door that opens and closes. The church has no floor, and this allows for the puppet to come up inside it. Inside the church, there is a hanging bell that can be rung by pulling down a string. As she explains, the church's door was opened from outwards by the Sacristan, who rand the bell calling the faithful to the mass.[12] Another three dimensional prop used by Mestre Otilio was an ambulance. The ambulance, like the church, had a movable (back) door and no floor. Open windows made it possible for the audience to see a little carved wooden puppet driving the car. The prop was operated by a single rod placed on its base and was used in the doctor scene.[13]

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[12] Magda Modesto, *Convivendo com Bonequeiros - Mestre Otilio: Magia e Melodia,* (Caruaru, 1987, unplublished), 44-5. A similar scene is found in the Tia Norica crib theatre, where a priest vigorously rings a bell, "trying to shove recalcitrant parishioners into church." (McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppet*, 165).

[13] Modesto, *Convivendo com Bonequeiros*, 45.

1.3 - Inside the Booth

In Zona da Mata's Mamulengo, the puppeteers manipulate the figures sitting on a bench that is placed over the boxes used for carrying the puppets and other materials. The puppets are hung on ropes that are horizontally stretched on the internal sides and back of the booth. The figures are grouped according to the scenes they take part in and to the sequence of their entrance in the show. Generally, the puppets participating in most frequently performed scenes remain closer to the puppeteers, while the less constantly used ones are placed on the back rope.

The master puppeteer and the *contra-mestre* remain seated on the bench while the helper (helpers) most of the time stands up behind them. This allow for the helper to be more mobile inside the booth, which permits him to hand to the master puppeteer and *contra-mestre* the puppets that are far way from them. Two small holes on the frontal screen are provided for the puppeteers to look out, allowing for the identification of spectators and the audience activity during the show.

1.4 - Improvised Booths

Research had shown that until the 1960s, instead of the booths used nowadays, the puppeteers used improvised ones that were made in the locale of the performances. The simplest example of that sort of booth was made by a cloth stretched between two poles stuck in the ground or between two trees in outside performance. This type was reported by Borba Filho and Pimentel as appearing in Recife and Paraiba respectively. In an interview, the puppeteer Januário de Oliveira (Ginu) from Recife explains that in the last years of his career he had no booth, thus the contractor of the show was responsible for the arrangements of the stage. As reported by him, it was often of the type just described. The puppeteer's only equipment was his box of puppets, a microphone and a sound-box used to amplify his voice.[14]

Zé de Vina explains that until the 1960s the puppeteers from Zona da Mata used to build their booth using materials located in the place of the performance. He remarks that the booths "had the shape of a house and were made by four vertical and eight horizontal poles that were taken from the trees." The poles were stuck into the ground in a square and were covered by straw, leaving just the aperture of the stage box without

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[14] Januário de Oliveira, interview, December 1975.

Assembling the Booth



Figs. 3.10 - 3.15 - Zé Lopes and the components of his group erecting the booth. Glória de Goitá, Pernambuco, 14 February 2004.

Booths and Panels



Fig. 3.16 - Zé de Vina's booth.





Figs. 3.17 and 3.18 - Two details of the panels on the lateral and back of the stage.



Fig. 3.19 - João Galego's booth



Fig. 3.20 - The backdrop depicts a rural landscape. The doors and the windows of the houses are "open."



Fig. 3.21 - A painted canvas with information about the group.



Fig. 3.22 - Pedro Bezerra's booth.



Figs. 3.23 - Back panel with a movable door allows the puppets to enter on the stage.



Fig. 3.24 - João Nazaro's booth in the *Museu do Mamulengo*. On the frontal side of the booth panels depict the figures of Simão, two "Quitérias" and policemen.

Inside the Booth



Figs. 3.25 - Puppets hung on the lateral and back of the booth.



Fig. 3.26 - Marlene Silva operating the puppets.



Fig. 3.27 - The Quitérias waiting to enter onstage.



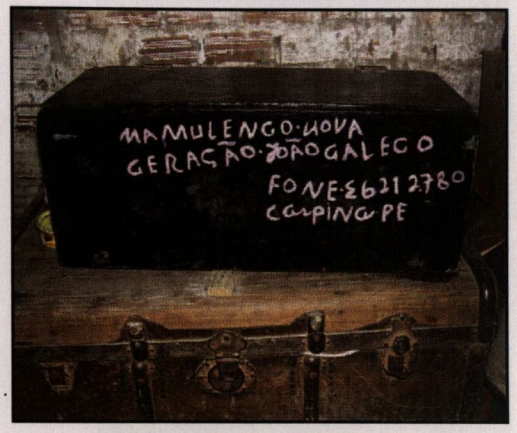
Fig. 3.28 - Zé Lopes and his wife Neide.



Fig. 3.29 - Zé de Vina and his wife Zefa.

Carrying the Puppets: Suitcases and Boxes





Figs. 3.30 and 3.31 - On the left, the Zé Lopes box with puppets and musical instruments. On the right, João Galego' suitcases.



Fig. 3.32 - Suitcase of the puppeteer Mané Pacaru in the *Museu do Homem*

Props as Scenery

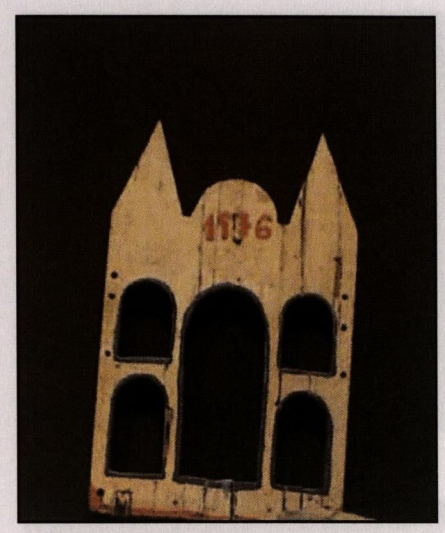


Fig. 3.33 - Flat church

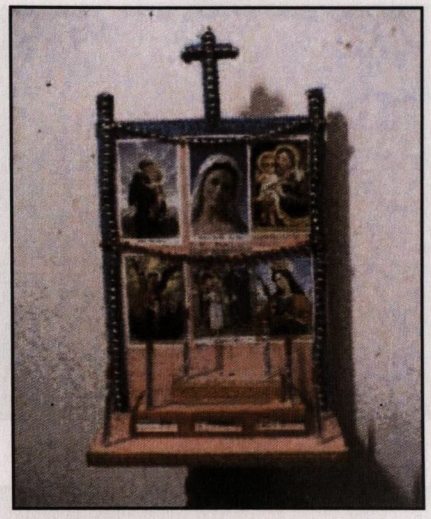
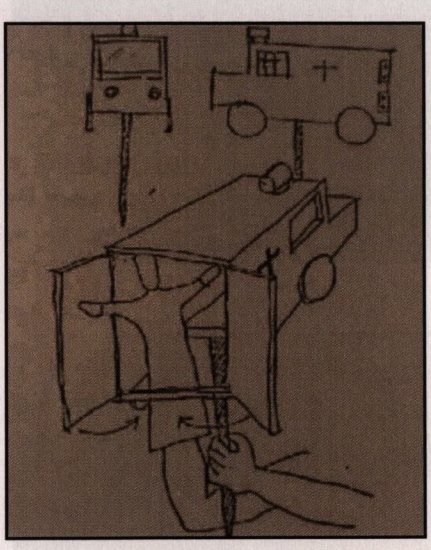
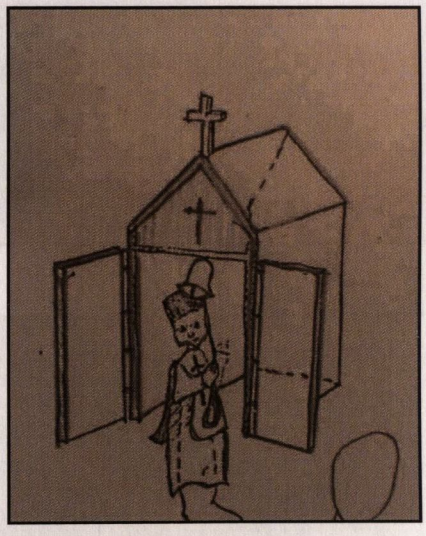
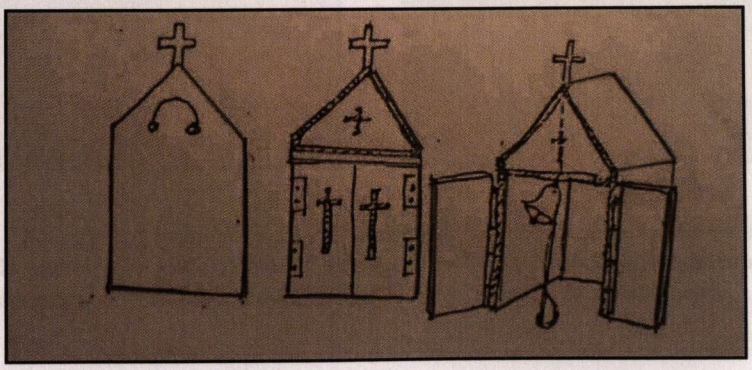


Fig. 3.34 - Altar - Chico Daniel







Figs. 3.35 - 3.37 - Diagrams of an ambulance and a church used by Mestre Otilio in his shows.

Props



Fig. 3.38 - 3.43 - Set of props in the *Museu do Mamulengo*. Knives, guns and rifles are the majority of props used in the shows. The knife on top left side is a "real" one. Other props appearing in the shows are: musical instruments; work tools; bundles; and so forth. (Museu do Mamulengo).

Lighting and Special Lights Effects



Fig. 3.44 - Gas light used in Zé de Vina's show performed on a farm in 1987.



Fig. 3.45 - Two Devil figures that produce a special light effect. On the left, "Anjo com olhos de fogo"made by Zé de Vina. On the right, a devil who "spouts fire" from his mouth made by Luiz da Serra.

covering. According to his description, the booth has almost the same shape of the second type described above, the difference being the material used in its construction.

1.5 - Lighting

We can say that the lighting used in Mamulengo is not employed for expressive purposes, its major concern being illumination. Night-time performances in outside spaces are lit by two or more light bulbs placed on the stage's wooden frame, either upright on the sides or hung above the front of the stage. Outdoors during daytime, daylight is enough. When performing inside, puppeteers use available room light.

Before electricity, the performances were lit by carbide lights (luz de carboreto) made by the puppeteers themselves. Zé Lopes explains that, "it was a mixture of water and a stone of carbide placed in a container from which a pipe protruded. The mixture of carbide with water produced an inflamed gas that when lit, produced a blue light torch." It was placed in front of the booth, providing light for the performance. Carboreto light was gradually replaced by gas, and finally, by electrical light. Even today, gas light is used in places where, for some reason, electric light is not available.

The only special light effect observed is in the Devil scene. One of the Zé de Vina devil puppets, which he calls "Anjo com olhos de fogo" (Angel with fire eyes), has a candle placed inside its hollowed head, which is lit during the scene, producing an impressive effect. In addition, in the Museu do Homem collection, there is a Devil puppet with a big hole in his mouth. When Zé de Vina was asked about the puppet, he explained that before, it was common to find devil figures that would "spit fire" through the mouth. The device could be done either by a "fire spit", often made by the puppeteer's helper, or by lighting a torch placed inside the hole.

2 - Puppets: The Figures

The figures appearing in the Mamulengo present a great variety of physical and technical features. An analysis of the puppets' visual configurations, that is, materials, construction, size, technical aspects of control, articulation and features, has shown that some puppeteers have in fact created their own "school". "School" used in this sense is understood to mean a personal style in the puppets' visual representation, which make it possible to recognise the figures as belonging to one or another puppeteer. But the different styles in visual representation, like other aspect of the Mamulengo puppet theatre, are encompassed within the limits of tradition, even if some 'breaking' departures from this can be observed. Thus, some codes cannot be changed, otherwise they would not be recognised by the audience, and would therefore blur the audience's perception and the communication process.

Unfortunately, most of the puppets in both collections are not dated, and many of them are neither even identified by the characters they represent, nor by the puppeteer who made them. Also, some puppets are identified not by the puppeteer who made them, but by the owner, or their most recent owner. Puppet sales and exchanges among puppeteers were, and still are, a common practice in the Northeast. Some puppeteers were (and are) more gifted in the construction process and often, sales of puppets were (and still are) a supplement to their scanty incomes.[15] Consequently, some puppets that are identified as being made by one puppeteer, could be in fact, have been made by another. This can only be perceived in the case of the figures made by puppeteers who have a very personal style, or else, who are well represented by the extensive number of their puppets in both collections. The most representative puppet-makers are: Luiz da Serra and Manuel Marcelino, from Vitória de Santo Antão; Solon and Sauba, from Carpina; Maximiniano Dantas, from Caruaru; Pedro Rosa, from Lagoa do Carro; João Nazário e Antonio Biló, from Pombos; Zé da Burra, from Lagoa de Itaenga, Samuel and Bate Queixo, from Feira Nova; and Seu Baixa, also known as Baixa Guarda of unknown origin, but who lived for a long time in Carpina, all cities of Pernambuco state.[16] Historical information about the figures

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15 McCormick and Pratasik observed the same practice regarding European puppeteers. (McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppet*, 127).

[16] Mamulengo Museum Catalogue and Catalogue of the exhibition "Marionettes en Territoire Brésilien".

deserves a specific and more detailed examination and is not a fundamental aspect of this study.

2.1 - Some Considerations about Taxonomy

Different resources and techniques are used in the composition of Mamulengo puppet-figures, thus generating great diversity in both their visual aspects and kinetic possibilities. To label the puppets using the usual nomenclatures can be dangerous. In European puppetry there is tendency to divide puppets into glove-puppets, rod puppets, and marionettes. But in some traditions other forms were introduced. Oh-Kon Cho, describing a traditional Korean puppet remarks that:

> The Korean puppet . . . does not belong to any of the most familiar puppet categories . . . Instead, it combines aspects of [many types]. The body of the Korean puppet, the main stick, is held by the hand, which is reminiscent of the hand puppet; its arms, somewhat like the marionette, are manipulated by strings, from below; and the quality of the arm movement reminds some audiences of the characteristic stiff mobilisation of the rod puppet.[17]

The observations of Oh-Kon Cho can be perfectly applied to some puppets appearing in the Mamulengo tradition, since they, like the Korean puppets, do not fit within the European taxonomy.

Thus, using a 'well known' descriptive vocabulary can lead to the risk of leaving one word of the 'uniqueness' of such traditions out of our analysis, simply because they do not fit within the vocabulary previously proposed. Thus, I will describe the puppets starting from the puppets themselves. Obviously, I do not intend 'to reinvent the wheel.' Moreover, some puppets, by their characteristics, fit well within standard nomenclatures and these will be used when appropriate.

Tillis, in search of a more "accurate and detailed description of the manner in which the puppets generate movement-signs", proposes breaking down the discussion of the puppet types (e.g., glove, marionette, rods) into three separate variables: the control mechanics, "the means by which the operator exerts control"; the control points, "those places on the puppet at which the control is exerted", and the

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From this group, Sauba (Antonio Elias da Silva) is the only one still alive. As pointed out before, Sauba, besides being a puppet-maker, was a well-known puppeteer. However, about ten years ago, he stopped performing and specialised in the construction of *Casa- de- Farinha.*

17 Oh-Kon Cho, *Traditional Korean Theatre*, (Fremont: Jain Publishing, 1988), 309, quoted in Tillis, *Toward an Aesthetic*, 108.

articulation points, "the places where the puppet is jointed to allow for differential movement of its parts".[18]

Tillis's proposal indicates new possibilities for describing the way puppets are constructed and the range of movements they can make. However, in applying Tillis's variables of the puppet sign-systems, which he divides into design, speech, and movement, one crucial problem appears. By analysing the puppets' size and the material used in the puppets' body construction as variables of the sign system of design, he takes into account the function of the these two variables only in the domain of audience perception. Therefore, the author does refer to their fundamental role in the puppets' movements, that is, the way the puppet operators have to deal with the figures' size and the material they are made of to allow the puppets to move.

Regarding puppet size, Tillis stresses two aspects:

> The size-signs work in two distinct ways. The first is when the puppet is contrasted with its stage, with its scenery and/or props, and/or with other puppets with which it appears; this may be called relative size of the puppets. (. . .) The second way is when the puppet is contrasted, purposely or not, with human scale; this may be called the absolute size of the puppet.[19]

The two aspects mentioned by Tillis may or may not cover the whole range of sizes the audience might perceive. But in considering size as a sign, we could agree that it might be considered a variable of the sign system of design, as proposed by Tillis. However, as I mentioned above, size also functions in another way that is not directly related to perception (as a sign that conveys meaning), but also, to the operator's technical procedure.

Moreover, Tillis points out that "the next variable to consider in the sign-system of design is that of the material that the puppets present to the audience". Again, it is clear that Tillis focuses on audience perception.[20]

Hence, in order to describe the range of puppet figures appearing in Mamulengo, and the way they are constructed to move, besides using the three variables proposed by Tillis, that is, the control mechanics, the control points, and the

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[18] Ibid., 133-45.

[19] Ibid., 123.

[20] Ibid., 126. Tillis makes it clear in the introduction of his book when he notes that in this particular study, he is not "concern with the means of the puppets construction." (Ibid.,5).

articulation points, I will now insert in this part of my description, information about the size and the basic materials used in the puppet's body structure. As mentioned earlier, these elements have a major impact on how puppets are manipulated.

2.2 - Types of Puppets in Mamulengo

The common element that is present in all Mamulengo shows is the position of the performer: he always manipulates the puppets from below. This applies to all types of puppets.

On a first and broad analysis, we could divide the Mamulengo puppets into four types. The majority are glove puppets,[21] followed by marottes, or stick puppets, mounted on a rod. The third type are puppets with their entire body carved in wood and they appear frequently as both anthropomorphic and zoomorphic, and finally there are mechanical puppets, known as *casa-de-farinha* which seem to have originated from the *presepios mecanicos* (moving cribs).

The diverse types of puppets have distinct functions in the show. Generally speaking, we could say that glove puppets are mostly used in the scenes that require more precise movements of the puppets' arms and hands, such as those scenes where the figures have to handle objects, such as weapons (fight scenes), a coffin (Widow's scene) or a baby (Praxédio scene). Moreover, glove puppets are allowed to hug and to caress another puppet. Such movements seize upon certain facets of human behaviour and express them often in an exaggerated way that is immediately recognized by the audience.

Marottes, or stick puppets mounted in one rod are mostly used for dancing. Comical dances are made mostly with small rod puppets, while sensual dances are made with bigger female rod puppets.

Puppets with their entire body carved in wood present a stiffer manner, due to the restriction on their kinetic quality, and are largely use in the representation of landowners and policemen.

Mechanical puppets are always used in conjunction with other puppets and act mostly to reinforce the role of these characters, or else, to reinforce specific scenery.

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[21] In the puppet theatre of Rio Grande do Norte and Paraiba glove puppets represent 95 per cent of the figures, while in Pernambuco they represent about 60 per cent.

From this very basic and reductive division, a great range in the technical aspects of puppet control and construction is observable. Firstly, I will examine the materials and techniques use in the puppets' basic shape.

2.3 - Shaping the Figures: Materials and Techniques

The majority of the puppets are carved in wood, especially *mulungu* and *imburama*, two types of light wood found in the Northeast of Brazil. Almost all glove puppets have heads, hands, and sometimes arms made of wood. The rods and the mechanical puppets can be entirely carved in wood, or have a wooden core covered with cloth and padded with rags.

Often, the puppet makers start from a block of wood, carving firstly the most elementary forms, then moving on to carve the features, such as the eyes, nose, mouth, and so on. Chiquinho, a sculptor and puppet maker from Passa e Fica, Rio Grande do Norte, when explaining his process of carving an ox puppet, remarked that, 'I take out from the wood block, everything that is not the ox".[22] In his philosophical explanation, he makes clear the huge possibilities that a block of wood represents in the sense that everything is essentially there. The part of the creator is to 'take out' what is unnecessary to express the creature. Thus, the puppet figure is a synthesis of the character it represents.

By looking closely at some puppets, it can be noticed that the original shape of the wood sometimes is used as 'inspiration' for the puppet's features. That seems to be the case of the 'Lieutenant' puppet of Luiz da Serra, where the puppeteer takes advantage of the wood distortion to give a particular facial expression for the figure. If for some puppeteers the original form of the wood inspired the shape of only a few figures, for Antonio Bilo it seems to be an essential aspect of his creative process. As can be observed in the entire set of Bilo's puppets, the original shape of the wood is the very base for the puppets' feature. By this particularity, Bilo's puppets can be immediately recognised.

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[22] Francisco Cardoso, interview, Passa e Fica, Rio Grande do Norte, 17 March 2004.



Fig. 3.46 - A set of João Galego's figures basic carving.

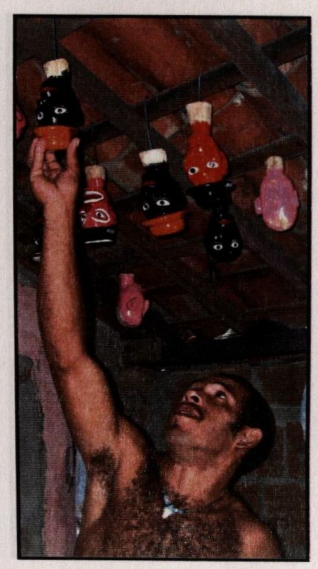

Fig. 3.47 – Bibiu and a set of his puppets' heads. In order to allow the drying of the painting, the figures are hung on the roof of his workshop.

By observing the carving process of four puppet makers who include Chiquinho, Zé Lopes, João Galego and Bibiu, we can affirm that in general, the figures that have no particular features are carved using the same pattern, almost I would say, serially. The particular attributes are created by adding details, such as colour, costume, hair, and so on. However, the puppets with specific characteristics require more detailed carving, even in their first configuration, such as Assustado (Frightened) of José Justino and the Luis da Serra puppet.[23] In both figures, along with many others, particular facial features require specific carving. Like the faces, most bodies are relatively standard, but some puppet body structures require a particular carving technique.

The variations in carving technique do not necessarily mean that the puppets carved in a standard pattern are less important than the more individualised ones. Zé de Vina's explanation about his puppets is useful to clarify this distinction. Zé de Vina divides his puppets into two groups: the principal puppets (*os bonecos principais)* and the samba puppets (*bonecos de samba*).[24] The principal puppets are those that are directly related to the character they represent. Hence, those puppets cannot represent

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[23] There is no reference to the name of the character Luiz da Serra's puppet represents.

24 There is no relation between the word *samba* and the puppets made to dance, even if some dance puppets may fit within this category.

another character, since their physical attributes correspond to one specific character. The samba puppets are those that can be used for more than one character. As noted by Alcure "this does not necessarily mean that those puppets are subsidiary characters (. . .) and many of them are in fact protagonists".[25]

As observed in Zé de Vina's performances, puppets representing many important characters, such as Joaquim Bozó or Ritinha, 'played' the role of another character in a different show. Yet a puppet representing a less important character, such as a sick man, did not. The division is related more to the physical features of the puppet, than to any other consideration. What Zé de Vina refers to as '*samba*' are those puppets which by their more general features, can be used for more than one character. Obviously, the choices are not made at random, since the visual attributes (features and control mechanisms) have to match the physical attributes of the other characters it will represent.

For example, the puppet representing Joaquim Bozó, a brave black-fighter glove puppet and one of the most popular Mamulengo characters of Zona da Mata, can also be used in another show to play the role of another black-fighter character. The black fighters (*negros de briga)* as the name indicates, are a group of black puppets that, for different reasons, appear in the show to argue and fight.[26] On the other hand, the reason that the puppet representing the *Doente* (sick man), or else, the *Fumador* (smoker) cannot represent another character is because it has a hole in its mouth and a mechanism (a plastic hose) in his back which allow him to vomit, or to smoke. This particular feature can only be used for these two characters. Zé Lopes also has some puppets that are used for more than one character, such as the *Fiscal* (the tax collector). Zé Lopes remarks that "he [the puppet] plays also the role of Raul, Simao's brother. He [the puppet] is like an actor; he can play various characters in different shows."[27]

For its flexibility, cloth is frequently used to make the body, legs and arms of almost all puppets that have sticks attached to the base of their feet and, sometimes, to one hand. In this case, the puppet's body is always padded with cotton or rags, while the legs and arms may be similarly padded, or else, may be empty. These are puppets specially made for doing exquisite movements, especially with their legs, such as the clowns (*paiaça or*

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[25] Alcure, "Mamulengos", 137.

[26] It is important to stress that this practice is not a routine, but happens only when, for some reason, the puppeteer has no other puppet available.

[27] Zé Lopes, interview, Glória de Goitá, Pernambuco, 14 February 2004.

palhacinho) and acrobats. Some puppets, such as the bird of the puppeteer Mané Pacaru,[28] are made of a wire frame covered by cloth.

Although appearing less frequently, plastic and different types of natural fibre are also used. In relation to the latter, there is a very distinct female puppet made entirely of a natural fibre (*bucha*). This fibre is largely used in the interior areas of Brazil to make children's dolls. I have only encountered one example of this, and it may have been an example of a puppeteer trying to use this type of doll in his show.[29]

The use of factory-made plastic dolls, although not a common practice, can be observed. Pedro Bezerra da Silva used a plastic doll to represent Quitéria, one of the most important characters of the Mamulengo.[30] In this case, the doll is dressed in the costume of the character, though she maintains the original doll's face. Zé Lopes uses a small, white, undressed plastic doll to represent a baby son of a black couple, Caroca and Catirina. A tiny plastic baby is also used in the Francisquinho[31] show. The doll represents a dead child placed inside a coffin made from a recyclable sardine tin.



Fig. 3.48 - Baby inside a coffin (Francisquinho)

Utilisation of parts of the body of industrialised dolls, such as hands and feet, is more common. In some figures, such as Mané Braz of Antonio Biló, the puppeteer used the entire body of a male doll replacing the head with a wooden one. A very exceptional puppet is Maximiniano Dantas' horse. The puppet is made entirely of cardboard and is ridden by a horseman made of cloth and paper.

28 Mané Pacaru was a puppeteer from Pernambuco. There is no information about his real name, or any other information about him. Some puppeteer's stage names are one of their character's names, often, the most important of his show. Borba Filho pointed out a puppeteer living in Recife in 1950's who used the name Benedito. Mestre Ginu was also known as Professor Tiridá, after his most famous character.

29 The puppet is in *Museu do Homem* and has no identification.

30 Santos, *Mamulengo*, 168

31 Francisquinho (Francisco Ferreira Sobrinho) is a puppeteer from Passa e Fica, Rio Grande do Norte.

2.4 - The Materials Used on the Puppets' Features and Costumes

A variety of materials can also be observed in the puppets' physiognomic features (e.g., hair, moustaches and beards) and costumes. Sometimes features are achieved simply through the carving and painting, but, frequently other materials are added. In this case, eyes may also be represented by seeds and marbles, or recyclable bottle tops. Factory-made plastic eyes are observed in more recent figures. Animal skin and hair, as well as natural fibres, are usually used to make the hair, beard and moustache of male puppets, and the hair of the female puppets. Human hair is also used in some figures. Moreover, these sorts of materials are also used to represent the body of animals. Many animal figures have their body covered by animal skin. Birds can be entirely covered by feathers, or a mixture of fabric and feathers. Feathers are also largely used in the props or clothes of Indian figures, such as the *cocá* (head ornament) of the Caboclinhos.

Clothes are mostly made from fabrics, but plastic and paper are also used. Hats, commonly appearing in male puppet costumes, are made of recyclable plastic or metal packaging, leather, straw, cardboard, rubber or fabric.

As can be observed, the puppet-makers use any material available, ranging from animal skins to recyclable plastic, to accomplish the communicative process with their audience. As shall be elaborated upon further, the selection of material employed in the puppet figure is directly linked with the role of the represented character.

By contrasting the puppets from the museum collections and the figures more recently made, we observe that the use of paint has been replacing the use of more diversified materials. This is observed mainly in the facial details, such as the hair, moustache and beard. Moreover, the use of machine-made materials, such as glass eyes and synthetic fibres has replaced the more individualised materials used before. In my view this process is the result of the changes that have been taking place in the puppeteers' context. On one hand, the increase in industrialisation that took place from the 1980's, followed by the economic globalisation process, made machine-made products more available, both in terms of quantity and affordability. On the other hand, as many puppeteers moved to the cities, many materials found in the rural areas, such as animal skins and seeds, became less accessible in the urban areas. So, if a skin is not available, the old man's beard can be made of wool, or even painted, since the most important thing is to express the idea that an old man must be bearded.

However, we should be careful not to reduce the significance of these changes to merely the result of a material contingency, since changes are also are related to the communication process. Since the aim of the puppeteer is to communicate with and please the audience, change might be understood as part of a dynamic process which helps to achieve the puppeteer's goal, and consequently, their success. New materials may be seen by the puppeteers as 'novelties', as something that will bring new dimensions to their show, and as such, they may be recognised as materials that will please the audience.[32] Some purists might be scandalised with the introduction of such industrialised materials, and maybe a nostalgic feeling dominates their view, since the 'idealised' Mamulengo of the old days, seems more 'creative' than the one practised today. In relation to this, we might beware of not imposing our 'artistic view' over the puppeteers' intentions. Aesthetic concepts of what might be called 'art' might not be appropriate in understanding their options. So, what are the qualities to be observed?

McCormick and Pratasik remark that, "There is no automatic relation between the quality of the figures and the expressiveness of the performance. Some of the finest shows are given with crudely hewn and garishly painted puppets (...)"[33] Maximiliano Dantas's set of puppet figures appearing in the Museu do Homem and Museu do Mamulengo collections is a good example of the incongruity observed by the authors. His figures are roughly carved and painted, but Maximiliano Dantas was known as a great puppeteer. Zé Lopes, referring to the figures remarks that "the uglier the better, because as soon as they appear in a scene, the public already laughs."[34] As already mentioned, the audience's laughter is the one of the puppeteers' main objective.

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[32] This can be observed, for example, in the changes Zé Lopes made in the back cloth used in his booth when he went to present his puppet theatre in Portugal and Spain. The common coloured cotton back cloth was replaced by a more fashionable red velvet cloth.

[33] McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppet*, 127.

[34] Zé Lopes, interview, Glória de Goitá, 14 February 2004.



Fig. 3.49 - Maximiniano set of puppets

2.5 - Puppet Figures: Technical Aspects of Control, Construction, Size and Articulation.

Glove puppets

The glove puppet is the simplest type of figure, consisting of a head, into which a finger is inserted, and a costume, with whatever elaboration, worn on the hand of the manipulator held in an upright posture. Unlike some traditional European glove-puppet,[35] Mamulengo glove-puppets have no legs.

The puppets' size, weight and type of sleeves (the basic body) affect the control mechanics (the means by which the operator exerts control) the control points (those places on the puppet at which the control is exerted), and at the articulation points (the places where the puppet is joined to allow movements),[36] and consequently

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35 McCormick and Pratasik remark that "in Punch and Judy, Punch is generally the only character to have legs, whereas, with Jan Klaassen, Vitéz László or Kasper, other male characters also have legs." (McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppet*, 140).

36 Tillis. *Toward an Aesthetic*, 135.

in the puppet 'responsiveness to control'. Therefore, the puppets present variations in their movements relative to their specific physical characteristics.[37]

In general, the glove puppet's movement derives directly from the movement of the operator's hand and finger. The puppet's head is most frequently controlled by inserting the index finger into the neck, since "it is the most sensitive and the most suitable for precise movement and control of direction of the puppet's gaze."[38] The puppeteer's thumb is inserted into one arm, while the other arm can be controlled by all three fingers; by the little and ring fingers; and finally just by the middle finger, the latter one been the most commonly used. The fingers' positions vary according to the operator manipulation style, but most frequently are dictated by the shape of the sleeve and the puppets' size and weight. Moreover, variations on the position of the fingers allow for particular movement.

Besides the head and arms, the operator's fingers can also act in the puppet's chest or belly. In Mamulengo, the belly articulation point is mostly used to express sexual excitement of male characters. In this case, the puppeteer presses his finger out against the sleeve, representing a protuberance of the penis.

An uncommon position of the operator's finger can be observed in Zé de Vina's manipulation of a widow character. The puppet's head was controlled by the puppeteer's index finger, the thumb controlled one arm and the little and ring fingers controlled the other arm. His middle finger pressed the sleeve out in the puppet's shoulder, giving a strange appearance to the puppet. The figure's peculiar appearance was in keeping with the character it represented, since the finger under the sleeve created the effect of a hunchback, so common in old people.

The sleeves often serve as the costume of the puppet or may also be an under-body to be dressed. Most of the time, the dress consists just of the upper part of the costume, such as the cowboy's and policemen's waistcoats and the doctor's overcoat.

The shape of the sleeve varies according to the puppet character and its function in the show, but also the puppeteer's style. The sleeves may be cut flat in the shape of a T, with a slight extension of the fabric in the centre to allow for the neck. Sometimes, the arms are cut separately and set into two vertical seams running down

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37 McCormick and Pratasik give a description of the range of glove puppet's movements to be found in Italy by the nineteenth and early twentieth century. (McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppet*, 143)
38 Ibid.

the front so that they face forward, in a horizontal position parallel to the ground. More rarely, the sleeves are cut in the shape of a diamond. In this case, the arms are placed at the points of the diamond on either side allowing for an extension of the neck. The Death figure often appears with long arms and heavy, wooden hands. In this case, the operator's finger controls just the head, allowing the puppet's arms to swing in a wide circular movement due to the weight of the hands.

Unlike the puppets of João Redondo of Rio Grande do Norte, in the Mamulengo of Zona da Mata, Pernambuco, the great majority of glove puppets have a cylinder of leather, or plastic, inside the arm. This allows for a firmer control of props and also gives to the puppets a stronger gesture. In some figures, the cylinder covers the whole length of the arm, giving to the puppet a stiff manner, since the articulation point of the finger joint is not available. This gives these puppets an ambiguous effect, since, the puppet is allowed flexible movement in the head and belly, yet it presents an almost robotic movement with the arms. Moreover, in some puppets the cylinders are not covered with fabric, exposing to view the actual material the puppet is made of.

Another distinction observed between these two Northeast puppet theatre traditions is the presence of hands. All Mamulengo glove-puppets have hands either made of wood or other material, such as plastic. On the other hand, in João Redondo and Babau puppet theatres the figures can either have hands or the extremities of the operator's fingers inside the puppet's sleeve appear as the puppet's hands.

The size of the glove-puppet appearing in Mamulengo varies according to the character it represents as well as the puppeteer's construction style. To the distinguishing feature of puppet construction styles mentioned above, can be added the puppet's size. Maxiaminiano Danta's glove puppets measure about 25 centimetres with the head measuring about 8 centimetres. Zé Lopes's glove puppets are much bigger, the average heads measuring about 15 centimetres and the entire body (head and sleeve) about 50 centimetres. However, the average size of the glove-puppet is about 12 centimetres for the head, with a total length of 40 centimetres including the sleeve.

The black-fighters and old-men are frequently smaller than other puppets. Their small size gives the puppeteers directness of control, and provides very dynamic and rhythmic movements. Black-fighters are mostly engaged in fight scenes, generally against old-men. Another small glove puppet appearing frequently is the old-woman, mostly

presented as a widow. She is also engaged in fight scenes (against the police and the murderer of her husband) and in actions such as carrying her husband's coffin.[39]

Glove puppets with larger heads generally have a stick jammed into the head, which is grasped by the palm of the puppeteer's hand. In this case, the puppet's movements are slower. Some have articulation, the most common being the lower jaw, moved by means of strings. Besides the jaw, articulation of the tongue and eyes is possible in some figures. This is the case with Simão, one of the biggest puppets appearing the puppet theatre of that region. As with the Korean puppet described previously, this puppet, despite being based on its operator's hand, is quite distinct from the traditional glove-puppet. Due to its big size, it has a stick jammed into the head, and a long cylinder inside the arms, allowing the puppet stiff movements. Moreover, it has an articulated jaw moved by means of a string connected to the lower part of the jaw. Another string allows the tongue to come out and the eyes to open and close due to a mechanism placed inside the head. Both strings (jaw and tongue plus eye) come down through the puppet's back, hidden under the puppet cloth. Although the three movements can be made at the same time (by pulling the two strings down together) the most frequently used is the jaw movement that stresses the character's speech, the eyes and tongue moving less frequently. The puppet's facial movements require from the puppeteer an acute manipulation technique since he has to grasp the stick and move the puppet arms with one hand, and with the other, pull the strings. The emphasis on the facial movements often makes the timing and rhythm of the character slow down.

Another puppet presenting almost the same facial movement is Tá- pra- Você (also known as Caso-Sério). However, in this case, the figure doesn't have articulation in the jaw. Instead, a hole in the puppet's mouth allows the tongue to come out, while opening and closing the eyes. By their particular facial movement, we can relate Simão and Tá-pra-Você to ventriloquist puppets. Borba Filho remarks that some mamulengueiros were also ventriloquists and they often presented their ventriloquist doll before the Mamulengo show.[40] Today, performances with ventriloquist dolls before the

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39 As indicated in Chapter II, the coffin carrying scene is found in some of Pulcinella-derived puppet traditions.

[40] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 171. During my field work I was able to attend a performance of a ventriloquist during a Christmas festival organised by the sugar industry in Escada, a city of Zona da Mata, Pernambuco.

Mamulengo show seem to be disappearing. We could think of Simão and Tá-pra-Você as a type of adaptation of the ventriloquist doll to the Mamulengo glove-stage.[41]

A rare puppet with a particular articulation of the mouth is the *Degolado* (literally, the throat cut off). The puppet's head is cut horizontally across the mouth, forming two separate parts. These two parts are joined by a leather piece nailed to the back part of the head. A string is fixed in the upper internal socket of the head, crossing it vertically and coming out at the base of the puppet's chin. By pulling the string down, the puppeteer allows the upper part of the head to be joined to the lower part. However, when the string is released, the two parts separate almost totally, except for the leather join just at the back of the head. This allows the throat (which is painted red) to be exposed, showing the puppets' "blood."

Although I have not seen this scene in any show I have attended, by analysing the picture in the *Mamulengo* journal[42] and another similar puppet present in the Museu do Mamulengo collection, we can be sure that this puppet was used in fight scenes. When the puppet's throat is "cut" by the knife of another puppet, the mechanism operates, exposing the puppet's throat. The red colour gives an even stronger dramatic effect to the scene. Zé Lopes' sick-men figure has a feature very close to the D*egolado*. The puppet's head is cut horizontally across the mouth allowing for a "worm" (a long fabric tape) to come out of the mouth.

As mentioned before, glove puppets represent about sixty percent of the figures in Mamulengo puppet theatre. Priests, doctors, cowboys, the many different types of workers, devils, death, and many others super-natural beings, are mostly glove-puppets. In Mamulengo, female glove puppets are quite common, unlike the puppet theatre of Rio Grande do Norte (João Redondo) and Paraiba (Babau), where they are almost non-existent.

Some puppets appear as pairs.[43] The most common is a pair of guitar-playing glove-puppets that come onto the stage carrying two guitars. They sing a *desafio*, which is an antiphonal singing style, with one replaying the verses sung by the other.

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[41] Mobile features are uncommon in European glove puppets. Nevertheless, some puppets of the Ferrari family of Parma have moving mouth and some times moving eyes.

[42] *Revista Mamulengo*, 09 (1984), cover.

[43] McCormick and Pratasik notes that pairs of figures are popular on the European glove- puppet stage. (McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppet*, 140) Pair of figures also appears in Gelede puppets, such as the twin sisters playing gourd rattles. (Witte, *World in Motion,* 45).

In João Galego's show, a short comic and rhythmic scene is presented by the two guitar players. The puppets are two small rod puppets that, by means of pulling a string, move their hands up and down, 'playing' the guitar. Unlike Zé de Vina's, João Galego's pair doesn't speak.

The two Caboclinho glove-puppets appearing in Zé Lopes show also act as a pair. Their dancing is very symmetrical, as are their features. As I mentioned before, the Caboclinhos scene is very popular in the Mamulengo of Zona da Mata. But, unlike in the work of Zé Lopes, in the majority of the shows, they appear as four figures and present a longer, more elaborate scene.

The only animal character appearing as a glove puppet is the snake. The snake scene is one of the most appreciated and is present in almost all Mamulengo shows. It appears mostly as a glove puppet, with the articulation entirely in the jaws.

Morottes and rod puppets

Two attributes connect the puppets I am including in this second group, and both qualities are distinct from the glove puppet. Firstly, these puppets appear full length. Secondly, their bodies are not 'filled' by the operator's hand. From that first broad classification, peculiarities in their technical aspects of control, construction, size and articulation make them distinct from each other.

The body of the puppets can be entirely made of wood, entirely of cloth, or a mixture of wood and cloth. When cloth is used, it is padded with rags, which gives materiality to the body. Due to the variety of the rod puppets in Mamulengo, they are divided into three types: dancing puppets; extending neck puppets; and puppets entirely made of wood.

Dancing puppets

Morottes mounted on one rod appear mostly as female puppet dancers commonly known as "the Quitérias."[44] They are the biggest and heaviest puppets appearing in Mamulengo, measuring about 60 centimetres and weighting 2 kg. For their attributes, we could say that the Quitérias are the puppets that most approximate

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44 Although Quitéria is one individual character (the landowner's wife), and other female dancers have their specific names and roles (mostly appearing as the landowner family), such as Colantina, Carolina, and others, the puppeteer uses the plural form, Quitérias, to name the group of female dancers. (Santos, *Mamulengo*, 160)

the human figure.[45] They have legs, arms, breasts and sometimes, even their intimate parts are represented

Like Simão, Quitéria puppets, have many control mechanisms and articulation points. But as distinct from the male figure, which has most of the articulation in the face, the female emphasis is on the body. The upper part of the body (head, arms and chest) and the lower part (waist, bottom and legs) are made of wood, connected by a strong but flexible fabric, or else by elastic. The articulated hip allows for sensual movements. Due to the puppet's weight and size, the rod used is thicker than the one used in other figures, and is often jammed inside the puppet's body. In some puppets, the rod is instead placed in the front part of the body and is attached with wire.

To allow for the movements of this big and heavy puppet, the operator must apply strong and fast control to the rod. The most common movement is the rotation, which he makes by spinning the rod between the palms of both hands, allowing her ample scope to display her charming rotundity. The circular body movement is followed by the arms, since, with most puppets, the arms are articulated at the shoulder. Moreover, in some puppets, the arms also move up and down. In this case, strings are attached to the arms, passing over the shoulder and coming down the puppet's back.

By pulling the strings down, the arms can make vertical movements. Yet, strings are also placed in the extremity of the shoulders and by pulling the strings down to the right and to the left side, the operator allows for half- circular movements of the chest.

Another character with a similar body structure to Quitérias is Chica do Cuscuz, or Chica da Fuba, a cuscuz-maker.[46] The Chica do Cuscuz puppet, like Quitéria, has the upper and the lower parts of the body made of wood, which are connected by fabric or elastics. Likewise, Quitéria has articulation in the shoulders. The puppet's arms are tied to a sieve placed in front of the puppet's belly. By rotating the rod to the right and to the left, the operator allows the arms to move laterally and

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[45] Sauba, referring to one of his master, Pedro Rosa, recounts that he used to do his "Quitérias" based on the features of real women, most of them, the puppeteer's ladies-love. (Interview, Carpina, Pernambuco, 18 January 2004).

[46] Cuscuz is a type of cake made out of manioc.

continuously to both sides as if sieving grains. This allows the puppet very fast and rhythmic movements close to a dance.

One more type of dancing puppet appearing frequently in Mamulengo is controlled by three small sticks. One is fixed in the base of the body, and the other two can be placed either in the base of the each foot, or one in the feet and another in one of the hands. The puppet has loose legs and arms, all made out of cloth. Its control mechanisms and articulation points allow the operator a great range of movements, such as bending the body, the legs, the arms, and so on. Likewise, its small size and light weight allows the puppet funny, rapid movements. The most common are Caroca and Catirina, a couple of figures who often open the Mamulengo shows of Zona da Mata, Pernambuco. As mentioned before, a great number of clowns and acrobat puppets have the same technical features. One such figure is the Palhaço Belezinha, a clown figure who always opens João Galego show.

Animal figures mounted in rods

The majority of animal figures appearing in Mamulengo are mounted on one rod, or stick. Birds are widely used, often appearing with an articulated beak moved by means of strings often attached to its lower part.[47]

A very popular type of figure appearing in almost all mamulengueiros sets of puppets is the horse ridden by a cowboy or a captain. Those puppets are connected with *Cavalo Marinho* and *Bumba-meu-Boi* and are mostly used in the scenes directly linked with these two *folguedos*. Some of these figures have articulation on the neck allowing it to move up and down imitating the horse's trot. **(See plate)**

Another figure coming from these folguedos is the Ox. Often the figure appears with ribbons on the horns and a star on the forehead.

Expanding neck puppets

Characters with expanding necks appear quite often, producing a comic effect. The most common is Janeiro (January), a black character moved by means of a stick jammed into the head that goes up and down. In some puppets, such as those of Zé Lopes, Zé de Vina and João Galego, the length of the extended neck can reach one metre. When the extended neck is directed towards the audience it invariably produces

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[47] Birds with articulated beaks are largely used in the *Gelede* puppet tradition. (Witte, *World in Motion* , 23-6).

a loud burst of laugher. Birds with expanding necks also appear with similar technical aspects of control and articulation points to the Janeiro puppet.

Puppets made entirely of wood

Figures with their entire body carved in wood appear frequently both in anthropomorphic and zoomorphic forms. They can be held or fixed over a wooden platform. But the majority are held by the operator directly. In this case, the human figures are held by the feet, while the animals are held either by the paw or the belly. These figures have their wooden body completely exposed, since the puppets are never dressed. The costume (comprising clothes, cap, and other details) is carved on wood. Paint is used to represent or even stress some particularities of the puppets' costumes and faces.

Most of the human figures have articulation at the shoulder, allowing for movement of the arms. Certain animals have articulated paws, such as the monkey and the cow. In both human and animal figures the articulated limbs are joined to the main part of the body with nails or small wooden sticks. Horizontal or vertical movement of the puppet's body allows for the motion of the loose limbs. The most common human figures appearing with entirely wooden bodies are groups of policemen, such as the popular Cabo 70, and politicians.

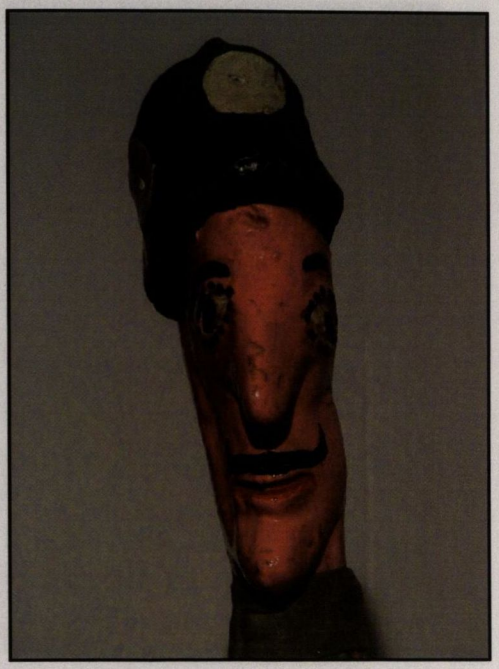
Others with the same technical aspects of control, construction and articulation are the puppets representing the landowner (Mané Pacaru, Mané Paulo or Capitão Mundinho) and the popular Inspector (Inspetor Peinha). But unlike the others, these figures have a wooden core covered with cloth and padded with rags. Like the puppets made entirely of wood, they present similar limitations in their kinetic quality, since their solid figures allow only limited and stiff movements.

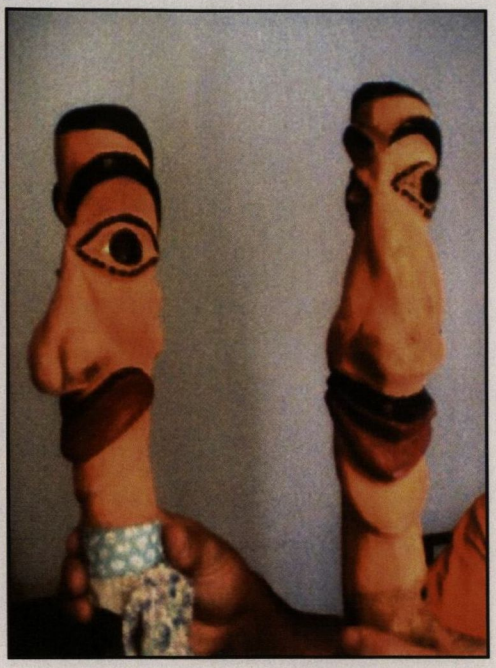
The size of the human figures varies from 30 to 60 centimetres high, and the animals from 10 to 20 centimeters high and 20 to 30 centimetres in length. Within this group, variations in size are mostly related to the style of the puppet maker.

In regard to the presence of rod puppets in European tradition, McCormick and Pratasik inform us that:

> With the exception of the marottes, figures operated by rods from underneath and known today as 'rod puppets' are not a major part of the European puppet tradition. Their use in the nineteenth century usually pointed back to some form of crib theatre. The puppets of the speaking cribs of Provence, for example, were mounted on a short iron rod fixed into

Wooden Puppets Presenting Especial Carving





Figs. 3.50 and 3.51 - The wood distortion gives a particular facial expression for these figures. On the left, *Lieutenant* (Luiz da Serra). On the right, Antonio Biló's puppets.



Fig. 3.52 – *Frighted* (José Justino)

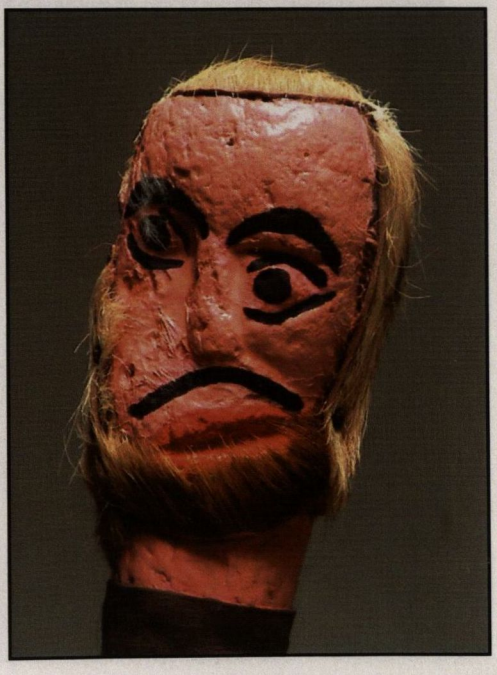
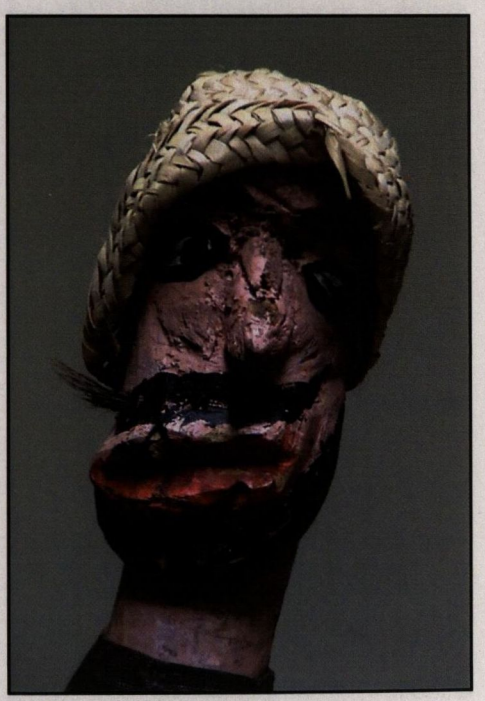


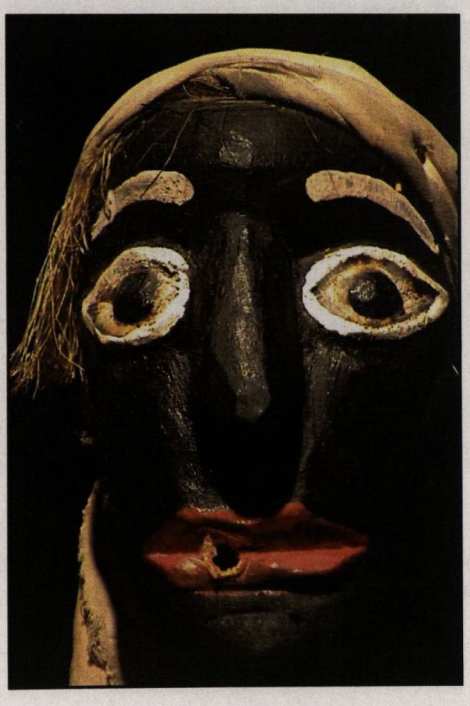
Fig. 3.53- Old man (Luiz da Serra)





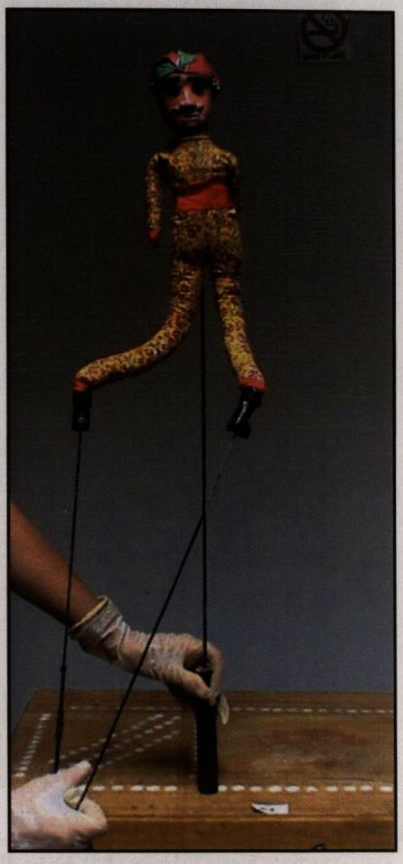
Figs. 3.54 and 3.55 – *The Smoker*. A hole in the puppets' mouth and a plastic hose in his back allow him to "smoke". (Pedro Rosa)





Figs. 3.56 and 3.57 - Two other exemplary of "smokers".

Puppets with Body Made Out of Cloth





Figs. 3.58 and 3.59 – Cloth allows for flexible movement of the body, legs and arms of dancing puppets. On the right, an acrobat (Manoel Amendoin). On the left, *Caroca* (Zé de Vina).

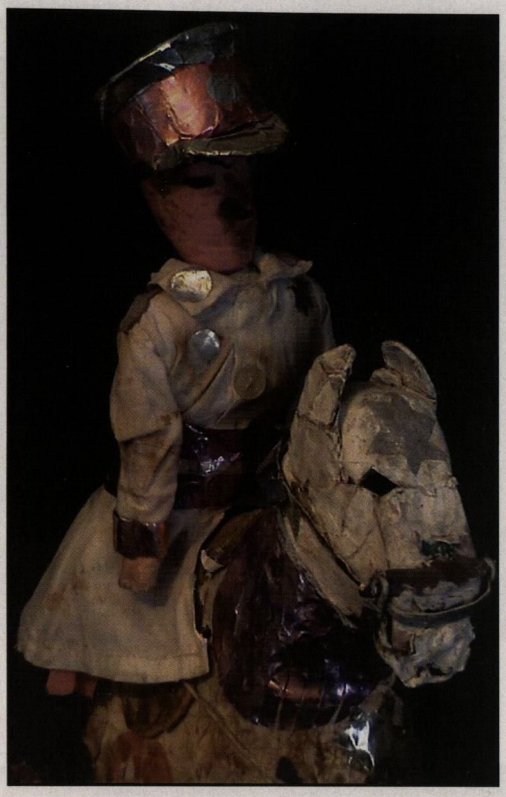




Figs. 3.60 and 3.61 – A doll made entirely of cloth (Maximiniano Dantas) and a tiny bird made of a wire frame covered by cloth (Mané Pacaru)

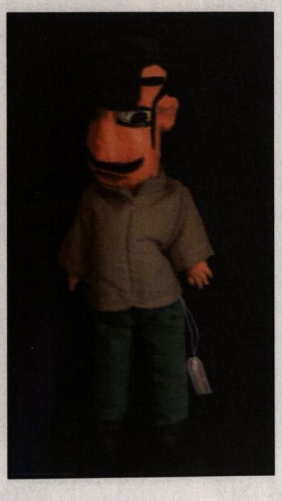
Other Materials Used in the Puppets' Body





Figs. 3.62 and 3.63 - A doll made of natural fiber (n.id), and a horse made entirely of cardboard (Maximiniano Dantas).







Figs. 3.64, 3.65, and 3.66 – Plastic are sometimes used to make hands, legs and feet. On the right, the puppeteer (José Justino) used a piece of plastic hose on the puppet's hand. On the centre (A. Biló) and on the left (n.id.), the puppets have parts of the body of industrialised dolls.

Hair, Beards and Moustaches



Fig. 3.67 – Zé da Burra



Fig. 3.68 – No identified.



Fig. 3.69 - Luiz da Serra

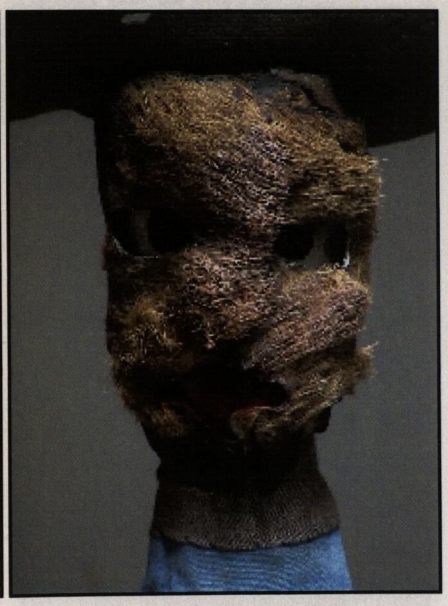


Fig. 3.70 – Bate Queixo

Female Hair and Ornaments



Fig. 3.71- Doll with horse's hair (L. da Serra).

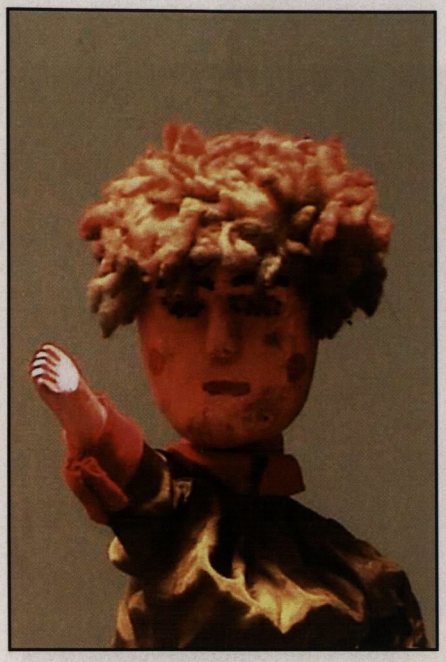


Fig. 3.72- Hair made of foam rubber (Zé da Burra).



Fig. 3.73- The hair is replaced by a turban (B. Queixo)



Fig. 3.74- Hair made of rope (Bate Queixo)

The Materials used on the Puppets' Features and Costumes

Hats made of recyclable materials



Fig.3.75 – Hat made of plastic (Bate Queixo)



Fig. 3.76 – Hat made of a metal plate (L. da Serra)

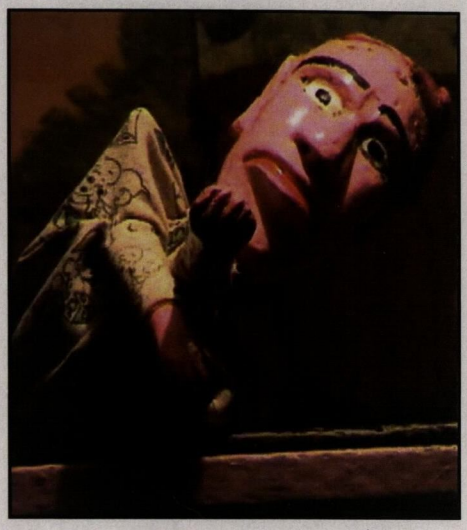


Fig. 3.77- Hat made of plastic (J. Justino)



Fig. 3.78 – Hat made of cardboard (Zé da Burra)

Some Types of Glove Puppets





Figs. 3.78.1 and 3.79 - On the left, the Widow (Zé de Vina). On the right, Death (Antonio Pequeno). The operator finger under the sleeve created the effect of a hunchback in the Widow figure. The Death figure often appears with long arms and heavy, wooden hands.



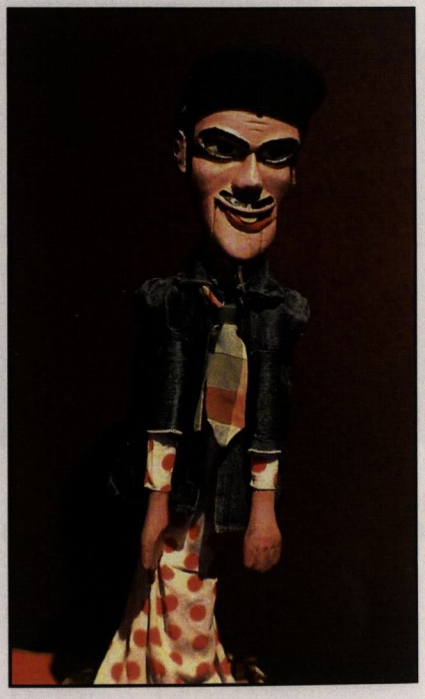


Figs. 3.80 and 3.81 - On the left, a rare type of sleeve cut in the shape of a diamond. A "porter" (Samuel Feira Nova). On the right, a simple type of sleeve cut in T. The sleeve also serves as the costume for the puppet *Cabo 70* (B. Queixo)





Fig. 3.82 and 3.83 – On the right, *Gangrena* (Zé de Vina). The yellow cylinder used in the puppet's arm is exposed to view. On the left, an exemplary of a puppet without "hands" (Antonio do Babau, a puppeteer from Paraíba).



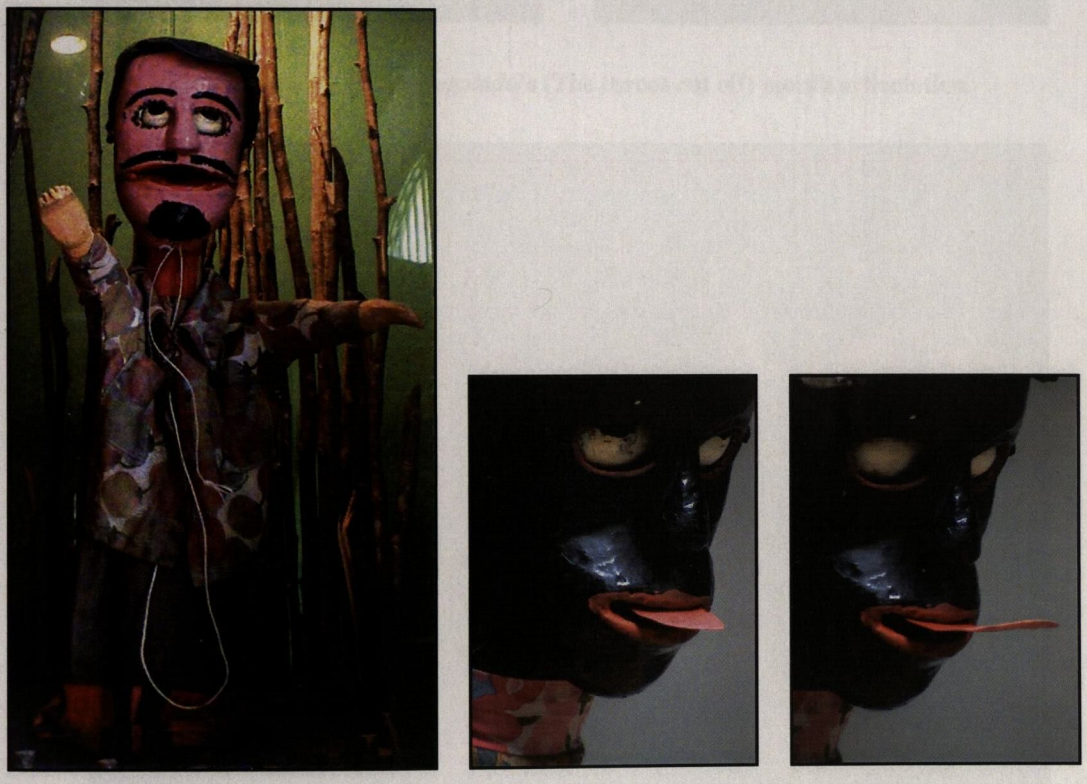


Figs: 3.84 and 3.85. Glove puppets with a stick jammed into the head. On the left, Simão (Zé Lopes). On the right, *Papa- Figo* (Luiz da Serra).

Glove Puppets with Moving Eyes, Mouth and Tongs



Fig. 3.86 – A sequence of the eyes' movement. Simão (Luiz da Serra)



Figs. 3.87 and 3.88 - On the left, a puppet with apparent strings (Luiz da Serra). On the right, *Tá-prá-Você* (Luiz da Serra). While the eyes turn up, the tongue comes out.



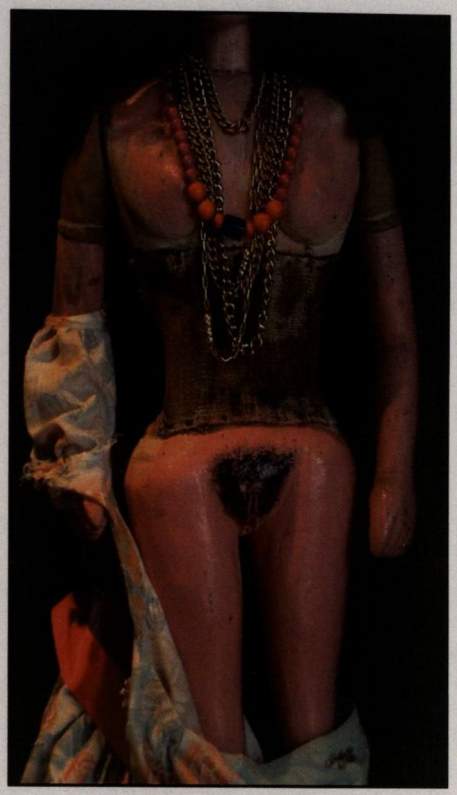
Fig. 3.89 – A sequence of the *Degolado*'s (The throat cut off) mouth articulation. (N.id.)



Fig. 3.90 - The only animal character appearing as glove puppet is the snake. (Severino Bilu)

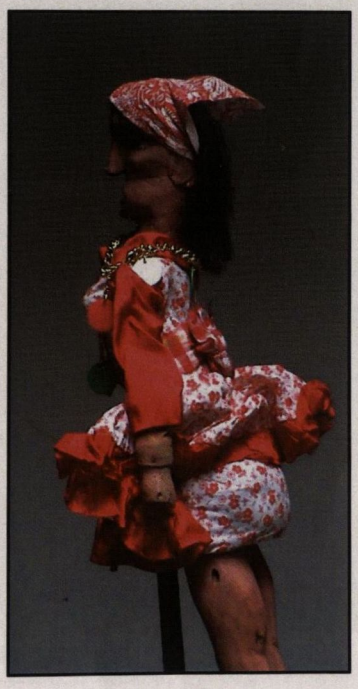
Morottes and Rod Puppets

Female Dancing Puppets









Figs. 3.90, 3.91, 3.92 and 3.93 – Two Quitérias. The upper part of the body (head, arms and chest) and the lower part (waist, bottom and legs) are made of wood, connected by fabric, allowing for the movement of the waist. On the left side, Zé Lopes' figure, on the right, Zé da Burra's.

Sensual dancing puppets

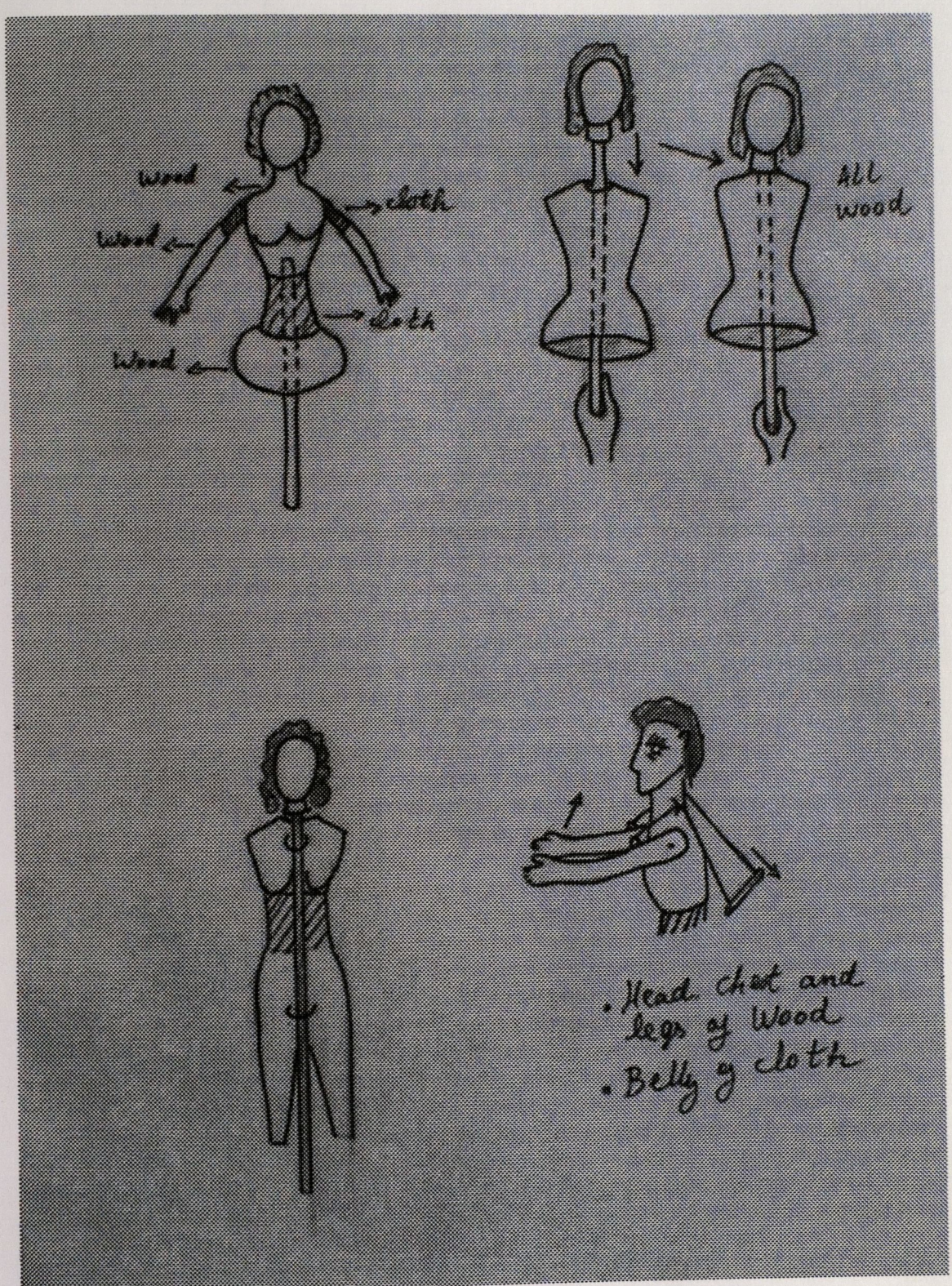


Diagram 2- Three different types of sensual dancing puppets.

Male Dancing Puppets



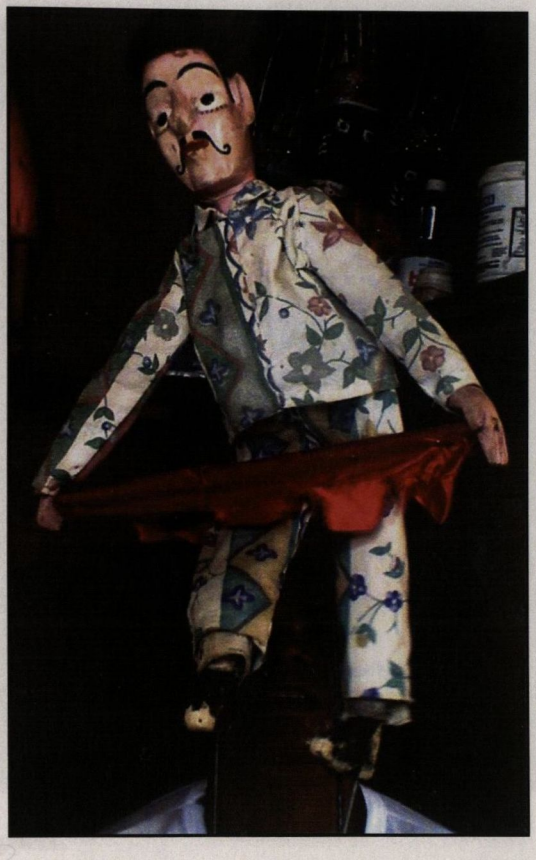




Fig. 3.94, 3.95, and 3.96. On the top left, *Vila Nova* (Zé de Vina). On the right, *Palhaço Belezinha* (João Galego). Below, *Caroquinha* (Bate Queixo).

Comic dancing puppets

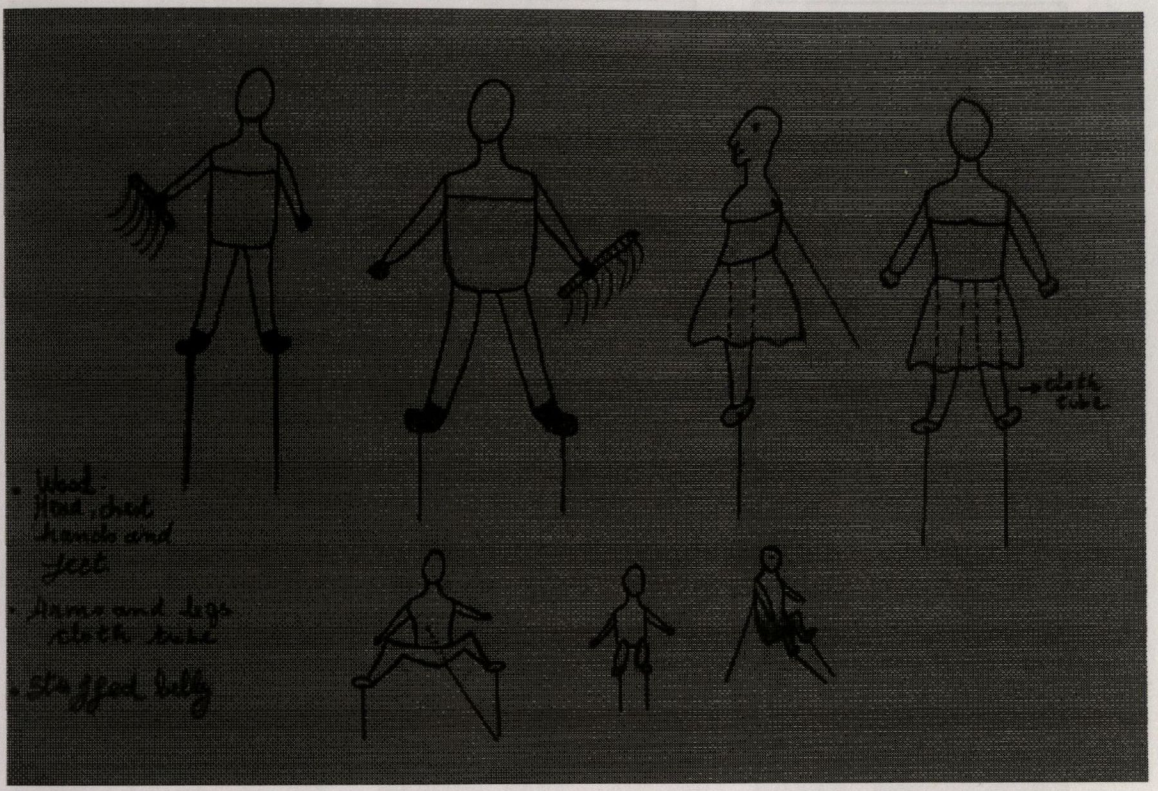


Diagram 3- Male and female comic dancing puppets.

Extending Neck Puppets



Figs. 3.97, 3.98 and 3.99 – Above, *Janeiro* (Luiz da Serra). Below, Zé Lopes with *Janeiro* and the Bird *Jacu*.

Figures Mounted in Rods and Made Entirely of Wood

Animals



Fig. 3.100 – "Animal" (Pedro Rosa)

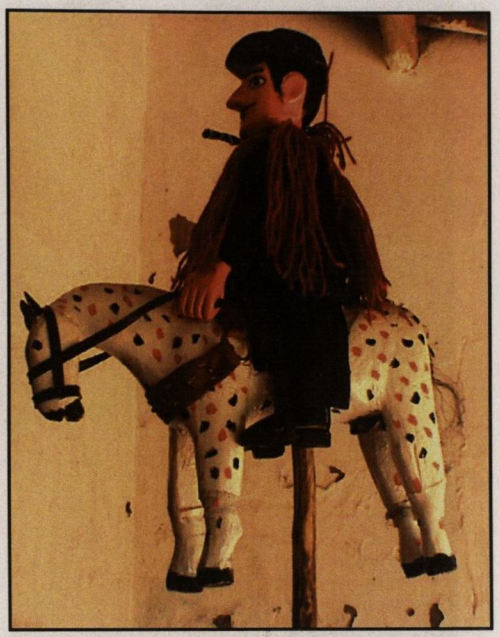


Fig. 3.101- *Cavaleiro* (Horse-man) Zé de Vina

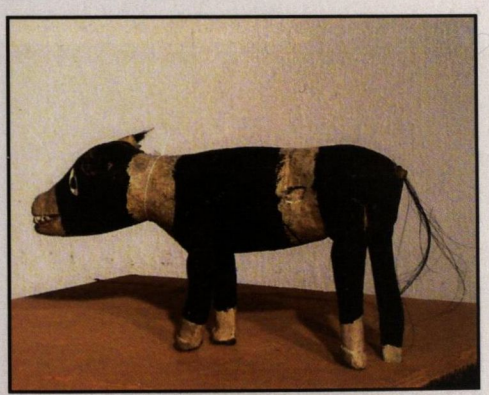


Fig. 3.102 - Dog (Pedro Rosa)



Fig. 3.103 – Goat (Severino Bilo)

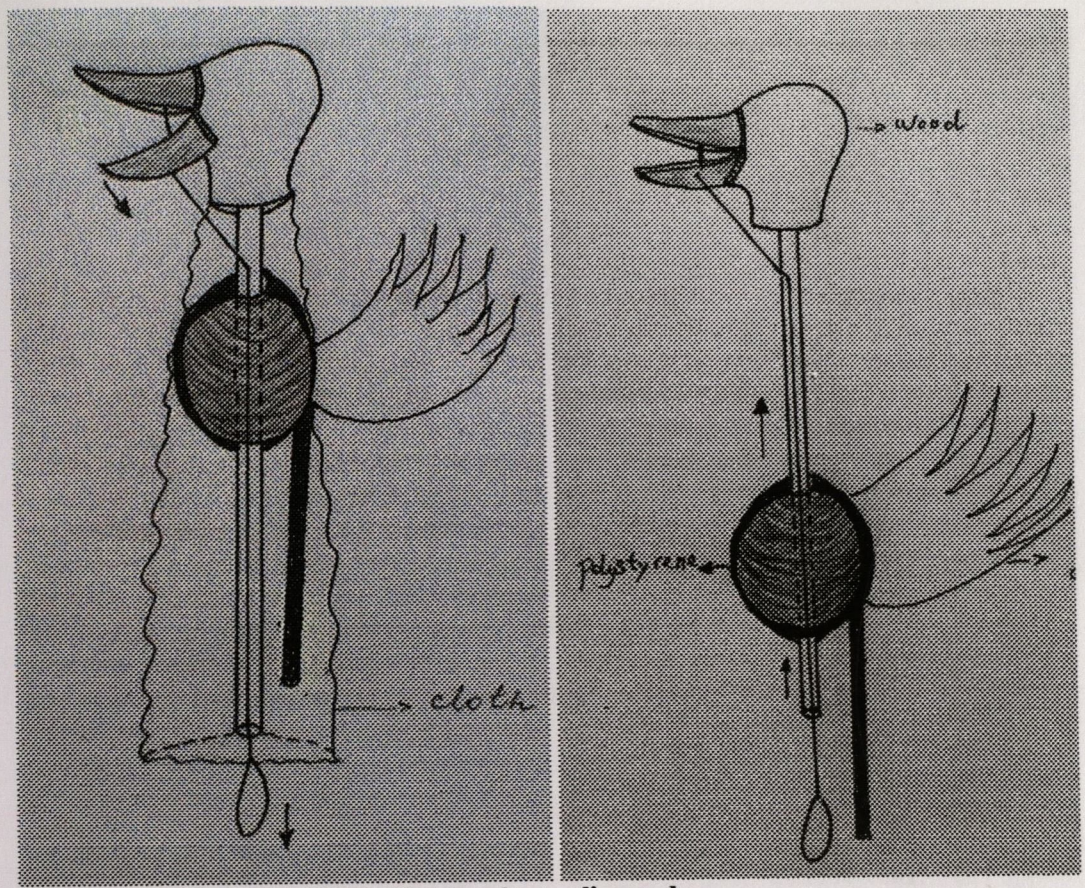


Diagram 4- Bird with articulated beak and extending neck.

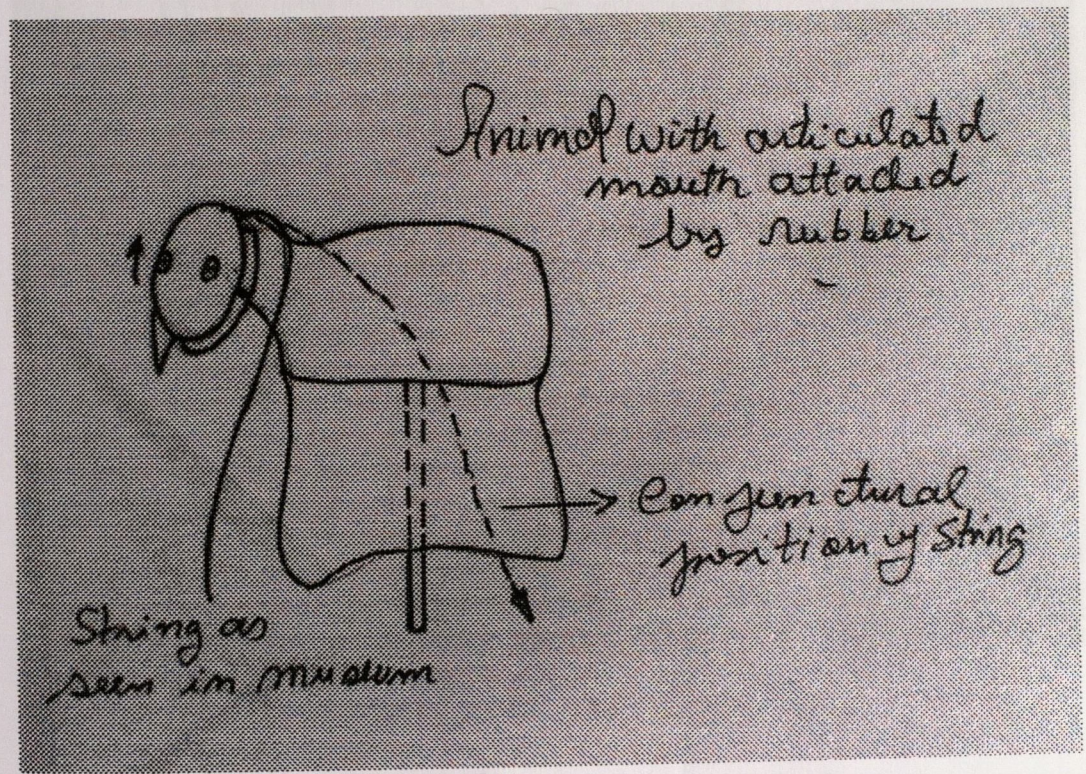
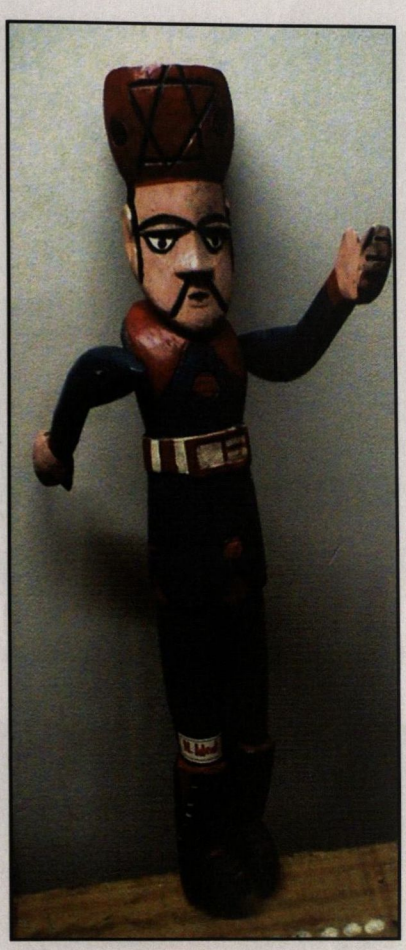


Diagram 5- Animal with articulated beak.



Diagram 6 – Some types of horse-men







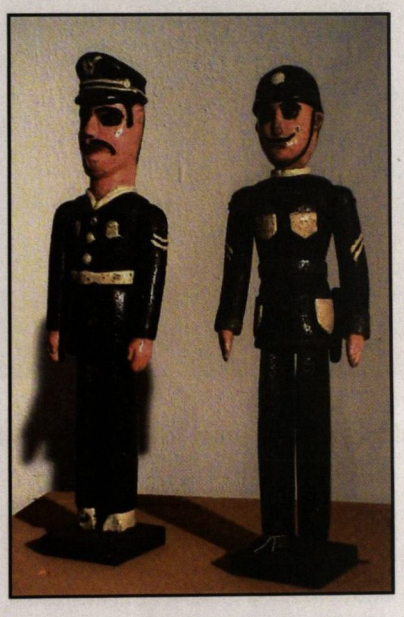


Fig. 3.104, 3.105. 3.106, and 3.107. On the left side, dressed puppets: above, Inspector *Peinha* (Pedro Rosa); below two "*Mané Pacarus*" (L. da Serra and Antonio Biló). On the right, figures entirely of wood: Above, no identified; below two policemen (Luiz da Serra).

Mechanical Puppets



Fig. 3.108 - *Trio de Forró* made by Miro appearing in João Galego/Marlene Silva' shows.



Fig. 3.109 - *Casa-de-farinha* depicting the fabrication of manioc flour (Sauba).

a heavier wooden base which moved in a groove under a stage floor Wires attached to small levers or handles then controlled the articulated limbs.[48]

As previously mentioned, by contrast with European puppet theatre, rod puppets appear frequently in some African puppet traditions.

Mechanical puppets

Mechanical puppets are a group of figures that make repetitive movements created by some mechanism. The simplest and most frequently used is the *Pisa-Pilão* (Grinding-the Pestle-Down), also called *Pisa-Milho* (Corn-Grinding). This is a pair of figures which moves their bodies backward and forward, allowing the arms to go up and down. Each figure is fixed in the extremity of a horizontal stick and has a 'pestle' fixed in the hands. By moving the horizontal stick to the right and left side, the puppeteer allows the pestle to go up and down as if grinding corn.

Another mechanical puppet more complex and less frequently used is the *Trio de Forró*. In the *Trio de Forró*, three figures with articulated arms appear playing a different musical instrument. The most common are the triangle, accordion and drum. The figures are fixed over a wooden box which has a hidden mechanism inside. By spinning a handle placed on one side of the box, the puppets' arms move up and down (triangle and drum) or to the right and to the left (accordion).

Casa-de-farinha is a much more complex set of mechanical puppets and can present diverse scenarios, the most common nowadays being the fabrication of manioc flour (*farinha)*, from where its name derived. Nevertheless, as demonstrated before, scenarios depicting the slaves' life in the context of the sugar-mill and Lampião's band's assault on a farm are also found.

Each figure has articulation in one or two parts of the body (e.g., arms, neck or waist) and is fixed in a wooden base. Wires and strings attached to small levers, handles and wooden wheels then control the articulated limbs. In the biggest *Casa-de-farinha*, the number of figures varies from 10 to 30. In this case, the puppets are fixed in a type of heavy wooden table measuring about 2 metres width, with a depth of 1 metre and about 20kg weight. The mechanism can either function manually or by an electrical source. The *Casa-de-farinha* appearing in Mamulengo performances is obviously much smaller and lighter.

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[48] McCormick and Pratasik , *Popular Puppets*, 143.

3 – Puppets: The Characters

The mamulengueiros of Zona da Mata generally have at least 30 puppets in order to present their shows. The figures represent humans, animals, and fantastic characters. The great majority of characters are stock type. As such, they synthesize the diverse types of personalities and social roles that express human dilemmas, at the same time they are closely connected to the region's history. They are formed by, and express, the historical context of their production.

In the human group, the characters are divided into two major groups: the representatives of high social position (the elite), and those of lower social position (the people). The elite representatives include the landowner (and his family); priests; soldiers; doctors; politicians; and so on. The people consist of workers, artists; vagabond, out-laws, and so forth. Apart from social rank, the characters are dived by race and age. Like the majority of puppet traditions, there are no children in Mamulengo, a fact that expresses the Mamulengo bond with the adult universe. On the other hand, an assortment of the elderly is observed. Luxurious widows and dirty minded aged males are one of the funniest characters. The racial types appearing in Mamulengo reflect the racial mixture of Brazilian society. Therefore the characters may be white, black, Indians, or mulattos.

The Mamulengo characters relate to the comic types present in the western dramatic tradition, including the types appearing in popular puppet theatre. Besides this, they are also linked to the stock types present in the traditional and popular dramatic expressions of Northeast Brazilian culture, what Ariano Suassuna calls "personagens do populário nordestino" (characters of the northeastern *popularío*[49]). The Mamulengo character of Simão, for example, can be compared to both the zanni of the Commedia dell'Arte, and to Mateus or Bastião (the two clown/cowboy figures) of Bumba-meu-Boi. Quitéria, can be related to both the popular female puppet characters, such as Madelon (Guignol) and Teresita (Pulcinella), and to the Pastorinhas (Little Shepherds) of the profane Pastoril. They bring with them in their configuration, human universal attributes synthesised into their local form.

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[49] In English language there is no corresponding word for the term "populário". We can approximate the meaning of the term by translating "populário" as "the characters that inhabit the Northeast people's imagination".

As stock characters, the Mamulengo puppets are designated according to the type of role they play and have a number of easily readable signifiers. Through the deployment of varying figurative codes, the characters are clearly distinguished. When brought to the stage, other codes are combined to form the character's typology and to build the scene. From certain attributes of the character represented,[50] movement and gesture, voice quality, inarticulate vocal sounds, music, and so on, are selected and combined depending on the complexity of the character and their role in the scene. The more complex the personage, the more codes are applied to form its typology.

As already briefly mentioned, and as shall be discussed in a more detailed manner, more important characters have specific music (baiano) and introductory rhyming speech (loa), which provide information about their actantial role in the Mamulengo. Characters often mention their own names when they begin to speak, and also often say what their main role in the play is. Moreover, they can be characterized by the phrases others pronounce when speaking of them. In addition, the characters' movement and gesture and their voice quality are fundamental elements in the composition of their typology. Some of the codes differ from those of daily life only in the reduction of the number of distinctive features.[51] Others, however, differ notably, owing to a particular choice of distinctive features, like the distortion of the voice quality of male elderly characters, or the limited mobility of the puppets made entirely of wood. Moreover, some codes are applied to just a few characters. The inarticulate vocal sound, which is essential for the animal and supernatural characters, has minor importance for the majority of human characters. Also, as previously discussed, the lighting effect is used only for the Devil character.

The majority of the Mamulengo characters have been passed down directly from one generation of puppeteer to another. Other characters, however, are creations of a particular artist. With regard to the traditional characters, some have maintained the same names, whilst other present variations in their naming, even if their attributes (psychological and physical), as well as their actantial role remain the same. One example of the former is Quitéria. In all areas of Pernambuco and in the shows of

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[50] Representation meaning that from an image's appearance, its behaviour or movements, or its speech, an audience can recognize and identify what or who is being represented. (Proschan, "The Semiotic study", 30).

[51] No representation can strive for total verisimilitude. Thus, in any representation there is necessarily a reduction in the number of elements which can be included in the portrayal. (Ibid)

diverse puppeteers from different epochs, the stock-character of the wife of the landowner almost always bears the same name and the same physical and psychological attributes.

Like Quitéria, the landowner appears in all shows, with almost the same attributes. Nevertheless, variation on his name is observed. The first reference to this character is in the puppet theatre of Dr. Babau, where he is called Capitão Raimundinho.[52] But, in the inland areas of Pernambuco state, the landowner character is mostly known as Capitão Mané Pacaru, or Capitão Mané de Almeida. In Zé Lopes's show, he is called Capitão Mané Paulo. As can be noted, the title "Capitão" (Captain) is the constant code conveyed by his name, and may be considered the most easily readable signifier related to the landowner's name.

Before proceeding on the description of the most popular characters of the Mamulengo of Zona da Mata, I shall address special attention to the female representation not only in Zona da Mata Mamulengo, but also, in the other Northeast puppet traditions.

3.1 - The Female Characters in the Northeast Puppet Theatre

Conservatism where gender is concerned is widespread in popular culture. The woman frequently appears as a villain, such as the shrew and the witch. In this case, she is represented as intensely active, whether she is seducing, scolding, or beating her husband.[53] She is also presented as causing bad weather, engaging in sex orgies with demons or talking with ghosts. Anecdotes about the malice of women and the preponderance of women among the accused at witch-trials is the best evidence of the capacity of popular traditions for misogyny. Nevertheless, women also appear as heroines, but the most popular heroines were represented as objects, admired not so much for what they did as for what they suffered.[54]

As a popular puppet theatre, the Mamulengo is filled with misogynous representations of women. Moreover, the role female characters acquire in Mamulengo is

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[52] As I mentioned before, Dr. Babau is the first documented puppeteer performing in the Recife from the end of nineteenth century until 1930s.

[53] See Barbara Badcock, *The Reversible World: symbolic inversion in art and society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978).

[54] Burke, *Popular Culture*, 164. Many examples can be taken from the legends of virgin martyrs of the Catholic Church, such as St Agatha, whose breasts were cut off, or St Catherina, who was broken on a wheel. (Ibid. 165)

also connected with the context of its production. It originated within Colonial Brazil's patriarchal system, and has been created, as far as research has shown, by men only,[55] thus, Mamulengo mostly express a masculine world. We can say that in most cases the puppeteer accedes to patriarchal values without questioning them. This is expressed both in the female characters' physical features and in their roles in the play.

The Female Characters' Physical Features

In João Redondo and Babau puppet theatres, and in the few Mamulengo groups,[56] most of the female characters are represented by puppets made out of cloth. The mamulengueiro José Petrolino Dutra explains the female puppets physical feature, saying that the cloth is the right material to represent women, "for this is their sense of beauty", confessing that "he holds the dolls only by their legs, being careful not to put his hands underneath their skirts."[57] Although the explanation given by the mamulengueiro is based on a poetic image, "for this is their sense of beauty", we can find others. I don't want to devalue this concept, but would like to unveil other characterisations, apprehend other meanings. These puppets don't move hands nor head separately, since their bodies are not articulated. In addition to this, they seldom show actions that represent their wishes or independent will. Their main role in the performance is to dance, being held by the waist by the male characters. This expresses, in itself, the patriarchal view of the women's characteristic of being dominated, conducted.

In contrast to João Redondo and Babau puppet theatres, Mamulengo of Zona da Mata, female characters are represented both by rod and glove puppets. Like the figures made out of cloth Female puppets mounted on one rod, do not have an active role either. These characters known as "Quitérias" appear mostly as beautiful and charming young ladies pertaining to the Captain's family. With the exception of *the character* of Quitéria (the Captain's wife), these puppets are designated mainly to dance. As in Mamulengo, female rod puppets appear in some European puppet traditions with similar visual attributes, such as Pulcinella's lady-love (Teresita) and the beautiful female characters of Northern Italian puppet theatre. As Pasqualino notes

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[55] However, as already mentioned, there is a version of it which has being derived from a performance by a woman slave.

[56] One example is the Mamulengo of Dengoso, from Recife. As informed by Patricia Angélica, all female characters are represented by dolls made of cloth. (Dutra, "Trajetórias de Criação", 96).

[57] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 148.

"the desirable beauties, the charmers, and princesses are stick marionettes (sic), while the witches are glove puppets."[58] Another rod puppet with a similar body structure as the "Quitérias" is Chica do Cuscuz. But instead of being a 'beautiful lady ready to dance", she is a 'hard' worker, a cuscuz-maker. As such, instead of being white, she is a black character[59] and often wears a torn dress.

In Mamulengo, female glove puppets are quite common, and unlike the rod figures, they are seldom attractive. Female glove puppets appear both as old women (mostly as widows), and as women of the people. The latter are often married and are frequently engaged in arguments with their partners: one example is Praxédio's wife. These characters are close to the female partners of the European street puppet's heroes. Like Judy (Punch), Madelon (Guignol), and Katrijn (Jan Klaassen), the Mamulengo female glove characters are "women of the people and capable of giving as good as they get."[60] The old women can also be related to the character of Judy. Similar to Judy, who is engaged in a stick-fight with Punch, in some scenes the Widow avenges her husband's murder by fighting and killing.[61]

The Female Characters' Roles

Unlike the male characters, the females neither have a profession, nor a fixed name. In Zona da Mata Mamulengo, Chica do Cuscuz is the only one whose role is related to trade, and only Quitéria and Chica do Cuscuz maintains the same name in the Mamulengo of almost all puppeteers.[62] Without both a profession (e.g., doctor, inspector, priest) and/or a stock name, the women's role are mostly defined by their relation to men. This can be seen, for example, in Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes' scenes of "Praxédio" and "Zangô". While the male characters appear with the same names, the females characters appearing in these two scenes change names. In Zé Lopes' show

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[58] Pasqualino, "Marionette and Glove Puppet", 268.

59 In the Museu do Mamulengo, there is a cuscus-maker who is white. However, it seems to be an exception, since all the others present in the collections and in the puppet shows I attended are black.

[60] McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppet*, 111.

[61] One such example is the scene of "Goiaba, Carolina and Gangrena". In some variants the widow fights and kills two black fighters. The widow may be also engaged in a stick-fight with Inspector Peinha, one of the policemen.

[62] The couscous -maker may also appear with the name of Chica-da-Fuba that has the same meaning of Chica-do-Cuscuz, since both names are directly linked with Chica's trade.

Praxédio's wife is called Xoxa, while in Zé de Vina's she is known as Ritinha. Zé de Vina uses the same name "Ritinha" for Zangô's mother,[63] while in Zé Lopes she appears as Fulo-do-Mundo. As can be seen, who they are (wife and mother) is what defines their roles. The passage of the play *Nem Solteira, nem Casada, nem Viuva* is very representative of what being a woman meant in the Mamulengo context:

> Chief of police – Hey, Ms. Rosita!
>
> Rosita – Yes, Mister.
>
> Chief – Tell me something, girl, are you married?
>
> Rosita – No, I'm not.
>
> Chief – Are you engaged?
>
> Rosita – No, I'm not.
>
> Chief – Are you a widow?
>
> Rosita – No, I'm not.
>
> Chief – Do you have a father?
>
> Rosita – Yes.
>
> Chief – What's his name?
>
> Rosita – My father is Colonel João Redondo.
>
> Chief – Tell me something. Where's he?
>
> Rosita – At home.
>
> Chief – Is he? Tell 'im I want to talk to him. How come he has a daughter that is not married, not engaged nor a widow. Then you are nothing! What the hell are you?
>
> Rosita – I'm a woman.
>
> Chief – A woman, how? How come you are a woman?
>
> Rosita – Because I'm not married, not engaged nor a widow. I'm a woman.
>
> Chief – Oh, then I don't get it. (. . .)"[64]

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[63] Alcure notes the same confusion with Zangô's mother's name in Zé de Vinas' show. (Alcure, "Mamulengos", 193).

[64] *Revista Mamulengo*, 01 (1973), 40. There is no information about the puppeteer.

It is evident, from this passage, that women only have an identity when related to men. However, Rosita's final answer is plenty of irony, which expresses the ambiguity characteristic of carnivalesque genre.[65]

In the Mamulengo plays, the female characters appear mostly as three stock types: the single young lady, the married woman and the old widow.

The single young lady

This character is usually introduced as the landowner and Quitéria's daughter (s), who always finds a way of escaping from her parent's surveillance, mainly to go to parties. She takes advantage of these occasions to seduce men (and be seduced by them), through the dance. Here we can establish a relation between this character and the image of Eve: young, single, sly, and therefore, dangerous. In Manuel Amendoim's play, As Trapaças de Benedito, Chiquinha, the single daughter of Balula (the landowner)66 and Quitéria, goes to a party without her parent's permission:

> Zé das Moças[67] – [entering] It's today. I'll dance with every woman in the ball.
>
> [Music starts to play. Zé das Moças grabs Chiquinha by force and dances with her.]
>
> Someone from the audience – Leave the girl, Zé! (. . .)
>
> Chiquinha – [screaming] Oouchhhh!
>
> [Enters Quitéria, Chiquinha's mother.]
>
> Quitéria- [screaming] Chiquinha, Chiquinha!
>
> Chiquinha – [screaming] Oouchhhh!
>
> [Enters Balula, Chiquinhas's father]
>
> Balula - Oh, what a pain! Didn't I tell you not to come here? You randy woman! Now, is that enough to you?
>
> [Balula fights Zé das Moças, but he is knocked down by Zé da Moças, who grasps Chiquinha again].

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[65] See discussion on Chapter IV.

[66] This is one rare case in which the landowner character does not receive the title of "captain" or "colonel", but is simply named "Balula".

[67] Zé das Moças (Zé of the Ladies) is an amorous and tough guy, who fights over the colonel's daughter with the hero Benedito.

Chiquinha – [screaming] Oouchhhh!

Quitéria – Enough! Help our daughter, Balula! (. . .) Let's take the girl, who's about to give herself to that man! [68]

The scene continues with Balula trying to take his daughter out of Zé das Moças' arms. Finally he succeeds and they leave the stage. Beyond the onomatopoeic "Oouchhhh!", Chiquinha has no speech in the whole scene. The characteristic of single young women is that they utter only a few words. Another aspect appearing in the scene is Chiquinhas' parents concern about her virginity.[69]

The married woman

The change in the "status quo" of the married women is evident. While the single young women only speak a few monosyllables and a few words, it is given to the married woman the "right" to intervene in the scenes, expressing points. As mentioned above, the married woman often appears as woman of the people, and constantly engaged in quarrels with their partners. The squabble mostly orbits around the couple's double infidelity, with an emphasis on the woman betrayal. The only married woman ascribed to a higher social position is Quitéria. Even though in another class, nonetheless Quitéria, like the other married women, always finds herself a way of escaping from her husband's vigilance, looking for pleasure through dance and sensual acts with other men. One such example is her role in the scene *Simão, Mané Pacaru and Quitéria*, in which she dances with Simão in a very salacious way, resembling a sexual intercourse.

The old woman

Although we find representations of old women as having super-natural qualities, and as *carpideiras*[70] it is more common to see them connected to lust and insatiability. This character is usually shown as a lascivious widow, always looking for another

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[68] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 123-145.

[69] As mentioned before, in Colonial Brazil, the State, the Church and the families have serious concerns about the awakening of female sexuality in a context where honour, together with the dowry, was the attribute that best qualified the young girl for marriage.

[70] *Carpideiras* were women specialised in crying and laments on the burials. In the north east region, they were very common, and their presence was an important symbol of the dead' status. In Mamulengo these characters appeared in burial scenes. Nowadays, it seems they have disappeared from the plays.

husband who can satisfy her sexual desires. As with single women, the absence of a man "to protect and control", the old lady assume a dangerous, and at the same time ridiculous, image. In the *Little Widow* scene of João Galego/Marlene Silva show, the widow, after the death of her 26th husband, looks for another husband among the male spectators. As can be observed, she offers herself as merchandise:

> Little Widow - I am widow again, and I am a single widow. What am I going to do about my fate? Man nowadays is so rare! Oh, what am I going to do with my life? (To the male audience) Hey, Chico, do you want me?
>
> Man 1 [joking] – Listen, Chico! She's talking to you!
>
> Chico - I don't want you!
>
> Man 2- Who would want a silly amorous old woman like you! Go home, you ugly old woman, nobody wants you here!
>
> Little Widow- Hey Mario, now that I am old you say this, eh? But you have already touched my breasts many times! Listen to me, mister, he touched my breasts so much and in such a way that he didn't let me sleep! Hey, Zé, do you want me? You, Chico, do you want me?[71]

Sometimes the widow even uses the Devil to have her desires satisfied. In the play *As Aventuras de uma Viúva Alucinada* (The Adventures of a Crazy Widow), of Ginu, the old lady devastated by her husband's death, looks for a partner for a dance. After exhausting two men who had danced with her, she says: "Today I'll dance even with Satan himself!" The passage below is transcribed from a part of the play in which the widow talks to Satan:

> Satan – [off] Anybody home?
>
> Widow – Who's there?
>
> Satan - [off] It's me! Brr!
>
> Widow – Come in. Come and dance.
>
> Narrator – It is when Satan hears the widow's voice always calling his name (. . .)

---

[71] Scene transcribed from the show performed in Carpina on 09 February 2004. Another fine example of an old-woman's sexual voracity is in the Zangô, Ritinha and Mr. Angu scene. See transcription in Appendix I.

(Satan, disguised in human form, enters and dances with the widow. The widow's son, noticing that his mother dances with the Devil, tries to warn her).

Son – Mother, this is the Devil!

Widow – What, boy? This man is a respectable citizen!

Son –This is the Devil, look to his horns! (. . .)

Satan – Now it's too late. Didn't you say you danced even with the Devil? (. . .) Now go to hell.

Son – See, mom? Because of you we'll be damned!

Widow – Shut up, boy! Don't they say women fool even the devil?[72]

The old woman also appears, as having super-natural qualities. Take, for example, the character Estreita (in Zé de Vina) and Xoxa (in Zé Lopes), who dominates the snake;[73] and the *mãe-de santo*, who exorcises the spirits. We can relate this character to the witches that have been in the collective imaginary for ages.

As can be noted, apart from the women with supernatural qualities, the characteristics of lust and insatiability are on the basis of the three stock representations of women. These help us to understand a little more about the historical profile of women and about the constitution and dissemination of the concept of gender in popular culture, and in the Brazilian society. As Mary Del Priore comments "women are still stigmatised for being labelled insatiable. Their sexuality resembles a whirlwind that sucks men's desires and weaknesses."[74]

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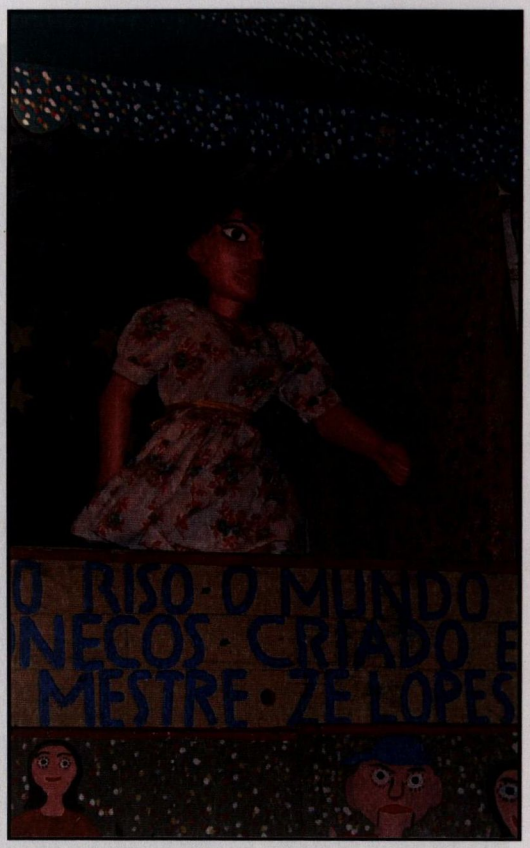
[72] Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 105-116.

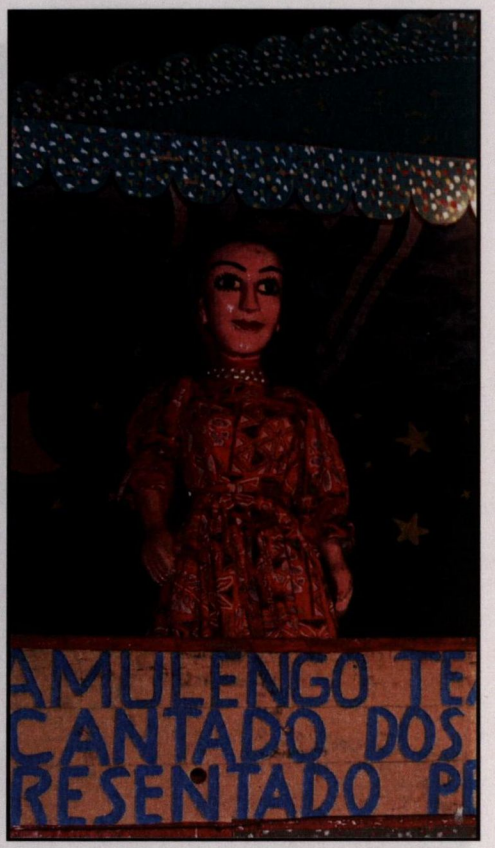
73 Again we observe the change in the female characters names. In this scene Estreita (or Xoxa) appears taming a snake. Zé Lopes explanation for this scene is that "it was created by an old puppeteer from this region [Glória de Goitá, Zona da Mata Pernambuco] as homage to an old woman, a famous midwife and witch, whose house was inhabited by lots of snakes and frogs. People said she dominated all of them". (Zé Lopes, interview, Glória de Goitá, Pernambuco, 14 February 2004). As we can observe from Zé Lopes' recount, the plot of the Mamulengo is being woven through the imagination of the puppeteer themselves, who look for explanations for the roots of their art. Once again, women appear as having super-natural qualities.

[74] Mary Del Priore, *Ao Sul do Corpo* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olimpyo, 1997), 35.

The Female Characters

The single ladies





Figs. 3.110 and 3.111 - Carolina and Colotilde are the daughters of Mané Pacaru and Quitéria. From Zé Lopes' show.

Quitéria

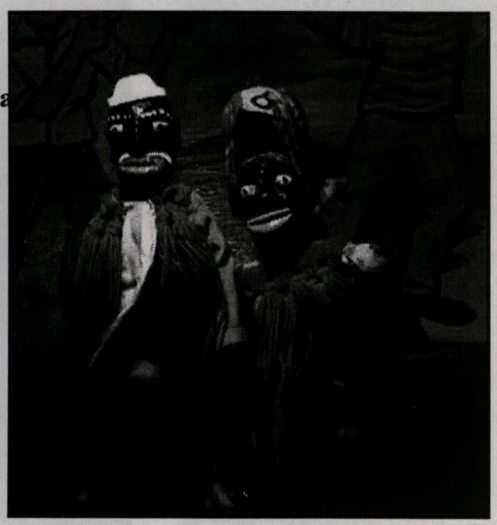


Figs. 3.112, 3.113 and 3.114 – From left to right, Quitérias of Zé Lopes, João Galego and Zé de Vina.

"Good evening! I am greeting all because this is my duty! Here comes Quitéria greeting everybody in this street and in this city; greeting our friends and all the public present."

Quitéria is the charming wife of the landowner. As such, she is represented as a dancing rod puppet wearing a nice, colourful dress, jewellery and a head ornament. She is a strong and independent woman, who likes dancing and drinking.





Figs. 3.115 and 3.116 – Caroca and Catirina. In Zé Lopes' show (left) the couple is portrayed as rural workers. Catirina's white baby indicates her betrayal, once her husband Caroca is black. In Zé de Vina's Mamulengo (right) the coupe is dressed with colorful costumes.





Figs. 3.117 and 3.118 - Xoxa and Praxédio. In Zé Lopes' show, Praxédio bends his head, ready to get Xoxa' slap.



Fig. 3.119 - Eve and Adam. In João Galego/Marlene Silva' show, the couple are portrayed as rural workers. While Adam ploughs the land, Eve sings and dances.[1].

The elderly female

Viuvinha (The Little Widow)




Figs. 3.120- 3.121 - While the Little Widow is carrying the coffin, her *baiano* is heard: "Oh Little Widow, Little Widow, put the scarf around your neck. Go and cry for your husband, because he died of heartbreak." From João Galego/Marlene Silva' show.

The Little Widow is always marrying and burying her husbands. After the death of her 26th husband, she is still looking for a new husband among the male spectators. This character does not have a proper name, but only a designation: "Widow".

Estreita





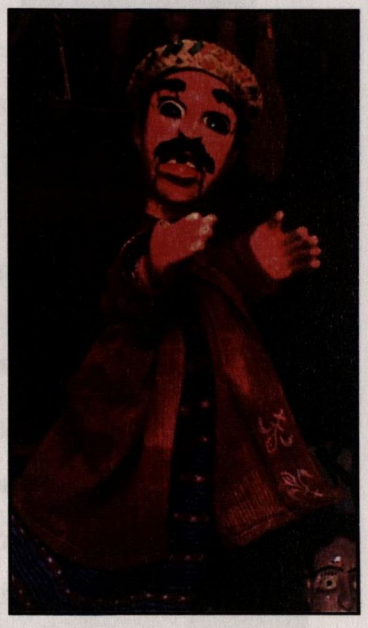
Figs. 3.122-24 – Sequence of Estreita and the snake Xibana scene in Zé Lopes' show. As can be seen, the snake resembles a crocodile, which may be another indication of the link of this scene with the one appearing in the traditional European glove-puppet.

Estreita, an old woman tames the snake Xibana. She places her head inside the snake's open jaw, makes signals with her hands and the snakes obey; and finally, the snakes follow her off the stage. She also appears in another scene with the miraculous Bird who lays an enormous egg. This character may be connected with the witch.

The Male Characters

The majority of the characters appearing in Mamulengo are male characters. Unlike the females that are represented as a general type (Quitéria seems to be the only exception) males are often represented as specific, more individualized





Figs. 3.125-27 - From left to right, Simão of Zé de Vina, Zé Lopes and João Galego.

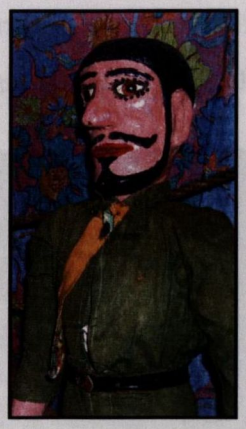
characters, even if they can be placed within general categories. In this way, the most important characters present well defined psychological and physical attributes and fixed names, even if some changes are observed throughout time.

Simão

> "Here has arrived Simão Countess Lime Glove Bough/ Stem Flower Albuquerque *Pejê* Yoke/ and Timber Sugar Loaf."

Simão is the employee of the landowner's farm. He is the clever and lazy servant who is always betraying his master through his trickeries, including his conquest of his mistress Quitéria. Simão is always represented as a big, white, glove puppet with an articulated jaw, eyes and tongue, and wearing a hat.

Captain Mané Pacaru


Figs. 3.128-30 – From left to right, João Galego's, Zé Lopes' and Zé de Vina's puppets.

He is the landowner, the representative of the economic power. He is always white; well dressed; has a strong and bass voice; moves in a rigid manner; and is the main representative of the dominant class. Nevertheless, the Captain sometimes appears as a weak and pathetic character, for example when he cries and moans after his wife, Quitéria, expels him from home.



Fig. 3.131 - From left to right: Frescal (the tax collector), Inspector Peinha, Cabo 70 and Sergeant in Zé Lopes' show.

The Policemen

They are responsible for law and order and are always trying to arrest drunken, murders and showmen performing without permission. Although he does not have a military rank, Inspector Peinha is the commander of the police force and is always accompanied by Cabo 70 (Corporal 70) and the Sergeant.

Inspector Peinha appears as a ridiculous character and is portrayed as a white man with a protuberant belly. The Sergeant seldom speaks and is constantly humiliated by the Inspector. Cabo 70 is a very popular and traditional figure, appearing in the Mamulengo of diverse puppeteers. Originally he was portrayed as a brave policemen but nowadays he has turned into a more ridiculous and comic character. He always appears as a black character; blind in one eye; and dressed in a military uniform.

Black Fighters



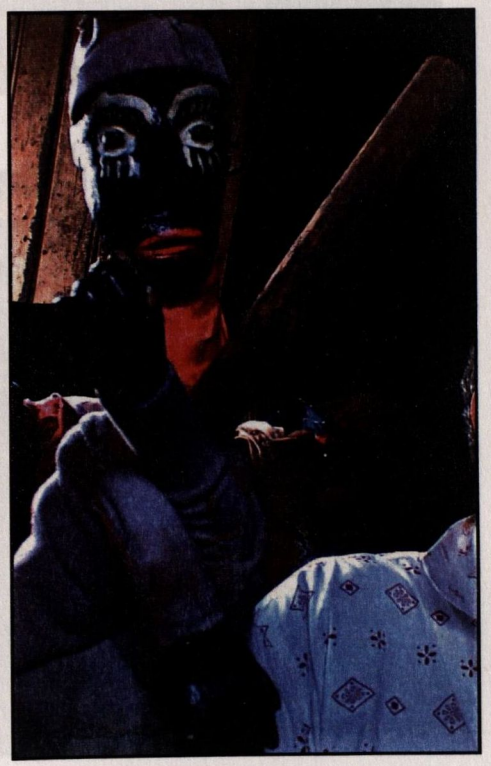
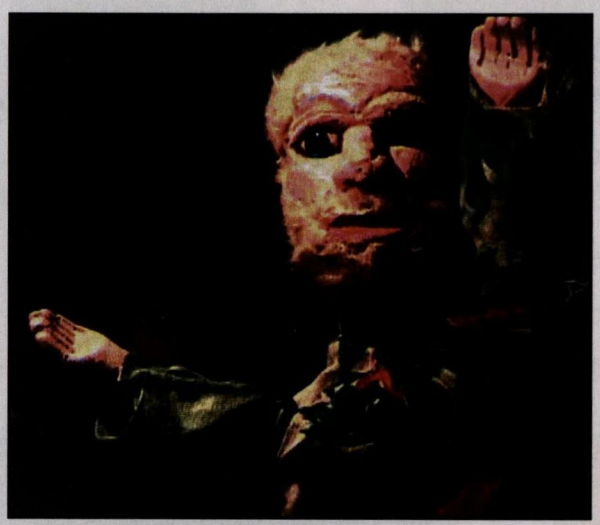


Fig. 3.132- 3 – "I'm Joaquim Bozo, who lives in a deep gutter/ a head breaker and back buster."

This is a group of black puppets that, for different reasons, appear in the show to argue and fight. They fight among themselves and against the elderly males. These characters appear with diverse names that can change from region to region, and even, from one puppeteer to another within the same region. But among this generic identification three appear as more individualized characters, they are: Joaquim Bozó, Limoeiro and Goiaba.

Elderly Males

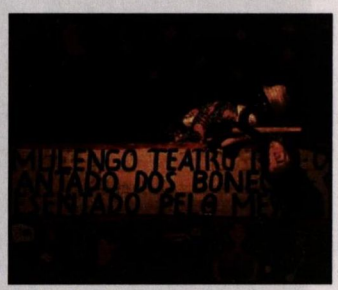


Like the black-fighter, the elderly males appear as a group. They are dirty-minded and racists, and are always making obscene and racially aggressive jokes. They hate blacks and are frequently engaged in fights against the black-fighters. The most popular characters of this group are João Redondo da Alemanha and Gangrena.

Fig. 3.134- Gangrena (Zé Lopes)







Figs. 3.136-8 – Sequence of a fight between Goiaba and Gangrena. From Zé Lopes' show.

Doctor Rodolera Pinta Cega and the Sick-Man





Figs. 3.139-140 – The Doctor and the Sick-man. In Zé Lopes'show, after the application of an injection, a worm comes out of the Sick- man's mouth. On the right, Zé de Vina'scene.

"I am Doctor Rodolera Pinta Cega Filho de Amansa Boi, where I touch with my finger the vulture puts its beak."

The doctor is a charlatan, who loves giving injections, no matter what the illness may be. The stock type of the doctor appears in many popular dramatic traditions, such as the Commedia dell'Arte and in Moliére's comedies. A Brazilian version of this stock character is also found in the comedies of Martins Penna and Ariano Suassuna, two popular Brazilian playwrights.

Zangô





Fig. 3.141 – Zangô of Zé Lopes.

Fig. 3.142 – Zangô of Zé de Vina.

Zangô is an amoral, tough guy who travels around the world doing illicit things. His bad behaviour may be the cause of his mother's death, which he does not regret. The stock

type of "the bad son" appears in almost all Mamulengo shows. Generally, the harm is directed towards the mother and is often punished by the death of Zangô.

Fantastic Characters

By contrasting the variety of fantastic characters in the *Museu do Mamulengo* and *Museu do Homem* collections, with the only two appearing in the shows – the Devil and Death – we can surmise that there has been a significant reduction in the fantastic characters' function in the shows. This may reflect the changes operating on the Northeast people's imagination, with the mythological stories, and belief loosing significance at the present time.

The Devil and Death



Fig. 3.143 – Devil of Zé de Vina

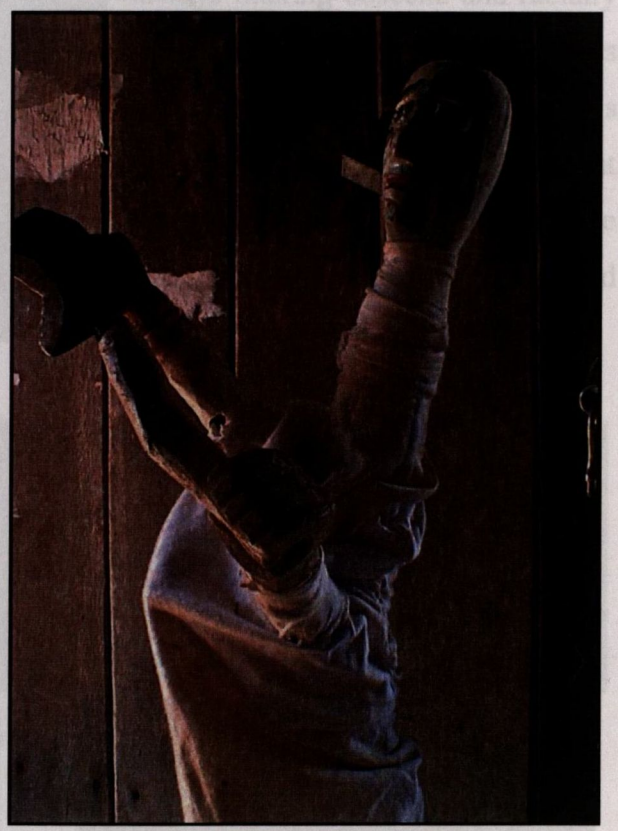


Fig.3.144 – Death of João Galego.

The Devil does not have a specific scene, but appears on different occasions to carry the sinful to hell, such as lascivious women and ungrateful sons. While the devil is portrayed as a playful character, death is a hieratic figure. The character's long arms and slow movement combined with a high-pitched crescendo sound makes the audience shiver.

These characters came, without doubt, from the European tradition, such the Medieval Morality plays and the Iberian Peninsula *Autos*. They are also present in almost all traditional European glove-puppet shows. The Devil also appears in European Marionette companies.

The Animals

The animal characters never speak and the most common appearing in the shows are the snake, birds and pigs. The ox, donkeys and horses appear in the passages coming from the *folguedos*, and most of the time, are used to enrich the scenes with their figures and movements.

3.3 - The Characters' Figurative Codes

The figurative codes are the physiognomic features, costumes (styles and colours), accessories and props employed by the puppeteer, or puppet-maker allowing for the easy identification of the character represented by the puppet figure. The figurative codes have two degrees of identification: generic and individual.[75] On the generic plane, the faces of the human characters allow for recognition of race, sex and age. Clothing facilitates recognition of sex and class. Above this general plane details are added to form individual characters.

Race is identified by the colour of the face and hands (glove puppets) or face and body (rod puppets). Generally speaking, African descendants, or "black-people", are black, dark brown or dark purple. The latter two are identified as mulatto (a mixture of white and black). European descendants, or "white people", are generally pink, but also white or beige, while Indians are brown, orange or purple.

The landowner and his family (his wife, daughter, mother, etc) are always white.[76] The majority of doctors and elderly male characters are also white. Priests are mostly white, but can also be mulatto. Policemen are either white or black. Black-fighters are obviously black. The only Indian group are the Caboclinhos (male Indians) and Caboclas (female Indians). The other characters appear in one of these racial groups. The relation between the characters' races (or the colour of their skin)

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[75] Pasqualino, "Marionette and Glove Puppet", 245.

[76] Here I am using the words "white" and "black" to designate race, and not necessarily the color of the figure. As I outlined in the above paragraph, the diverse races may be depict with a distinct range of colour.

and their position in the social strata once more demonstrates the close connection of the Mamulengo and its context.

Males are usually distinguished by a moustache, side-whiskers and/or beard. Elderly men always have a pronounced beard, often white or grey, mostly made out of animal skin, which sometimes covers almost the whole face. The hat also is a notable prop of male characters. Females are mostly characterised by long hair or by a scarf tied on the head. Young women, who are generally rod puppets, have smooth and beautiful faces, while the elderly, who are generally glove puppets, have coarse, with irregular features.

Clothing permits recognition of sex and class. The only instance in which clothing permits recognition of race are the Indians Caboclinhos, since their head ornaments (*cocá*) and the painting in their faces appear as distinguishing elements. Gender distinction is mostly perceived in the rod puppets. Female characters use colourful dress and males use pants and shirts usually in plain colours. In the case of glove puppets, due to the restricted view one has of the lower part of the figures, distinguishing clothing of male and female characters is not so clear, though a waistcoat and tie are often used to distinguished male characters.

Female figures representing the upper class (the family of the landowner) wear nice, colourful dresses, jewellery and head ornaments. Female representative of the people use simple and sometimes torn dresses and no ornamentation. The only exception is Zé de Vina's Chica-do-Cuscuz that has head ornaments. As for the male characters, clothing is not a remarkable feature for class distinction.

The other characters are often identified by their costumes and props, enabling one to tell the difference between a doctor, a policeman, a priest, a cowboy, and the many other types of workers. Doctors can be distinguished by the white waistcoat and cap decorated with a red cross, and by the use of a stethoscope. Priests are dressed in purple or black sacramental cloth. Policemen can be distinguished by the characteristics of their uniforms, especially by their headgear, but also by their clubs or guns. Cowboys appear with a leather waistcoat and a particular hat.

Props allow for recognition of workers (male and female), acting as an important sign to indicate their profession. Cuscus-makers have sieves; traders have boards carried on their heads; farm-workers have hoes, axes and carry firewood on their heads.

Devils have coarse faces and horns, appearing painted and dressed in either red or black or both colours. In certain cases their costumes include a piece of fur, and some evoke cult figures. Death always has a white face, often with a skeleton physiognomy and

is dressed in a long, white or black tunic. The other supernatural characters may be distinguished by their coarse, sometimes frightening, faces. The most common features include the following: figures with two or three faces; figures with one side of the face showing a gentle expression and the other side a cruel expression; figures with just one eye placed in the middle of the forehead; big and pronounced teeth mostly used for the vampire characters; pronounced teeth and long ears mostly used for the papa-figo (liver-eater) character. The clothing of the supernatural characters is distinguishable by colours. The most commonly used colours are purple, black, red and white.

The figurative codes appearing in the representation of animal characters are determined by the basic material used in the construction of the puppets' body structure. The puppets with their entire body carved out of wood are very close to the 'real' figures they represent. Obviously leaving aside the aspect of the puppets' size, we can say that they are lifelike figures with the puppet-makers deploying as many codes as possible to imitate the live figure. In the case of some oxen figures, for example, apart from the animal's most evident physiognomic elements, such as its facial features, horns, ears, hooves, tail, and so on, even the sexual parts are represented. Horses, dogs, pigs, snakes, and so on, are distinguished from each other by the features of their bodies and faces, including the colour of their skin.

In the case of animal figures made out of a mixture of wood and other materials, such as cloth or animal skins, the figurative codes applied to distinguish the various animals are mostly based on the animal's essential features. Birds have a beak and wings; horses have ears, a mane and a tail; oxen have ears, horns and a tail, snakes have a long body and articulated jaw, and so on.

Figurative codes also permit recognition of individual characters. Quitéria is always represented as a dancing rod puppet wearing a nice, colourful dress, jewellery and a head ornament (sometimes a tiara, sometimes lace). However, as mentioned above, other puppet dancers, appearing either as Quitéria's daughters or sisters, have the same visual typology as Quitéria. Their distinctions are made by a combination of the various codes of speech and movement. Hence, Quitéria is distinguished from her daughters or sisters by her speech, or by other characters' speech when referring to her, and by her typical movements and gestures. The combination of these codes determines Quitéria's role in the scenes in which she may appear.

The Workers – Props allow for the recognition of workers



Fig. 3.145 –Dona Conceição (João Nazaro)



Fig. 3.146- Chica-da Fuba (Luiz da Serra)

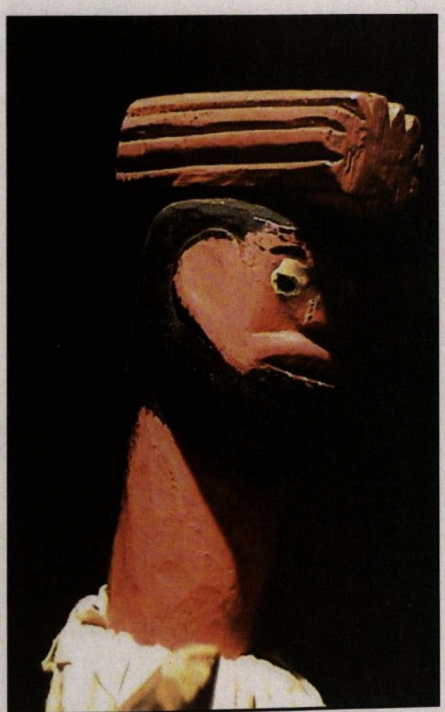

Fig. 3.147 – Woodcutter (José Justino)

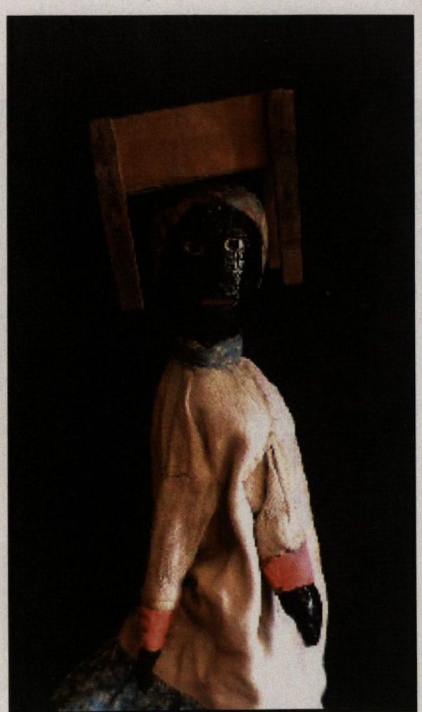

Fig. 3.148 – Tapioca maker (L. da Serra)

Other Fantastic Characters

Vampires



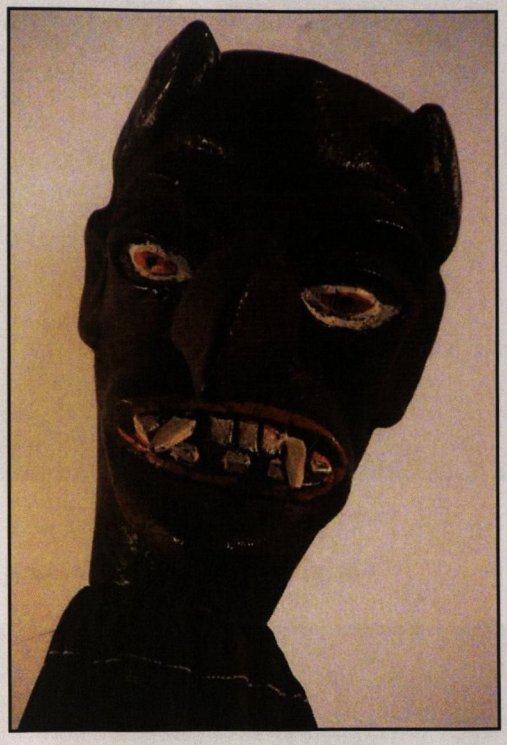

Fig. 3.149 and 3.150 – Vampire (Zé Lopes)





Fig. 3.151 and 3.152 – Vampire (n. id.).

Three Faces

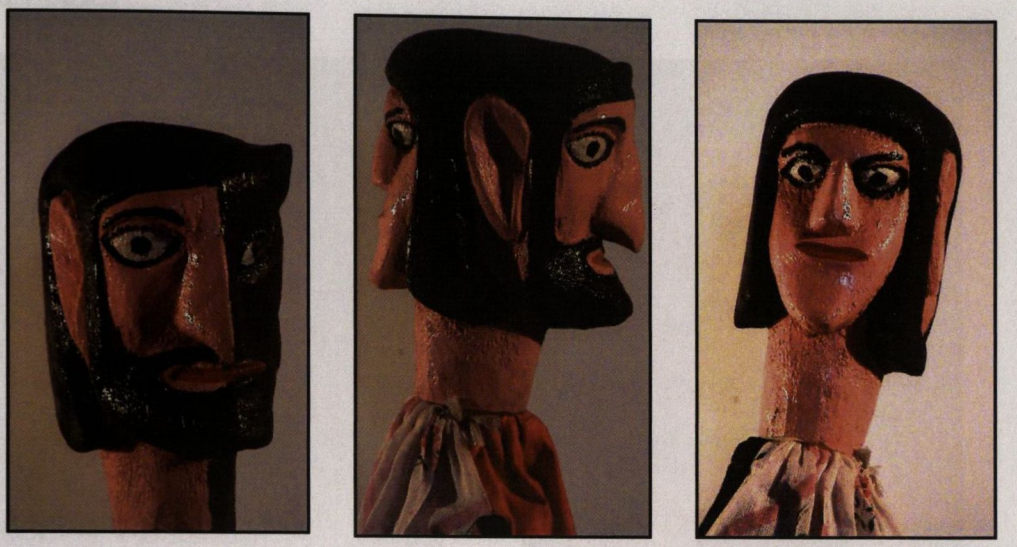

Fig. 3.153, 3.154 and 3.155 – The faces: a woman, a man and a devil (n. id.)



Fig. 3.156 and 3.157 – Devil of Three face (n. id.)

The Contrast: elderly and young characters

Old women



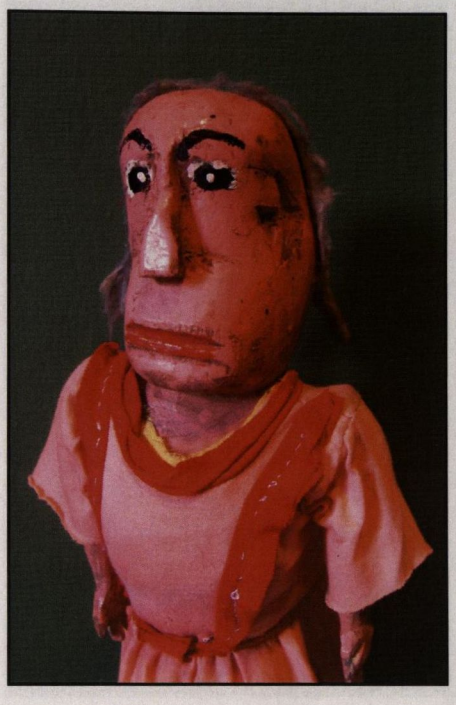

Fig. 1.158- Dona Quiquita (Maximiniano Dantas) **Fig. 1.159 – Dona Rosa (P. Rosa)**

Young Women

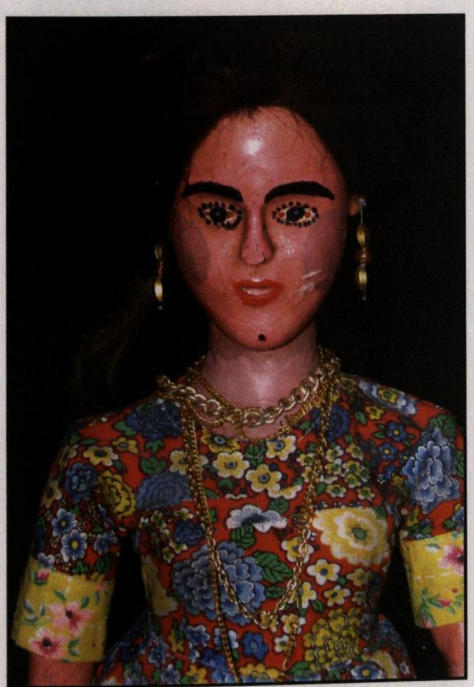



Fig. 1.160 – Danceira (Dancer) Luiz da Serra. **Fig. 1.161 – Colantina (Luiz da Serra)**

Old Men

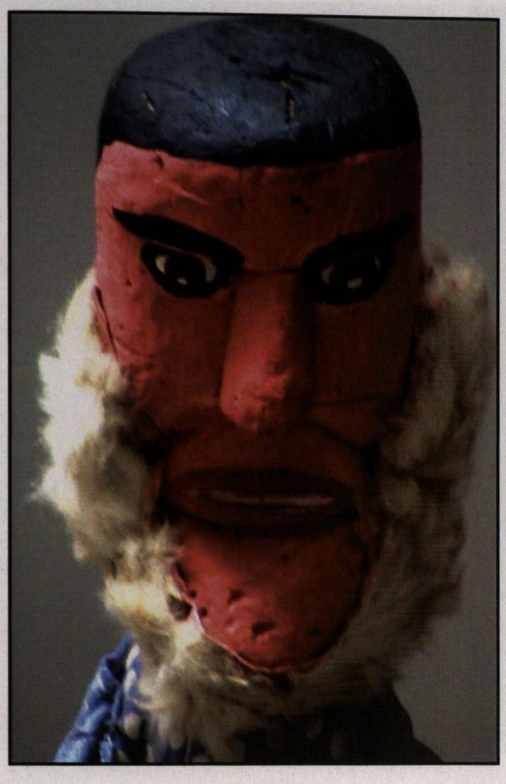

Fig. 1.162 – Zé da Burra



Fig. 1.163 – Zé da Burra

Young Men

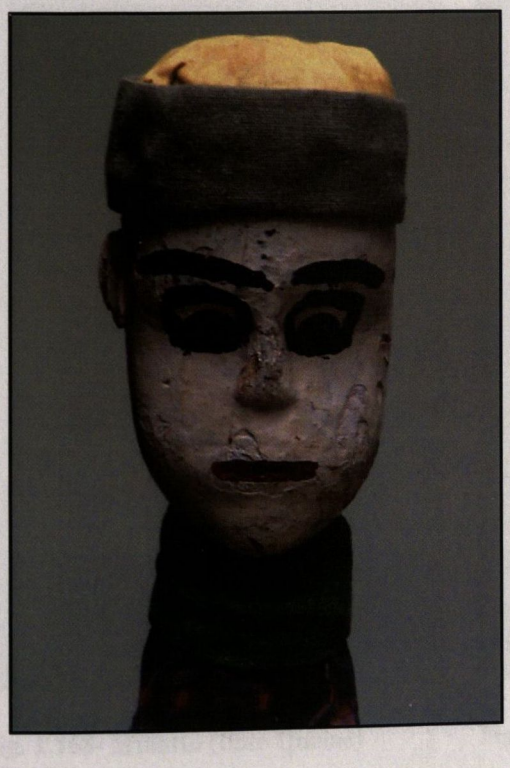

Fig. 1.164 – Zé da Burra

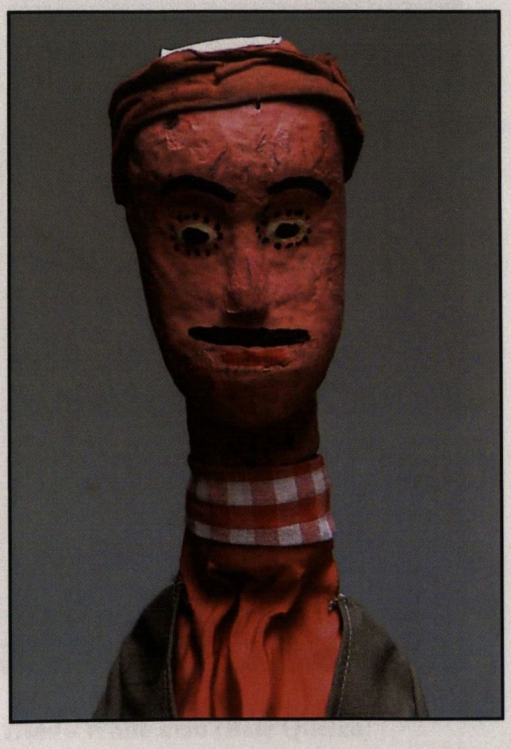

Fig. 1.165- Luiz da Serra

Races

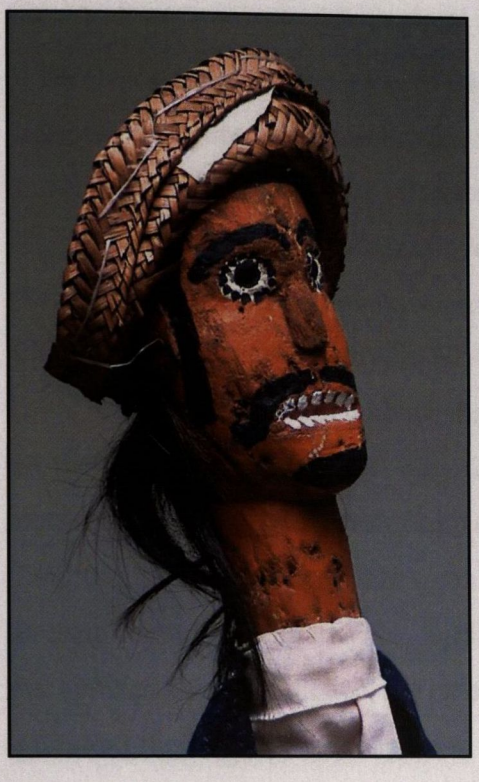

Fig. 1.166 – *Caboclo* (Luiz da Serra)



Fig. 1.167 – Black man (Samuel Feira Nova)

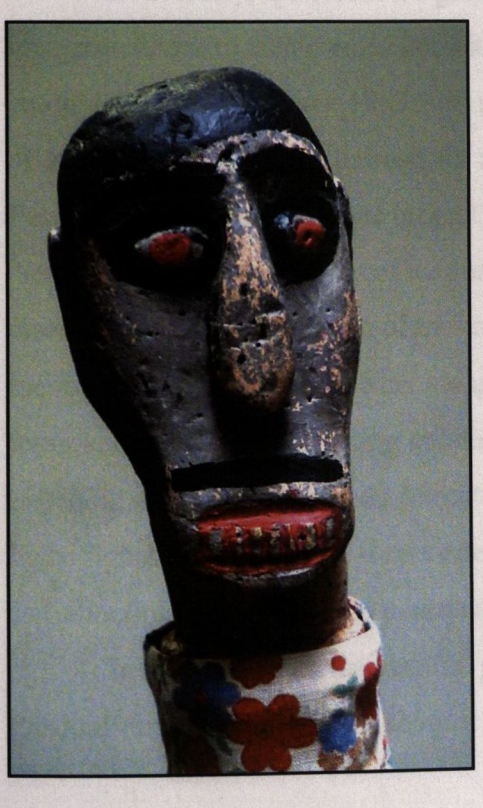

Fig. 1.168- Mulatto (Bate Queixo)

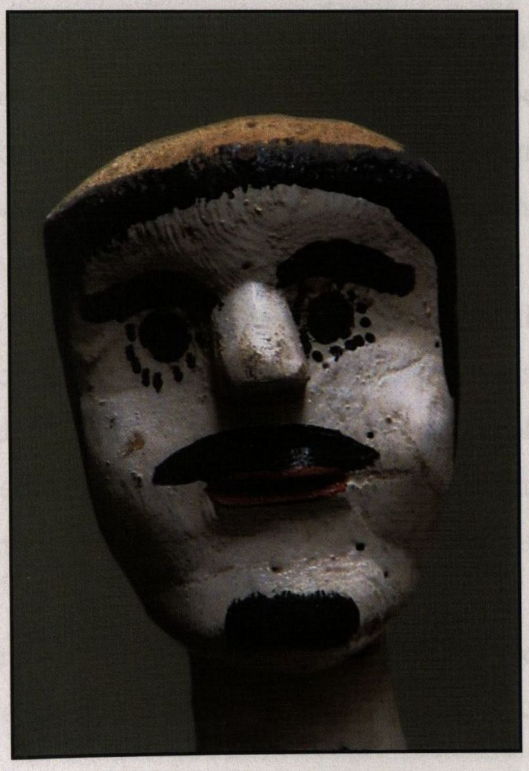

Fig. 1.169 - White man (Bate Queixo)

4 - Puppet Movements and Gestures

A puppet's kinetic potential is strongly affected by the technical aspects of control, construction, size and articulation. However, besides the physical qualities of the puppet figure, the choices the operator makes in the domain of the puppet's movements and gestures are related to the expressive meaning conveyed by them.

Like the other elements, movements and gestures are also dictated by tradition. Thus, some patterns of movement and gesture are observed mainly in the traditional characters, and consequently, in the traditional scenes.

This section deals with the major variables of puppet movements and gestures in the Mamulengo of Zé de Vina, Zé Lopes and João Galego/Marlene Silva, and demonstrates how the codes of movement and gesture are used by these puppeteers (and their helpers) to generate signs of life. Some of these movements and gestures present enough similarity to human movement and gesture and are instantly recognized by the audience, for example, the puppet's capacity to clasp a stick or a gun, and the immediate recognition of this gesture as showing a person who clasps and manipulates an object.

Conversely, apart from the gestures and movements that allow for instantaneous recognition, due to their connection with the ones of real life, others are not immediately recognized. As Pasqualino (1983:234) notes, those "may require knowledge of a process of stylization that passes through an abstract model, a code." An example given by Pasqualino is the combat scene present both in Opera dei Pupi and in Guarattella, which, "remind one of armed dances of folklore, and for the expressions of certain passions that resemble the codified gestures of ancient theatrical practice." As with the puppet traditions mentioned by Pasqualino, in Mamulengo in some of the scenes the puppet movements are remarkably stylized, presenting codified movements that are carefully choreographed, exposing what could be called a puppeteer's 'kinetic grammar'. This is especially observed in the fight scenes and in the scenes directly influenced by other Northeast *folguedos,* such as Caboclinhos and Maracatu passages.[77]

In his analysis of the gestural grammar of the Opera dei Pupi and Guarattella, Pasqualino divided puppet movement into four categories. First is what he calls

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[77] Although I have not seen the Maracatu scene, by Zé de Vina description, it is clear that the dance of the puppets was remarkable stylised.

"involuntary communicative movements that express only themselves". This comprises functional movements, such as walking and sitting, where the puppet (depending on physical limitations) can imitate a human actor. The second he labels "involuntary communicative movements that, apart from themselves, also communicate emotions and attitudes",[78] for example when the puppet leans the head over the arm to demonstrate sorrow, or throws the hands in the air to express surprise. As mentioned by McCormick and Pratasik, this is "particularly important for the audience [and] indicates the ways in which such movements are performed, and the emotion or psychological message conveyed."[79] The third category is made up of "partly voluntarily communicative movements and gestures that underline or illustrate the speech", such as banging one's hand on the stage or banging one's hand on someone's shoulder. The fourth he describes as "voluntarily communicative movements and gesture of a specific meaning", which are those movements intentionally composed to convey a message to another character, such as approaching and holding another puppet's hips with both hands, and moving its belly forwards and backwards to show sexual desire.[80]

Pasqualino segments the puppet's movement (appearing both in Opera dei Pupi and Guarattella) into a syntactic system linked to a corresponding semantic system. Pasqualino's methodology helps us to understand the connection between the diverse codes of movements utilized by the puppeteer, and the meanings conveyed by them. The analysis of the puppets' movement in Mamulengo, carried on below, is based on Pasqualino's methodology.

As pointed out in the beginning of this section, the construction of the figure determines the puppet's kinetic possibilities. Hence, a glove puppet' physical vocabulary is entirely different from those of the rod puppets and of the mechanical puppets. The glove puppet's movement derives directly from the movement of the operator's hand and finger. This intimate control allows for the operator a great range of movement of the puppets' head and arms. Even if the glove puppets' movements are not directly mimetic of the human movements and gestures (like those of the marionettes puppets for example) they are expressively closer to the human movement

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[78] Pasqualino,"Marionette and Glove Puppet", 231-2.

[79] McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppet*, 149.

[80] Pasqualino, "Marionette and Glove Puppet", 232.

and gesture. As McCormick and Pratasik point out "glove puppets are more directly perceived as puppets, and part of the enjoyment they provide is in the gap between human movement and their approximation to it."[81] Due to the articulation point in the neck and the directly control of the operator finger in the head, glove puppet can direct its gaze to many different directions, which resemble human movement. It can bend the head downwards and shakes it between the hands to express a crying, and so on. Such movements and gestures seize upon certain features of human behaviour and express them in an exaggerated and schematized manner allowing for the audience to instantly recognise them.

Conversely, due to the lack of articulation on their body's axle the majority of rod puppets appearing in Mamulengo move in a very stiff, un-humanlike manner, and some of them are like sculptures in motion. Many of the figures with the entire body carved in wood present no articulation at all, and others, only articulation of the shoulder, allowing for vertical movement of the arms. In order to compensate for the restrictions of these puppets' intrinsic kinetic possibilities, the operators are constantly moving these figures, supplying vertical movements (small jumps) and horizontal movements (turning the puppet's body continuously to the left and right). These types of puppets are mostly used in the representation of the landowner, policemen and politician. This expresses the close connection between the figures and their authoritarian manners, since pedantic authorities never bend their heads.

The dancing puppets controlled by three small sticks present an entirely different physical vocabulary. The puppet's flexible legs and arms, its control mechanisms and articulation points and finally, its small size and light weight allow the operator a great range of funny and rapid movements. In this way, they are mostly used for comic dance.

With regard to mechanical puppets the movements produced are just functional movements, as they do not express anything apart from the actions themselves. Since they are manipulated directly by the puppeteer's hand (which make them distinct from the automaton), alterations to the rhythm of the puppet's movements are the only possible changes available to the operator. Hence, a prolonged viewing would expose the fact that these mechanical puppets cannot sustain the audience's imagination of life.

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[81] McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppet*, 150.

One could argue that the reduction of the codes of movement could be supplemented by the codes of speech, which could possibly convey a greater range of expressive meanings, thus providing the 'illusion' of life. However, and this been their second distinction, the mechanical puppet used in Mamulengo never speak. Mechanical puppets are always used in conjunction with other puppets and act mostly to reinforce the role of these characters, or else, to reinforce specific scenery.

Pisa- pilão always appears with Chica-do-Cuscuz. While *pisa-pilão* "grinds the corn", Chica do Cuscuz "sieves the corn" and "sells her cakes". Through the message conveyed by its movements, Pisa-Milho adds information about complementary activities to the process of 'making the cakes', since the corn must be ground before it is used to make the couscous. Besides the visual aspect, Pisa-Milho also reinforces the scene through the sound it conveys. The repetitive sound of the 'pestle' hitting the base of the wood strengthens the actions and punctuates the rhythm of the scene.

In all the shows attended, *Trio de Forró* was used just once. It was in one of the performances of João Galego/ Marlene Silva, where the trio appears in a dance scene. The box was placed on the right side of the play board while the *Quitérias* (female rod puppets) danced on the left side of the stage. In the scene, the musician puppets' movements were accompanied by live music played by real musicians. Since the source of the sound was visible to the audience (the 'real' musicians sat beside the booth), it produced a *verfremdunsgseffekt* (estrangement-effect).[82] The separation of the sound source and the puppet movements present to the audience, in quite a radical manner, the artificiality of the puppet theatre. This is one of the many 'frame-breaking'[83] techniques observed in Mamulengo.

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82 Bertolt Brecht's estrangement or alienation-effect was a theoretical description of the aim of his 'epic theatre' to create an estrangement in the audience, such that they would not lose themselves in the illusion of the representation. In revealing the means of theatrical production, it foregrounds the rhetorical functioning of the stage, its performativity as representational apparatus (Simão and Wallis: 2002:186) The term is closely related to the concept of 'ostranenie' (defamiliarisation) which the Russian Formalists, especially Victor Shklovsky, considered to be a requirement of aesthetic appreciation. But, in Brecht's usage, the term is not merely part of an aesthetic code, but positioned politically. In: Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception* (London: Routledge, 1999) 28.

83 About "frame-breaking" see: Irving Goffman, *Frame Analysis* (Victoria: Penguin Books, 1974), 345-377.



Figs. 3.170 - Chica do Cuscuz shakes her body and moves the sieve "sieving the corn", while Pisa-Pilão (or Pisa-Milho) "grinds the corn". In Zé Vina's show.

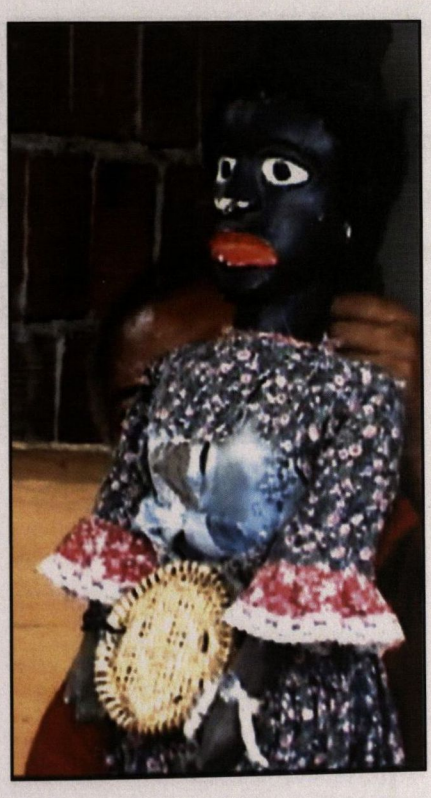

Fig. 3.171 - Chica do Cuscuz (Zé Lopes)

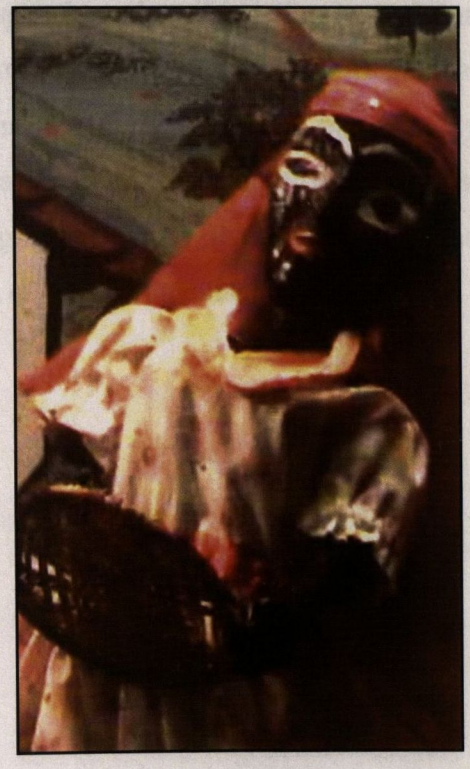

Fig. 3.172 - Chica do Cuscuz (João Galego)

Likewise the *Trio de Forró, Casa-de-Farinha* was presented just in the João Galego/ Marlene Silva show. It was a set of five figures fixed in a wooden box representing the fabrication of sugar by the slaves. Like the *Trio de Forró,* the front of the box was placed in the play board at the front of the stage, while the other was held by the puppeteer's helper. João Galego allowed the puppets movement by spinning a handle placed in the back part of the box. The *casa-de farinha* appeared as the last scene to close the show.

Due to the variety in the types of puppets appearing in Mamulengo, to proceed to an analysis of the codes of movement the figures are classified into three groups: glove puppets, rod puppets and mechanical puppets. This allows for a more precise description of the puppets' movements, and its connection with their technical aspects of control and construction, and consequently, to discern the specific physical vocabulary of these various figures.

Since the nomenclature used by Pasqualino to refer to the four types of movement seems somewhat complicated, they are labelled here as follow: functional movement; movement to convey emotion and psychological messages; movement intentionally composed to convey a message to another character; and finally, movement and gestures that underline or illustrate speech. The functional movements and the movements that underline or illustrate speech are described in just one column given that they do not mean anything apart from themselves. The movements that convey emotion and psychological messages and the movements intentionally composed to convey a message to another character are described using two columns: semantic, which corresponds to the meaning conveyed by the movements; and syntactic, which correspond to the description of the movements.

4.1- The Code of Movement and Gestures of Glove puppets

Glove puppets represent about 60% of the figures appearing in Mamulengo. As far as the form and movement is concerned, the code of the puppets contains about 80 stylised movements and gestures than can be divided into the following categories.

Functional Movements

- Moving slowly: walking
- Moving fast: running
- Standing still
- Lying on the front of the stage
- Getting up
- Fighting rhythmically
- Clashing sticks or other weapons
- Hitting the enemy's head with a weapon many times
- Hitting alternately the enemy's head and weapon
- Hitting alternately the front of the stage and the enemy's head with the weapon
- Bending the body and butting one's head into another figure's head, moving to the right and to the left with the heads linked (such as in a bull fight)
- Holding the enemy's head with the hands and belting it many times on the front of the stage
- Holding one extremity of the stick, while the enemy holds the other and moving laterally to and fro
- Striking with the hand a stick, or another type of weapon
- Being hit without falling
- Being hit and falling on the stage, and getting up
- Being hit and falling flat on the stage without getting up
- Getting hold of the body of a fallen character with the point of a stick and carrying it off stage.
- Swinging the body of a fallen character with both hands, raising it and letting it fall down at the front of the stage
- Carrying a coffin by holding it between the hands; opening the lid of a coffin; placing a corpse in a coffin; closing the lid of a coffin

- Holding a hoe with the hands and pulling it up and down at the front of the stage: weeding
- Holding a baby, rocking the body smoothly back and forth: lulling it to sleep
- Moving the belly forward and backward continuously; embracing and moving rhythmically with another puppet: dancing
- Bending to look downwards
- Turning to look upwards
- Turning to the right, left or behind
- Throwing an object to someone and catching it back continuously and rhythmically
- Lying on top of someone shaking the belly up and down: sexual intercourse
- Lying on the stage and having someone over one's body, and shaking one's belly up and down: sexual intercourse.

Functional Movements made by Specific Puppets

- Bending downwards and vomiting: sick man and drunkard
- Leaning the ear over someone's body: doctor
- Putting an object (a bottle) over someone's mouth: drunkard
- Moving one hand up and down over guitar 'strings': guitar players
- Swallowing someone's body: snake
- Putting the head and body inside of the snake's open mouth: Estreita
- Taking the head and body out of the snake's open mouth: Estreita

Movements and Gestures that underline or illustrate the Speech

Generally the puppets gesticulate continually with synchronous and very marked rhythm when they speak. When they are not talking they often stand still, or move only slightly. However, as I mentioned before, sometimes these actions are not observed and a puppet character can deliver a speech without any movement at all. Also, more than one figure can be in motion while just one voice is heard.

The most frequent movements and gestures that underline or illustrate speech are:

- Moving backward and forward
- Moving to the right or left
- Moving towards whoever one is talking to, and coming back
- Lifting one or both arms

- Clapping or rubbing the hands together
- Banging the hand on the stage
- Banging the hand on someone's shoulder.
- Bending the body downward and upward
- Opening and closing the mouth and eyes (Simão and Tá-pra-Você)

Movements that convey Emotion and Psychological Messages

Semantic	**Syntactic**
Showing off	Walking proudly, moving to one side and the other
Thought	Holding the head in the right or left hand
Self-satisfaction	Rubbing the hands together
Laughter	Shaking
Joyousness	Jumping
Fear	Trembling
Crying	Bending the head downwards and shaking it between the hands
Sorrow	Leaning the head over the arm.
Surprise	Throwing the hands in the air
Extreme surprise	Jumping and falling backwards, banging the back of the head on the stage
Perplexity	Scratching the head
Delight	Falling backwards smoothly
Fury	Shaking the body rapidly and strongly
Impatience	Shaking the body and the hands
Regret	Bending the head downward
Fright	Jumping jerkily backward

Movements intentionally composed to convey a Message to another Character

Semantic	Syntactic
Calling the attention of someone	Banging one's hand on the head, back or shoulder of another character
To draw attention to something or someone	To point at something or someone with the hand
Greeting	Bowing
Threat	Raising the hand or a weapon as if to strike
Love	Caressing; embracing each other.
Aggression (real or joking)	Head butting someone
Scorn	Directing the back side at someone
No	Turning the head to the left and right
Yes	Shaking the head up and down
Sexual attraction	Running after someone
Sexual attraction	Erecting the 'penis' under the sleeve
Sexual attraction	Approaching someone, holding their hips with both hands, and moving one's belly forwards and backwards (reciprocally or not)
Sexual repulsion	Running from the other
Sexual repulsion	Pushing someone with one or both hands.

4.2- The Code of Movement and Gestures of Rod Puppets[84]

As far as form and movement are concerned, the code of the rod puppets contains about 50 stylised movements and gestures. Due to the frequency of dance in a Mamulengo show, and since the dance is mostly done with the rod puppets, it deserves a special examination. The dance is divided into two categories: comic and sensual.

Functional Movements

- Standing still
- Moving fast or slow
- Looking upward, downward, to the right, to the left and behind
- Striking the other with the body: fighting
- Being struck without falling: fighting
- Being struck and going down on the stage: fighting
- Lying over the other puppet body and moving the body up and down: sexual intercourse
- Lying on the stage having the other puppet over one's body and moving the body up and down: sexual intercourse

Comic Dance

These are made with small rod puppets (about 25 cm high) which, besides the main rod located at the base of the body, also have two small rods, one in the base of each foot.

- Spinning (twisting) continuously and rapidly.
- Jumping continuously and rapidly.
- Turning the body to the left and right.
- Shaking the body, bending both legs together in front of the body
- Shaking the body, bending both legs together to the left and right of the body
- Shaking the body, bending both legs, one to each side of the body
- Shaking the body, turning the head downward and the bottom upward
- Bending the body forward, touching the head on the front stage.

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[84] To visualize properly the movement described here, we have to remember that rod puppets don't have articulation on their body's axle.

Sensual Dance

These are made with the female rod puppets. They have one rod located at the base of the body, articulation of the hips, and sometimes articulation of the arms.

- Jumping continuously and more or less quickly
- Turning the body continuously to the left and right
- Spinning (twisting) continuously and rapidly (in this moment, their panties appear under their skirts)
- Jumping continuously and twisting the hips
- Shaking the body smoothly and continuously and twisting the hips
- Shaking the body smoothly and continuously and moving the hips to the left and right side
- Shaking the body smoothly and continuously and moving the hips forward and backward
- Shaking the body smoothly and continuously and moving the arms up and down

Special Movements made with Extending Neck Puppets

- Moving the neck up and down.
- Turning the head to one side and the other
- Turning the head 360°
- Stretching the neck and hitting the roof or the spectators with the head

Movements and Gestures that underline or illustrate Speech

- Moving the body forward and shaking.
- Moving the body continuously from one side to the other
- Turning the body to the left and right
- Moving the body to one side, stopping, and moving to the other side
- Jumping (small and fast jumps)

When the movements underline rhymed speeches, such as *loas*, they acquire characteristics of a dance, since the puppet moves in a very stylised and rhythmic manner.

Movements that convey Emotions and Psychological Messages

Semantic	Syntactic
Authority	Small and firm jumps, moving to one side and the other
Threat	Moving jerkily toward another character
Impatience	Turning the body continuously to the left and right
Fury, and unfriendliness	Moving fast toward another character and moving backward, shaking one's body.
Attention	Standing still looking toward the other
Surprise	Small jump backward
Extreme surprise	Falling backwards and lying on the stage
Laughter	Shaking the body
Joy	Hopping (Jumping up and down) continuously and rapidly
Extreme joy	Falling backwards slowly on the stage
Fear	Shaking the body
Fear	Jumping backward
Weeping	Touching the front of the stage with one's forehead, shaking the body

Movements intentionally composed to convey a Message to another Character

Semantic	Syntactic
Love, friendship	Approaching the other puppet (reciprocally or not)
Sexual attraction	Running after the other character
Sexual attraction	Approaching the other character, shaking and rubbing the body against the other (reciprocally or not)
Sexual repulsion	Running from the other
Sexual repulsion	Pushing the other puppet with the body.
Salute	'Bending' slightly downward in the direction of the other
Threat	Moving jerkily in the direction of the other puppet and standing still in front of him or her
No	Turning the body rapidly to the left and right
Yes	Jumping jerkily
To draw attention	Touching the other's body with one's body

4.3- The Code of Movement and Gestures of Mechanical Puppets

As mentioned before, the movements made by the mechanical puppets are, by their nature, functional movements In the simplest type, *Pisa-Milho*, the puppet's movements are limited to the up and down movement of the arms. In the *Trio de Forró* the puppets move the arms up and down, or to the right and left. In the *Casa-de-Farinha* representing the fabrication of sugar by the slaves, a much more complex movement code appears. They are:

Moving arms up and down

- Holding a stick (grinding grain)
- Holding a hoe (weeding)
- Playing musical instruments, such as snare drums, triangle and a shaker
- Beating someone with a whip

Moving the arms to the right and to the left

- Holding the sieve with both hands (Sieving grains)
- Holding a spoon (to stir)
- Playing musical instruments, such as accordion

Moving the arms forward and backward

- Opening a gate
- Pushing someone

Moving the neck

- Looking to the right and left

Bending the body up and down

- Picking up, or putting down something on the ground
- Being pushed by someone

5 - The Puppet's Voice

In his discussion about the puppet sign-system, Tillis argues that "[m]ost of puppet-artists have little doubt that the sign- system of movement is the most important of the three sign-systems." Tillis's argument to support this assertion is as follow:

> "[T]he design of a puppet may be radically unlife-like, presenting the audience with signs so unrepresentative of a given character as to be unintelligible by themselves. (. . .) Likewise, the speech of a puppet may be radically modified, or the puppet may be given no speech at all, presenting the audience with signs that are either unintelligible or nonexistent. (. . .) But the general movement of the puppet must be intelligible as a character movement, or else the design and speech, whatever their representational quality, will be nothing more than plastic art and oratory."[85]

Tillis's arguments about the way the three sign systems operate in puppet theatre, and their 'hierarchical position', may be appropriate for much twentieth-century puppetry, but is not relevant when trying to understand Mamulengo. Firstly, as I have demonstrated before, in Mamulengo there are no "radically unlifelike" figures. Even if the figure is completely distorted from its correspondent in real life, it will never be so "unrepresentative" as to be "unintelligible" by itself. The audience knows, by tradition, the connection between *the* figure and the character its represents.

Moreover, like the majority of puppet traditions, in Mamulengo the voice acquires a status that often surpasses the movement. As research has shown, it is common to see a character "delivering" an immense speech without any movement of the correspondent figure. Another common practice is the presence onstage of more than one figure in motion, while just one voice is represented. Certainly this would provoke confusion in an uninitiated spectator. However, for the public who share the 'grammar' of this tradition, it does not present a problem. This is simply because the audience recognizes the quality of the voice (e.g., rhythm, tonality, timbre, speech defect, etc) and even more importantly, that the content of the speech pertains to a particular character.

McCormick and Pratasik make a valuable observation related to the importance of voice in traditional puppetry. They remark that:

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[85] Tillis, *Toward an Aesthetic*, 133-4.

> The later twentieth-century emphasis on puppetry as a visual medium easily obscures the fact that voice is a central element of traditional dramatic puppet theatre. Showmen communicated with their audience through language and even today, older people still remember phrases heard on puppet stages in their youth. Whether working directly from a script, repeating texts that had been passed down orally, or simply improvising to a scenario, the puppeteer was first and foremost concerned with passing a story.[86]

McCormick and Pratasik's remarks can be applied perfectly to Mamulengo. As shall be elaborated upon further, language plays a fundamental role in Mamulengo, appearing in many forms (poetic, narrative, comic, etc.). In some passages, the connection with the *cordelistas*[87] is evident. Zé de Vina's *Caboclinho* passage, when presented in its entire version (he also has a shortened version) can last for half an hour, with four Caboclinhos figures speaking long, rhyming lines.

In Mamulengo, as in many traditional puppet theatres, language plays a fundamental role in two distinct, but inseparable, ways. On the one hand, there is a special characteristic in the production of the puppets' voices, since the wide variety of voices is mostly provided by one single person: the master puppeteer, thus reinforcing the link with the story-teller. Even when the *contra-mestre* (main helper) also speaks, he often lends his voice to only a few subsidiary characters. On the other hand, as mentioned by McCormick and Pratasik, it is mostly through words that puppeteers tell their stories. Moreover, in Mamulengo it is primarily through language that the puppeteers provoke audience participation.

To express the necessary variety of voices, the master puppeteer must be capable of imitating the sociolinguistic repertoire of an entire group, community or even a society. By imitation we understand not a precise reproduction of the original source but rather an artistic, stylised view of reality, since the puppeteer's mimicry plays with reality by exaggerating salient points and ignoring others. The variations in the characters' voices involve many aspects of language. Paralinguistic features or, as Elam defines, "suprasegmental features", that is, the vocal qualities provided by the speaker "over and above its phonemic and syntactic structure" (voice modification; dialect; accents and styles of speakers; and so on) are selected and combined depending on the character represented.

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[86] McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppet*, 151-2

[87] Writers and story tellers who recount his/her rhymed story written in a cordel, or cheap book.

With regard to the paralinguistic features, Elam isolates the elements of 'loudness, pitch, timbre, rate, inflection, rhythm, and enunciation."[88] Pasqualino referring to the voice quality in Opera dei Puppi and Guaratelle segments the codes of voice applied by the puppeteers into "volume, tonality, timbre, rhythm and vibrato."[89]

In some traditional puppetry, language can reach high levels of stylisation through the radical modification of the human voice. One such example is the Kathputli Indian marionette where the puppets "emit mood signs more than words."[90] Voice distortion is mainly achieved through the use of voice modifiers, such as a swazzle. With the European popular glove puppet, the use of the swazzle for the voice of the main character allows for distinction between the voice of these characters and the subsidiary ones. In Mamulengo, the swazzle is not used. Nevertheless, the voice of some characters is so distorted as to make their speech almost unintelligible. This is mostly observed in the voice of elderly males, which bestows a comic quality to these characters. Mateus repeats the incomprehensible words and phrases spoken by them, assisting the audience's comprehension of the puppets' speech.

In traditional puppetry, dialects, accents and styles of speech are largely used to distinguish characters in regard to their class and ethnic origin. In the countries where dialect is spoken in parallel with the official language, the puppet heroes and other representatives of the popular classes frequently speak dialects while the official language is spoken by characters representative of the higher social orders (e.g. judges, doctors, policeman, priests, etc.). Also, garbled words and expressions often appear in the speeches of the latter group adding humorous and negative values to these characters.[91] Furthermore, the linguistic means is complemented by the vocal

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[88] Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (London : Methuen, 1980), 79-81.

[89] Pasqualino, "The Puppetry Traditions", 231.

[90] Joan E. Gross, "Creative use of language in Liège puppet theatre," *Semiotica 47* (1983), 282.

[91] Bogatyrev was the first scholar to stress this particular vocal feature of traditional puppetry. He points out that speech varieties can be artificially constituted from a mixture of existing speech styles, or a known dialect may be assigned to an incongruous character to create a sense of irony. (Petr Bogatyrev, "The interconnection of two similar semiotic system: the puppet theatre and the theatre of living actors," *Semiotica* 47 (1983) 1976: 47-68.)

Pasqualino (1983:262) remarks that with the guarattelle "the language of Pulcinella and almost all other personages is Neapolitan dialect", or another local dialect, such as "Sicilian in Sicily and a mixture of Neapolitan and Roman in Rome". Related to the Opera dei Puppi, he states that the personages of high

quality employed by the puppeteers to achieve communicative effectiveness. In Brazil, there is no dialect. The Portuguese language is spoken all over the country[92]. However, many distinctions in colloquial language are found in the different regions of the country, and in some areas something approaching a dialect is observed. Those variations include accent, diction (suppression or inclusion of letters), regional words and expressions.[93]

In the Mamulengo of Zona da Mata, speech patterns do not play an important role in distinguishing between the characters representative of high social position and those of lower social position. Unlike popular European puppetry, in Mamulengo the characters representative of the two groups use almost the same patterns of language. Nevertheless, some exceptions are found. In the speech of the Politician, for example, some garbled words, such as *estelionatário* [fraud] and *corrupto* [corrupt] are observed. Also, some pig (or invented) Latin expressions are spoken by the priest character, such as the terms "*ejaculorum*", "*domum seculorum*", "*seremum seculorum domum*", and so on.

This lack of differentiation in speech patterns of the characters representing the higher and lower classes does not mean that such distinctions are not present in Northeastern society. Obviously, differences between the spoken language of upper/middle class people and those of the popular classes are observed. However, in Mamulengo, distinctions between these two groups are made by the combination of the various codes that form the typology of the characters: the figurative codes, the voice quality, the content of their speeches, and finally, their function in the show.

Referring to accent and style of speaker, Sherzer and Sherzer remark that in popular puppetry accents of foreigners are particularly mocked and note that "tourists

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social position use Italian, while those of low position speak the Sicilian dialect. (Pasqualino, "Marionette and Glove Puppet", 234)

[92] Many Brazilian Indian tribes have they own language, or even sub-dialects from the same language group. But they are isolated groups. Although some Indian expressions are found in the Portuguese language spoken in Brazil (mainly in the North regions, where the majority of the tribes are located), they do not form a dialect.

[93] Armando Sergio Prazeres, "Incelenças e Romances: da performance oral à apreenção midiática," *XXXI Congresso Anual em Ciência da Comunicação* (Belo Horizonte: UFMG, 2003). With the development of the mass media, especially television broadcasting, these differentiations become each day less visible.

and salespersons speaking" appear in "Brazilian Mamulengo".[94] Although they do not specify what Mamulengo they are referring to, the mention of Rio Janeiro[95] suggests they might be referring to some Mamulengo show of that southeastern city.[96] In Zona da Mata Mamulengo foreign accent is almost nonexistent. A hint of a southeast accent is observed in the voice of a few characters. In Zé Lopes Mamulengo, Praxédio, an amorous man who is always trying to conquer the female audience, has a style of speech close to the *carioca* accent from Rio de Janeiro.

Voice quality is also associated with the gender, age, physical and personality type, mood, as well as the speech defects, of the characters represented. Stuttering is the voice defect used most often, appearing with elderly characters, such as Gangrena, of Zé Lopes Mamulengo and Surdo-Gago (Deaf- Stutterer), of Zé de Vina, and Zé Gago (Zé-Stutter) of João Galego. Moreover, Mané Foié Fotico (a homosexual character) frequently deforms words by changing the letters. This voice defect at the same time assigns a 'childish' quality to the characters' voice and also makes possible alterations in many words, allowing for double-meanings. One such example is the alteration of the word *policial* (policeman) into *putial*, an invented word very close to the word *puta* (whore).

Also, it is through the puppeteer's voice that sounds of many types emanate from the puppet's mouth and other orifices, such as shouts, cries, nose blowing, snores, coughs, burps, farts. Also, sounds of some animals, such as the ox's "moo", the pigs "onk", the snake 'ssss'; and the supernatural beings, such as the "brrr" for the Devil, or the "uuuuu" for Death are also are produced to assist the communicative process between puppeteer and his/her audience

Voice plays a central role in sustaining the interest of the audience and demands great vocal versatility from the puppeteer. Consequently, voice is an important element in the aesthetic quality of the performances, and a great claim to fame for puppeteers. Aesthetic judgments made by audience members, by other puppeteers, or by the puppeteers themselves, are primarily based on a puppeteer's

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[94] D. Sherzer and J. Sherzer, "Verbal Humor in the Puppet Theatre", 53.

[95] Ibid., 62

[96] As far as research has shown, Sherzer and Sherzer reference to Mamulengo seems to be the only one made by foreign puppet scholars to the Brazilian traditional puppet theatre. This reveals our (Brazilians) isolation and the lack of information it generates.

ability to produce a wide range of voices. Therefore, it is one of the most emphasized features of a performance. Ginu claimed he could do sixteen different voices;[97] Zé das Bananas claims he can make 21 different voices.[98] Chiquinho, a sculptor and puppet-maker made these comments about Bilim, a famous puppeteer:

> The best puppeteer of João Redondo was Bilim. Here, in Rio Grande do Norte, or in Paraiba, wherever he went, people would say 'Oh yes, he knows how to play!' When he was performing, obviously it was he who was speaking, but everybody thought that it was the puppet who was speaking. He could do fifteen different types of voices and he would completely change his voice from one character to another. If it was João Redondo, he would use a very deep bass voice, if it was Baltazar, there was another voice. For each puppet, either female or male, he had a different voice.[99]

The variations in the voices remarked upon by Chiquinho are a result of modifications the master puppeteer applies to his own voice. As mentioned above, the master puppeteer is often responsible for the voices of the majority of the characters appearing in the show. Consequently, he applies many devices in order to make the characters' voices distinct from one another.

5.1- The Codes of the Voice Quality

The codes of voice quality applied by the mamulengueiros are: volume, pitch, timbre and rhythm. Through the deployment and combination of these codes, the characters' voices are rendered remarkably different. Besides shaping the intrinsic quality of the character's voice, these vocal codes may also be used in a particular situation, such as to stress a character's mood. Thus, the former are applied constantly, while the latter are applied variably.

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[97] Januário de Oliveira, interview *Museu da Imagem e do Som*, Recife, Pernambuco, December 1975.

[98] Oswaldo Pereira da Silva, "O Mamulengo como Fator de Educação Informal no Contexto de Quatro Municipios da Zona da Mata de Pernambuco" (Master diss., Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, 1998), 65.

[99] Francisco Cardoso, interview, Passa e Fica, Rio Grande do Norte, 17 March 2004. As informed by Chiquinho, Bilim (Chiquinho did not know his real name) was a puppeteer from Passa e Fica, Rio Grande do Norte, who died in the 1980's.

Volume:

The volume of the characters' voices is somewhat uniform and maintained at a medium level. Variations mainly appear to stress changes in the mood of the characters. The most usual change is the increase in volume (from normal to high) during an argument between two or more characters. Appearing less frequently, but nonetheless present, is the volume increase in moments of sorrow, fear, pain and joy. It is important to stress that in all these situations, the volume is increased for comic purposes.

A decrease in volume is applied mostly when a secret is addressed to a specific character, to Mateus or to an audience member.

Pitch:

The pitch of the character's voice is usually modified in accordance with gender. Generally speaking, we can say that female characters have high tonal quality, and male characters medium pitch. However, variations within the same group are observed. Within the female group, divisions are mostly related to age, and the increase in voice pitch corresponds to a decrease in age: the younger the woman, the higher the vocal pitch. Within the male group distinctions are more complex, since they are related both to age and to social status of the characters. But even within the same group some variations may appear.

The representatives of economic, political and military authority have voices of a bass pitch, which makes them distinct from all the others that have baritone and tenor voices. However, the priest and the doctor, both representatives of the higher social group, have voices with baritone or tenor pitch. The distinction, I think, is also related to the puppet types representing the two sub-groups. As I mentioned earlier, the landowner, the politician and policeman are rod puppets, while the doctor and priest are glove-puppets. To complement the stiff movements of the former, a bass voice seems to be more appropriate, while the agility of the glove-puppets corresponds more closely to a slightly higher tone of voice. This demonstrates the connection between the various codes in the typology of the character.

Variations in vocal pitch occur mostly among the characters of authority (landowner, politician and policemen). In this case, the voice acquires an even deeper bass pitch to emphasize specific phrases, or more particularly, to demonstrate

anger. The lowering of the vocal pitch of the other male characters is mostly observed in situations when the character is seducing a female.

Timbre:

Even though the swazzle is not used in Mamulengo, modifications applied by the puppeteers to the timbre of some characters' voices have the same effect as voice modifying devices.[100] In Mamulengo, the modification in timbre is often observed in voices of old characters. The majority of the characters of this group have a nasal, clucking timbre, which often makes their speech unintelligible. To make their speech understandable, they are 'translated' by Mateus, through the device of word and phrase repetition. The scene brings moments of great hilarity, with the audience making fun of the elderly characters.

The timbre also changes with the typology of the character and tents to follow the division of pitch quality. For female characters, variations in timbre are mostly dictated by age. Old women, mainly widows, have a nasal, sometimes throaty timbre. Middle- aged women have a nasal to normal timbre. Finally, the young (and beautiful) women have a normal to softer timbre. Among male characters, again, variations are more complex. But, they seem to be based mainly on the contrasting effects between different groups. The authorities (colonel, politician, policemen) present a throaty and raucous timbre, which contrasts with the strident timbre of the black fighters. The timbre of both group's voices contrast to the clear timbre of most of the adult male group, including Simão. A contrast is also observed between the doctor's clear timbre and the strident, nasal timbre of the sick characters.

Rhythm:

The voices of the majority of the Mamulengo puppets are spoken mostly at a fast rhythm. They keep time with movements and gestures used to underline the speech. In most of the rhymed speech the metre gives the voice a very marked rhythm, which is reinforced by the character's movements and gestures. In this case, the rhythm of the voice remains consistently fast.

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[100] Pasqualino defines voice modifiers as "various devices for modifying the sound of the voice that affect above all the timbre and make it difficult to distinguish the meaning of the words" (Pasqualino, "Marionette and Glove Puppet", 263).

However, variations are more frequent in the dialogues. The most visible contrast is between the elderly males, who speak with a slow rhythm, and the black fighters, who speak faster. The rhythm of the other characters varies from moderate to fast, depending on the dramatic situation. As with volume, an increase in voice tempo occurs mostly during arguments between two or more characters. However, increases in rhythm are also observed in situations of joy and excitement.

As can be noted, the puppeteers see close connections between the way puppets look and the away they talk. The most grotesque are the ones with the strangest voices, while the most attractive present nicer voices.

6 - Music and Sound Effects

6.1 - Music

The types of music played in the shows are drawn from the Northeast traditional repertoire. Rhythms such as *côco, forró* and *baião* are played throughout the show. Included are songs coming from the popular Northeast *folguedos*, such as *cavalo-marinho, maracatu, ciranda*, and so on. Moreover, some tunes are specially created for the puppet theatre. Music plays a crucial role and serves different functions:

1) To attract, entertain and prepare the audience and puppeteers for the opening of the show

While the master-puppeteer and his assistants arrange the puppets in the booth, music is already being played. At this particular moment, the musicians enjoy absolute freedom to choose the music they want to play and, therefore, may play part of a repertoire not included in the show. Thus, the musicians attract dispersed members of the public and entertain those who have already taken their places at the front of the booth.

The music also helps to create a proper atmosphere for the show. Inside the booth, the master and his assistant(s) also sing before opening the show. In this context, music also serves as a vocal and psychological warming-up exercise for the puppeteers.

2) Musical accompaniment of certain scenes

This function is mostly used in dance or fight scenes. In the latter case, the music is generally instrumental with stronger emphasis on percussion rather than melody.

3) Intermediary scenes

Throughout the show, music is used to connect scenes. At least three different tunes are played in each scene. The first tune introduces the puppet (s) onto the stage. The second tune is played when the puppet (s) leaves the stage. The third tune serves an intermediary function, as it fills the period of time necessary to allow the puppeteer to prepare for the new scene. In this context, in general, the third tune is merely instrumental, while the first and second tunes feature a narrative function. In some passages, the music is also played in different moments of the developing scene.

4) Narrative Function

In the analysis of the music with a narrative function, I will take into consideration the lyrics of the songs. As words, the lyrics may be considered as

pertaining to the text. However, the juxtaposition of melody and lyrics gives the words a distinctive feature, which makes their perception diverge from the spoken words.

The most important narrative function is the introduction of the main characters. As pointed out before, these characters are associated with specific tunes (*baianos*), which are sung before the characters' entrance on stage, and serve as references to the audience to indicate which character and scene they are about to see. Some of these *baianos* were, and are still, specifically created for Mamulengo characters. In this context, the composer may write new music and lyrics, or even use a popular tune and add his own words.[101] An illustrative example is the *baiano* of *João Carcundo* (John Hunchback), by Zé de Vina. In this *baiano*, besides the character's name, the puppeteer also includes his own name:

"João Carcundo, pegue no pé que eu deixar / João Carcundo, pegue no pé que eu deixar./

Quem quer ser mais do que è / fica pior do que està / êh, João Carcundo, vai tomar conta do mundo/ êh, João Carcundo, vai tomar conta do mundo.

João Carcundo/ dê de la que eu do de cà/ me chamo José de Vina/ falo sem medo de errar/ êh, João Carcundo, vai tomar conta do mundo"

[John Hunchback, you'll only get it if I let you / John Hunchback, you'll only get it if I let you. / If you want more than you need / you might get more than you can handle. / Yeah, John Hunchback, get off my back / Yeah, John Hunchback, get off my back. John Hunchback / It's tit for tat / I'm José de Vina / I speak out loud / Yeah, John Hunchback, get off my back.]

Others, like the *baiano* of João Carcundo, also include the character's name. The majority of these types of *baianos* are composed specially for the Mamulengo. Another example is the *baiano* of Simão:

"Vou pra Limeira Simão / apanhar lima, Simão / a fruta è boa, Simão / a fulô cheira, Simão"

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[101] Magda Modesto remarks that Master Otilio, a puppeteer from Caruaru, Pernambuco, used the tunes sung by Mario Reis (a famous Brazilian singer) and added his own lyrics. (Modesto, "Convivendo com bonequeiros", 42). Moreover, Chico Daniel uses the tunes from Roberto Carlos (another famous Brazilian singer) and also inserts his own lyrics.

[I'm going to Limeland[102], Simão, to catch limes, Simão. The fruit is nice, Simão, the flower smells good, Simão.]

Unlike the two examples described above, in the *baiano* of Inspector Peinha the name of the character is suppressed. Instead, the actions it describes call attention to the character's particular function. One of the functions of the Inspector Peinha is to confirm whether or not the puppeteer has the correct licence to present the show:

"Assentei praça no quartel do Derby[103] / seu capitão mandou me chamar / eu fui chamado, ora eu fui chamado / pra tirar uma licença aqui nesse lugar./ Soldado é bom na guerreira / eu quero ver guerrear."

[I was in the Derby barracks / the captain asked for me / I was called, yes, I was called / to ask for a licence, here, in this place. / A soldier is good for fighting / I want to see them at war.]

Most *baianos* of this type are drawn from the traditional musical repertoire of other *folguedos*. This helps to explain the lack of character names, since these songs are delivered not for one specific personage, but for a stock character. [104]

In the *baiano* of the Widow the lyrics contain advice to the character:

"Oh, Viuvinha, Viuvinha, bota o lenço no pescoço.Vai chorar por seu marido, que ele morreu foi por desgosto."

[Oh Little Widow, Little Widow, put the scarf around your neck. Go and cry for your husband, because he died of heartbreak].

Further, in the context of the narrative function, tunes are sung when some characters leave the stage and, therefore, describe this situation. One example is the tune appearing at the end of the scene of Cavaleiro, Paiaça and Baiana[105]:

"Boa noite Capitão, que a hora chegada esta. / Boa noite Capitão, que a hora chegada esta./ Eu dei um salto, saltei de banda / rima um côco na ciranda / oi Mariana, oi Mariana."

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[102] *Limeira* is a name of a city in Pernambuco.

[103] Derby is a barracks located in Recife.

[104] The Inspector's *baiano* is a song coming from *cavalo-marinho* (Alcure: 1999:178). As mentioned in Chaper II, in that folguedo the Inspector character also appears with the same function as in Mamulengo.

[105] This scene is derived from *Cavalo-Marinho*, and consequently this song is as well.

[Good night Captain because the time is arrived / Good night Captain cause the time is arrived./ I have to leave / I leave now/ sing a tune in the *carnival*[106]*/* Hi, Mariana, hi, Mariana.]

Generally speaking, the master-puppeteer sings the first two lines of the *baiano* in a slower rhythm and without musical accompaniment. After this introduction, the instruments join in, increasing the tempo of the music. The effect of this contrast in rhythm creates a state of euphoria, which is accompanied by the puppets' movements.[107] In addition to its expressive function, the fact that the *baianos* are introduced by the puppeteer can also be explained in virtue of operational order. As previously outlined, the sequence in which the scenes are brought onstage is very flexible. Hence, by singing the introduction of the baianos, the master puppeteer allows for the musicians and Mateus to know which scene is coming next.

Due to the range of functions served by music in Mamulengo, the musicians have to be carefully selected. Since variations in the shows of the various puppeteers are not particularly great, it can be observed that many musicians play with more than one puppeteer within the same region. The expertise of the musicians is essential for the quality of the show, since the music can amount to anything up to a third of the performance. Hence, we can conclude that the music plays an important role in bringing the public to the show.

We can establish some parallels between the role and function of music in the Mamulengo of Zona da Mata and some popular European puppet traditions. In terms of its importance and the amount of time music occupies in Mamulengo, it can be compared to Greek shadow theatre. Describing the music in Karaghiozis puppet theatre, Myrsiades remarks that:

> The percentage of a performance done in music, both dances and songs, differs from player to player. With live music, it can range from 25% to as much as 40%, depending on the player's singing ability and the general richness of his performance text. Most

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[106] Instead of "côco na ciranda" I opt to use the word "carnival" to preserve the assonance of the song. Nevertheless, *côco* and *ciranda* are rhythms present in the Northeast carnival.

[107] Borba Filho in his researches carried on in 1960s had already observed this characteristic, which lead us to think this is a traditional aspect of the music played in Mamulengo. (Borba Filho, *Fisionomia*, 160).

players know the traditional songs and possess at least the minimal ability to sing their own songs.[108]

Moreover, we can observe the importance of music and its continuous presence in the Portuguese *Bonecos de Santo Aleixo*, in which an orchestra and singers accompany the puppets in various situations throughout the show. The second part of the show consists mainly of singing and dancing. Music provides a musical background for the dances, which are similar to the Mamulengo dance scenes. However, they differ from Mamulengo insofar as, in the tradition of Alentejo, melodic instruments have a more dominant role than percussive ones. As far as the research has shown, melodic instruments seem to have accounted for the majority of instruments used in crib puppet theatre (*presepe*) in the Northeast region.

In Mamulengo, the musical rhythm is closer to *batucada*, with an emphasis on percussion instruments, which is clearly an African influence. As is commonly known, the African influence in Brazilian musical culture is indisputable.

6.2 - Sound Effects

The most frequent sound appearing in Mamulengo is that of a whistle. The master puppeteer makes extensive use of this throughout the show, since the whistle serves many functions.

At the beginning and end of each scene, the master-puppeteer gives a long, loud blast indicating to the helpers, musicians and Mateus the time to start and to stop their actions. Moreover, the whistle often signals the beginning and end of the songs. The whistle is a crucial device since it gives to the puppeteer control over the rhythm and duration of the music, scenes and consequently the show. The whistle is commonly used in many *folguedos* of the Northeast region, where it serves a very similar function. The whistle can also be used to produce the sound of some characters. The most common are the birds and some supernatural characters, such as the Devil and Jaraguá.[109]

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[108] Linda S. Myrsiades, *The Karagiozis Heroic Performance in Greek Shadow Theater* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1988), 232, note 8.

[109] Jaraguá is a rod puppet with an articulated jaw, appearing mostly in the puppet theatre of Paraiba and Rio Grande do Norte. Chico Simões, a puppeteer from Brasilia, also presents a Jaraguá puppet in his show. The whistle sound is combined with the opening of the puppet's mouth.

Another sound effect frequently observed is the wooden sound produced by the stomping of the puppeteers' shoes on a wooden box.[110] It accompanies the rhythm of the music played all through the show; underlines the rhythm of the puppets' movements, mainly in the fight and dance scenes; and finally, it highlights the puppets' speeches.[111] Zé de Vina gives a very interesting reason for the use of such a device: "We [puppeteers] work with the hands and the *juizo* (mind); with the mouth and the feet. Thus, everything done with mouth is reflected in the movement of the feet." Zé de Vina's explanation is very illustrative of the synchronised actions involved in the process of bringing the puppets to life.

The glove puppets knocking hands and heads on the stage and the cudgel blows they exchange is yet another wooden sound appearing in the scenes. This device is very typical of the glove puppets and is therefore found in many of the traditional glove puppet shows.

The sound of gun fire sometimes is used in fight scenes. Here, the puppeteer uses gunpowder to imitate the sound of a gun being fired. In an interview given to Santos, Zé de Vina tells us he used to make this sound using fireworks, which make a very loud "seven gun-bullets sound". He calls this effect a "surprise" and explained that "when the gun was 'fired' by the puppet, the helper lit the fireworks, providing the sound."[112] However, in the Zé de Vina performances I attended the "surprise effect" did not appear, since all the fights were performed with sticks and knifes. Once more it shows the changes that pervade all elements of the shows.

I have been discussing throughout this chapter how the various elements are applied and combined by the puppeteer in order to construct the characters typologies and their actantial role in the scenes. All the elements are combined to communicate a story. In Mamulengo, like in most of the traditional puppet theatre, the stories are passed mainly through language, here understood in its restricted sense. Zé de Vina statement "everything done with mouth is reflected in the in the movement of the feet"

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[110] The puppeteers manipulate the figures sitting on a bench that is placed over the boxes.

[111] The same device is found in Opera dei Pupi, where the wooden sound is used to underline the rhythm of the movements and gestures of the puppets, such in the battle scenes, and to emphasise the puppets' speech. However, in the Italian puppet tradition, it is produced by the stomping of the puppeteer's clog on the floorboards. (Pasqualino, "Marionette and Glove Puppet", 239).

[112] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 73-74.

shows the leading characteristic of the speech. Whether working directly from a "script" written in his memory, or simply improvising to a scenario, the puppeteers are primarily concerned with passing a story. What are the stories they tell? How are they built through language?

PART II – Mamulengo Text

1 - The Scenarios: Structure, Plots and Reformulations

The Mamulengo text presents an episodic structure, since it is made up of various scenes that are selected and ordered by the puppeteer in order to set the show. Nowadays the mamulengueiros have about twenty different scenes, but they are rarely presented all together in the same show. The puppeteer's process of selecting and ordering the scenes serves different functions. Firstly, he needs to make his shows distinct from one another, and also from the shows of other puppeteers. Secondly, he needs to adapt his shows according to the performance context (the location of the show, age of the audience, the available time for the show, etc). Finally, the combinations may be the result of the audience's reaction and of his own mood. Hence, the number (and type) of the scenes appearing in the shows of the various puppeteers, and also in the shows of the same puppeteer, can vary greatly. For these reasons, to establish what constitutes an entire Mamulengo show is complex, since there are so many variations.

In addition to the structural factors, the changes which occur in the text are also the result of the wide use of improvisation, which is based mostly on the interplay between the puppets (puppeteer), the intermediary and the audience. In this way, we can say that the Mamulengo text is an 'unstable entity'.

The Mamulengo text, like the other elements, has been subjected to a lot of changes. Many passages deriving from the *folguedos* (e.g. Maracatu de Simão, Pastoril) as well as those coming from the *Presepe* (Crib), such as *São José* (Saint Joseph) and *Rico Rei Avarento* (The Rich Mean King), that were once very popular, are absent from the current shows.

Zé de Vina tells us that in earlier days, if he presented an "entire" Mamulengo show, he could present about 30 passages. But nowadays, he has just 25 passages ready to be performed. He gives two different reasons that led him to stop performing some of the scenes. With regard to ones originating from the cribs, Zé de Vina argues that "today, the public are not interested in religious issues, preferring fight scenes." Concerning the scenes derived from the *folguedos*, operational considerations rather than audience predilection appear to be the main reason. He states: "Due to the

quantity of puppets appearing in these scenes, they require at least four operators and I cannot afford to pay more than one helper."[1]

The so called "entire" Mamulengo seems to be an idealistic notion, rather than a concrete practice, since it seems improbable that one single show would be composed of so many scenes. Also, as research has shown so far, there is no reference to any show containing any possible episode. Imbued in this notion is an idea of quality: a good puppeteer is the one that can present an "entire" show.

1.1 - The Scenes (Scenarios)

The plots present in the Mamulengo repertoire vary greatly and mostly refer to subjects of everyday life, such as festivities, work, or social satires. In these passages, the themes orbit around hierarchy inversions, disputes between brave men, sex, food, among others. They also sometimes describe Brazilian myths and superstitions, and religious issues that range from Indian and Afro-Brazilian cults (e.g., *Caboclinhos*, *Xangô*) to Catholic mythology, mostly relating to the Nativity and morality plays.

Santos groups the various scenes of the show under five headings: pretext, narrative, fight, dance and play or plot.

The pretext is an excuse for the puppets to come to the stage without 'logical' justification, just to crack jokes or indulge in wordplay and comical, physical actions.

The narrative scenes are clearly influenced by the *repentes*. These are stories or events narrated in verse by one or two men playing guitars. In this scene the puppets come onstage, tell the story and go offstage.

Fight sequences are very common. Here the puppeteers can show their expertise in moving the puppets and dealing with objects, such as guns, knives and the famous stick.

Dance scenes, accompanied by music, are mostly used to connect two scenes. The puppets' dancing can be comic, with the puppets showing exotic movements, or sensual.

Play or plot scenes are like small plays. Some of them resemble social satires, others are close to moralities and farce, and finally to the *autos.*[2]

The division made by Santos helps us to understand the essence of many passages present in Mamulengo, and is a very convenient rough classification. Nevertheless, in many scenarios the boundaries are not so evident. In some scenes, the

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[1] Zé de Vina, interview, 25 March 2004.

[2] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 142.

diverse elements coming from the passages categorised by Santos may be mixed. One such example is the *Goiaba* passage, which presents elements of fight, dance and also has a more developed plot. Also, dance scenes are frequently used in the opening and closing of the shows.

The 'money collection' scenes are very common, occurring many times during the same show, with the puppeteers using different strategies to make the *quête*. Although Santos does make reference to the practice of *quête,*[3] he does not include this as a specific category. I suggest its inclusion as a separate category because of its essential function in the show.

The scenes described below are the ones that appear in one, or more shows of Zé de Vina, Zé Lopes and João Galego/Marlene Silva.[4]

The Structure of the Scenes

Generally speaking, the more developed scenes present the following dramatic structure:

The music (*baiano*) of the character is introduced. The character enters dancing. After few minutes, a long, loud whistle is heard. The music stops. The character says his/her introductory speech, which always includes this stereotyped formula of introduction: "My job is to greet you all!" followed by "Here I am (the character name)" and finally the character's *loa* (rhyming speech), which is always related to the character's role.[5] The character greets Mateus and the audience. After, a dialogue is developed between them. In this first dialogue, the audience is informed about the character's role and function (who, what, why, when, how) which sets up the structure of the scene to come. The character often refers to one or more audience members, asking questions, making jokes and referring to past events where the person referred to

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[3] Ibid., 59.

[4] Since I attended more shows of Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes than of João Galego/Marlene Silva, the former are referred to more here. The scenes *Vila Nova,* and *Cavaleiro and Baiana,* originating from the *Cavalo-Marinho* performed by Zé de Vina are not described in this section, since they were already described in Chapter Two.

[5] Referring to the European traditional and popular dramatic genres, Burke observes the same pattern of formulae in the characters' speeches. As he writes, "verbal formulae abound, from the simple 'Here comes I' of the English mummers to the more elaborately stereotyped phrases of the Commedia dell'Arte, in which each character has its own repertoire of conceits, the rhetoric of this part." (Burke, *Popular Culture,* 134). Examples of Mamulengo characters' formulae are described further in this section.

is included. The time of this first part of the scene depends on audience participation, and sometimes can last up to 15 minutes. The character then, either leaves the stage, or remains. A second character, not necessarily a subsidiary one, comes onto the stage. Depending on the character's importance, the same introductory structure is repeated: a *baiano* is sung; the character says his/her *loa*; and talks to Mateus and the audience members. If the first characters have already left the stage, the second character is informed by Mateus of the events that have occurred. The first character returns and meets the second one. A conflict occurs between the two, but is finally resolved. A tune is played and the characters dance and then leave the stage.

The scene structure exemplified above is formed by only two characters. When there are more characters, the introductory structure (baiano, loa and dialogue with Mateus and audience) may or may not occur with the others characters. Generally speaking, less important characters do not present the formula of introduction. In this case, the character is introduced by a speech from another character, or else, by Mateus. Although this is the most common practice, however, it is not a fixed rule.

Example of a Scene with Two Characters: *Praxédio and Xoxa*[6]

Praxédio's baiano is heard. Praxédio enters and presents his introductory speech. He tells Mateus that he has been away from home for a long time, and also that he is looking for a new girlfriend. Praxédio starts flirting with female spectators. Mateus reproves him, saying that he should not to do so, since he is a married man. Praxédio does not take Mateus's advice and continues to pursue his conquests. Enter Xoxa (Praxédio's wife). Although Praxédio is on stage, she does not see him. She talks to Mateus and asks about her husband. Mateus shows Praxédio to her. She talks to him complaining about his long absence and asking about the food he was supposed to bring home. He answers saying "people" (he refers to the musicians and audience members) have eaten the food he had bought. This gives rise to a quarrel between them. Praxédio hears a baby crying and asks about the child. Xoxa says it is their new baby. Praxédio suggests Xoxa's possible betrayal, since he has been away from home for more than one year. Ritinha then makes an impossible account of the number of months her pregnancy. Praxédio accepts Xoxa's explanation. The couple make peace and decide to baptize their son. Praxédio ask the audience for a monetary contribution

[6] This character may appear with other names, such as Ritinha.

for the baptism. Mateus collects the money, while Praxédio and Xoxa sing and dance. Finally, they leave the stage.

Unlike Praxédio, Xoxa does not have baiano and loa. But the introductory dialogue with Mateus allows for setting the character role and functions for the scene. Now I pass on to describe examples of the seven types of scenes present in Zé de Vina; Zé Lopes and João Galego's shows. They are organised in the following sequence: opening; play or plot; fight; money collection; pretext; narrative; and dance. As can be observed by the scene descriptions below, their division is not strictly watertight. The scenes derived from the autos are not performed nowadays. For this reason, they are not major part of the discussion carried on in this section, and instead are inserted in the appendix.

Types of Scenes

1 - The opening scenes

The Mamulengo show is frequently opened by clown-type rod puppets controlled by three small sticks. The puppets appear on the stage dancing a very rhythmic dance, which accompanies the rhythm of the character's *baiano*:

"Eh, vem Caroca, Capitão, lá vem Caroca/ Eh, vem Caroca, Capitão, lá vem Caroca"

[Yeah, here comes Caroca, Captain, here comes Caroca/ yeah, here comes Caroca, Captain, here comes Caroca]

Caroca and Catirina

In the shows of Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes, the opening scene is composed of two characters, Caroca, and his wife, Catirina, two small, black dancing rod puppets controlled by three small sticks. Caroca is the first to enter, saluting the audience with a rhyming speech (*loa*):

"Caroca- Chegou Mateus velho do rosário/ com dois cancão na gaiola/ um na parte de dentro/ o outro da parte de fora./ Que diabo é nove que dez não ganha./ Bateu na jaca do velho mendonha,/ cabelo ruim de estoupa seu pai na carreira e tua madrinha, no sufoco."

[Here comes old Mateus of the rosary/ with two birds in the cage/one locked inside/ the other free outside. / What the hell is nine, that never gets a ten. I hit the jack fruit of the old ugly man/ with hideous hair, your father is in a hurry, your good mother in despair.][7]

[7] In composing rhymed speech, the puppeteers make wide use of apparent nonsense language. The translation of this sort of verse is therefore, an extremely difficult task.

After his introductory speech, Caroca establishes an improvised dialogue with Mateus and the audience. Generally, he starts with a salute to the "owner of the ground" that is, the person responsible for the contract of the show. Soon after Catirina enters, dancing a very fast and rhythmic dance. The two puppets establish a conversation based on a conflict, resolve the conflict, and finally, sing, dance, and say their farewell before leaving the stage.

Palhaço Belezinha

In the João Galego and Marlene Silva shows, the introductory scene is presented just by one figure called, Palhaço Belezinha (Pretty Little Clown). After the dancing, he salutes the audience, with special reference to the "owner of the ground". He establishes an improvised dialogue with the audience and leaves the stage.

2 - Play or plot scenes

2.1- Farce and social satire

The plot of this type of passage generally orbits around marital infidelity and ridicule of the authorities.[8] The scene of Simão, Mané Pacaru and Quitéria described below, combines these two topics. Moreover, it also presents a social critique of the exploitation of workers by landowners. However, the critique is always presented in a humorous way. This is mainly represented in the dialogue between Mané Pacaru and Simão with the former relating to Simão the enormous quantity of work he has to do in his farm.[9]

Simão, Mané Pacaru and Quitéria

Simão's baiano is heard. Enter Simão singing and dancing. He presents his introductory speech greeting the audience members and Mateus. Simão tells Mateus he is looking for a job and asks Mateus if any employer passes by looking for an employee, to please call him. Simão leaves. Mané Pacaru's baiano is heard. Mané Pacaru enters and presents his introductory speech. He says he needs an employee and is informed by Mateus about Simão. Mateus calls Simão, who returns to the stage. After an extensive and hilarious interview with Simão, Mané Pacaru hires him, listing all his duties on the

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[8] The Praxédio and Xoxa scene described above, can be included in this category. The scene's central plot refers to the double infidelity by husband and wife. See the full transcript of the scene on the appendix.

[9] See the full transcript of the scene in appendix I.

farm. Mané Pacaru says that he is going to travel and asks Simão to take care of the farm, the house and his wife, stressing not to allow her to dance with anyone. He tells him that when his wife arrives, he should tell her that he went on a trip but will be back soon. They leave. Instrumental music begins. Enter Quitéria. She dances rolling her dress and moving the ribbons and the necklace around her neck. A whistle is heard. The music stops. Quitéria asks Mateus about her husband. Mateus says he went in a trip but left an employee. Mateus calls Simão who enters. Simão, staring at the boss, bends backwards as if delighted by her beauty. He then begins to court Quitéria and asks her for a dance. The music begins again and the two of them dance in a very salacious way, resembling sexual intercourse. Mané Pacaru returns and, catching them in *flagrante delicto*, demands an explanation of his wife. Simão worriedly leaves the scene. The couple argues and Mané Pacaru says Quitéria is no longer his wife and demands that she leave home instantly. Quitéria replies saying that if someone is supposed to leave, it should be Mané Pacaru, since everything there belongs to her. Quitéria bumps her body against Mané Pacaru expelling him from the scene. She complains about her husband to Mateus and audience members, and leaves. Mané Pacaru enters whining, complaining about his fate to Mateus. He sings a melancholic song remembering the good times with his wife. Enter Quitéria. Considering her husband's pleas for reconciliation, she agrees that he may stay. However, she demands that from now on he will allow her to have a good time, enjoy herself and drink. Mané Pacaru agrees saying that "what one cannot see, the heart will not suffer". Then Quitéria sends him home[10] saying she will stay a little bit longer at the party. Mané Pacaru leaves. The music begins and Quitéria dances.

The Doctor and the Sick Man

The Sick-man is a glove puppet with a bulging belly. He enters onstage complaining of sharp pains in the belly. Mateus asks what happened and, always using hyperbolic images, the Sick-man describes the enormous amount of food and drink he has consumed. He asks Mateus for help, for he thinks he will die. Mateus then calls the Doctor. The music of the Doctor starts:

> "Mr. Doctor, Mr. Doctor bring the injection that now, everything will change/ Mr. Doctor, Mr. Doctor bring the injection that now, everything will change."

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[10] Note that the place where the action was taking place (the couple's house) has changed to a party without any explanation. Borba Filho has observed the constant lack of coherence in regard to this subject.

The Doctor enters. The whistle is heard and the music stops. The Doctor makes his introductory speech:

Doctor: I am Doctor Rodolera Pinta Cega Filho de Amansa Boi, where I touch with my finger the vulture puts its beak.[11] Mateus, is there any sick person here?

Mateus indicates the Sick-man. Dr. Rodolera asks what is wrong and the Sick-man tells him about all the food and drink he ingested. The Doctor starts to examine the Sick-man, touching different parts of his body and repeating the same question:

Doctor: Tell me one thing: does it hurt?

Sick-man: It hurts!

The scene continues with the Doctor repeating the same question and changing the place of the touch. When finally he touches the Sick-man's buttocks, the Doctor explains to him that his problem is gas and for that reason, he must apply an injection in order to cure him. The Doctor leaves and comes back with a huge club that is poked into the Sick-man's buttocks. After loud shouts of pain, the Sick-man starts to expel an enormous "worm" from his mouth. The worm is a ribbon of about five meters long that comes out from the orifice. The ribbon is pulled out by Mateus, who walks towards the audience holding the ribbon. Finally, the Doctor requests payment for the treatment. The Sick-man asks Mateus to collect money from the spectators to help him pay the Doctor. The music starts again. The puppets dance while Mateus collects the money.

Inspector and Policemen (Frescal, Inspetor Peinha, Cabo 70 and Sargento)

Frescal[12] enters to ask Mateus and the musicians for the license to present the Mamulengo show. Mateus says he indeed has the license. He starts searching in his pocket, but cannot find it. The Frescal calls him a liar and says he will call the policemen to arrest them (Mateus and musicians). He leaves and immediately comes back followed by Inspector Peinha, Cabo 70 (Corporal 70) and Sargento (Sergeant). Peinha says that without the license the show cannot go on, and that everybody is under arrest. After many arguments between the policemen and Mateus, he finally finds the license (a piece of paper his has in his pocket) and passes it to the Frescal,

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[11] As explained by Zé Lopes, the phrase "the place I touch with my finger the vulture put the beak" means, "the person the Doctor treats certainly will die". (Interview, Glória de Goitá, 14 December 2004).

[12] "Frescal" is a corruption of "Fiscal" (Inspector) that means the tax collector. The word "Frescal" is related to "Fresco" (affected). Here, the puppeteer adds in the character's name his malicious critique over the practice of tax collection.

who holds the license to be read aloud by Peinha. He proceeds to read, giving information about the name of the group, the master puppeteer, Mateus, and musicians. Finally he says they have permission to present their show in a particular place (where the show is taking place) and on a particular date (the date of the show). The Inspector Peinha's baiano is heard:

"I was in the Derby barracks / the captain asked for me / I was called, now, I was called / to ask for a license, here, in this place. / A soldier is good for fighting / I want to see them at war."

The puppets dance and leave.[13]

The Priest and the Sacristan

The priest comes in dancing in the rhythm of his *baiano*:

"Oh oh, the Priest has arrived with the Sheriff and the Judge. Oh oh, there will be a marriage."[14]

Priest- Ladies and gentlemen, good evening! Here I am, the Priest of the Holy Catholic Church. A priest can unite and disunite; a priest can baptise and "unbaptise"; a priest can heal and "unheal". If there is here anyone who wants to confess, I am ready.

Sacristan- Very well Father, very well.

The priest preaches with a mixture of Portuguese and "pig Latin", using words such as "*ejaculorum*", "*domum seculorum*", "*seremum seculorum domum*", and so on. A black woman enters:

Black woman - Good evening, Mateus!

Mateus - Good evening.

Black woman - I am here because I am a Catholic woman and I need to confess and to receive Holy Communion. Is that possible, Mateus?

(Mateus talks to the sacristan who takes her to the priest.)

Black woman - Good evening Father, I came here to confess.

Priest - Sorry, I cannot confess at this time. I am very busy.

Black woman - Please Father, let me confess.

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[13] Scene transcript from Zé Lopes' show, performed in Glória de Goitá on 14 February 2004.

[14] The reference to the presence of the sheriff in wedding ceremonies is very common in Brazilian folk tradition and means that the bride is pregnant and consequently, the bridegroom is forced "by law" to marry.

Priest - Listen, confessions for black people are only possible on Sundays from noon on. Today I do not have the time!

Black woman - If I were a very young woman, very beautiful, with big tits, I bet you would confess me, baptise me and even administer me Holy Communion.

The black woman calls the sacristan and makes malicious comments about the priest. She leaves the stage. A beautiful white woman comes in.

White woman - Good evening, Father.

Priest - Oh . . . Good evening my daughter! (Talking to the audience) This is a real girl! Oh Mateus, this is a real woman! Look what God created, look what a wonder!

(To the white woman) Tell me my daughter, what can I do for you?

(A man from the audience) - Kinky priest!

White woman - Father, I have not been to confession in a long, long time, and now I need to confess!

Priest - So, come here to the confessional and tell me your cute little sins.

(Priest whispers in the white woman's ear. She always responds in a loud voice).

White woman - No Father! Izabela had only two doses of each (she refers to *cachaça*) but she was fine.

(Priest whispers again). White woman - No Father, no, this was only a rumour. Izabela didn't sleep because she didn't want to. The bed was tidy, but there were a lot of drunken men drinking and making noise. So she became very angry and did not sleep!

(The scene continues with the priest recounting a lot of gossip, which the white woman refutes in a very loud voice.) [15]

Priest - Stand up, my daughter!

White woman - Oh Father! Do you think it is possible for me to sing a song?

Priest - If you want to sing Mamulengo songs, Pastoril, cavalo-marinho, samba or forró, they are all big sins! But if the song is one from the Catholic Church, then you can sing.

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[15] The confession is nothing more than a way the puppeteer to weave commentaries on the audience members. All the commentaries made Zé de Vina regarding to me, in fact had happened during my stay in his house.

White woman (sings): "He is a funny priest, he is always squeezing the lemon/. During the day he drinks three little bottles/ and hour after hour he drinks three big bottles/ and he even leaves some / to the sacristan."

Priest- What is this, coquette? How can you sing this song inside this church! So if it works like that, I'll sing a song as well! What is your name?

White woman - Colotilde.

Priest (sings) - "The priest was saying Mass in a chapel in Barling, but when he thought he was going to say a prayer, he said Colotilde my darling!" (The priest begins to insinuate himself to the white woman.)

White woman - Father, I want to learn the song, "Pelo Sinà" (sign of the cross)

Priest: Well, my daughter, the song begins very slowly but ends very rapidly!

(The priest begins to sing a song very slowly and gradually he accelerates the rhythm. As he sings, he shakes his pelvis as if he were having sex).

Priest (sings)- Pelo sinà, pelo sinà, pelo sina, and your babà.

The white woman leaves the stage while the priest is singing. He does not notice this. An old man (her father) comes onstage, holding a big stick. The priest keeps dancing, leaning his pelvis on the old man, thinking he is the white woman:

Priest – (dancing) Oh, my daughter, bite me, kiss me, and make me your ice cream!

The old man gives him a punch to his head. The policemen come in. The priest sees them and runs offstage. The police arrest the old man.[16]

2.2 - Morality

Zangô, Ritinha and Mr. Angu

Zangô travels around the world, doing illegal things. After many years he comes back home to see his mother, Ritinha, a supposed dressmaker who sews pants for men every day. At first, Ritinha does not believe that he is, in fact, her son. At last, she recognizes him and blesses him. They hug and kiss each other. She asks him where on earth he has been all this time. Zangô answers that he has been traveling around the world. After talking with him for some time, Ritinha realizes her son is not totally reliable but even so, she accepts him. In his turn, Zangô is surprised by the manner of his mother. As

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[16] Scene transcript from Zé de Vina's show performed in Feira Nova on 21 December 2004.

the scene unfolds, it becomes evident that Ritinha is not a dressmaker, but is in fact a prostitute. Ritinha tells him that she got married again to a "very young 79 year old man, called Mr. Angu". Then Ritinha calls Mr. Angu and he comes in. Zangô does not like the old man. The two of them have a quarrel and Zangô kills Mr. Angu. When Ritinha realizes she is a widow again she has a nervous breakdown and falls down dead. Zangô says he has to get some money from his stepfather for his mother's coffin and asks Mateus to help him collect money among "his friends in the audience". Zangô leaves the stage and Mateus starts collecting money. The Devil enters and carries off Ritinha and Mr. Angu. Zangô returns and asks Mateus about the couple. Mateus explains that the Devil carried them away. Zangô starts "praying" for his mother, which is in fact a curse, making the situation even worse:

> "Minha Mãe, a senhora morreu/ o que será de tu. / Eu desejo ver seu fim/ no bico do urubu. / Oi, que coisa boa ela morreu / ela morreu, coisa boa / é de xibim, de xibim/ é de xibim, de xibim. / É de baixo pra cima/ de cima pra baixo/ é de xibim, de xibim."
>
> [Mother of mine, you are dead/ what will happen to you/ I wish I could see your end/ at the vulture's beak. / Heah, what a good thing, she is dead/ she is dead, what a good thing. / It is xibim, xibim/ it is xibim, xibim/ it is upwards, from the bottom to the top/ from up till down/ it is xibim, it is xibim.]

Mateus looks at Zangô cursing his mother. Mateus hits Zangô on the head with a stick. Zangô falls down dead on the front of the stage. The Devil comes in again and carries him off. [17]

Bambu and the Death

Bambu (Bamboo) enters. He is a glove puppet with a very pale countenance. He sings a *baiano* and then says his *loa*:

> Bambu- At the Caico River/ a trifle of a whale /it sang as a mermaid/at the Suassu River/dry armadillo tail/is a Mateus loosened thing/I hate those women/who have no hair/and shave even their . . .
>
> Mateus - . . . there.
>
> Bambu - Mateus, good evening!
>
> Mateus - Good evil thing!

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[17] In Zé Lopes, Zangô's mother appears with the name "Fulô-do-Mundo". See the full transcript of the scene in Appendix I.

Bambu - Mateus, I am selling blood. I am too rosy, too healthy, and thus selling blood!

Mateus -You're selling blood!

Bambu - Oh Mateus, I was sleeping this very night and saw a skinny gal, all dressed in white. I think she wants to date me.

While Bambu tells his dream, Death appears behind him accompanied by a high-pitched crescendo made by the puppeteer. Bambu does not see Death and begins to sing a song.)[18]

Bambu (sings) - "I had a dream this very night/I wondered about/I had a dream this very night/I wondered about/ Oh! Death, don't kill me, let me live some more days/yeah, yeah, yeah, Bambu, watch out Death behind you."

Bambu - Mateus!

Mateus - what?

Bambu - This dream, Mateus, what is it?

Mateus - Maybe is that thing there!

Bambu - That thing what, Mateus?

Mateus - That! (He points to Death. Bambu turns and Death hides itself)

Bambu - What, Mateus?

Mateus - It is Death, which walks around the whole world.

Bambu (sings) – "I saw Death arriving/by the side of the road/ I saw Death arriving/by the side of the road/Oh! Death, don't kill me/let me raise my little kids/yeah, yeah, yeah, Bambu, watch out Death's behind you."

Bambu - Mateus!

Mateus - What?

Bambu - Where is she?

Mateus - She's over here, just behind you (Bambu turns but Death hides itself)

Bambu (sings) - "Death wants to kill me/I came to play during lunch-time/Death wants to kill me/ I came to play during lunch-time/ Oh! Death, don't kill me, Death/let me live one more month/ yeah, yeah, yeah, Bambu, watch out Death behind you"

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[18] Unlike the large majority of the songs appearing in Mamulengo, this is a very sad and melancholic melody, where Bambu asks Death not to take him.

(When Bambu stops singing, we hear a sound: uhhhhh!)

Bambu - Mateus!

Mateus - What?

Bambu - Did she fart?

Mateus - She didn't fart, she left.

Bambu - She went away?

Mateus - Went away.

Bambu (sings) - "I had a dream this very night/it gave me a great grief/ I had a dream this very night/it gave me a great grief/Oh! Death, don't kill me, let me live one more year/ yeah, yeah, yeah. Bambu, watch out Death behind you! (While Bambu sings Death enters again).

Mateus - Look! She is over there! (Bambu turns but Death hides herself)

Bambu - You liar! It is a gal who wants to date me! (Sings) "I saw Death fishing / with a creel and a landing-net/ I saw Death fishing / with a creel and a landing-net/ Oh! Death, you don't kill me, only when God wants/ yeah, yeah, yeah, Bambu, watch out Death's behind you."

Bambu then turns around, faces Death and begins to quiver all over. Death comes closer and strikes his neck with a scythe. Bambu falls dead on the play-board. The Devil enters and carries off Bambu. [19]

3 - Fight scenes

Arguments followed by fights occur for many different reasons. They combine elements such as swearing, racial prejudice, women, money, revenge, and so on. The two most popular "fight" passages are: "Joaquim Bozó, Limoeiro, João Redondo da Alemanha e Velho Gangrena" and "Goiaba".

Joaquim Bozó, Limoeiro, João Redondo da Alemanha and Gangrena.

Joaquim Bozó (black fighter) enters and asks for a samba. The music starts, he dances and leaves the stage. Enter Limoeiro (another black fighter) and asks Mateus to

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[19] Scene transcript from Zé Lopes' show, performed in Glória de Goitá on 14 February 2004. The scene was translated by Nelson Maravalhas. Zé Lopes in interview to Alcure mentions that before the entrance of the Devil, two puppets used to come onto the stage carrying a hammock, in which Bambu was placed to be buried. But, nowadays the scene finishes with the Devil. (Alcure, "Mamulengo", 190). In the Northeast region until the middle of twentieth century a hammock, instead of a coffin, was used to bury poor people.

stop that samba and to play a samba from his home region instead. The music changes. Enter Joaquim Bozó and he asks Mateus, who has changed the samba. Mateus indicates Limoeiro. The two characters engage in a discussion followed by beatings with Joaquim Bozó killing Limoeiro. Gangrena (an elderly white male) enters and argues with Joaquim Bozó. They fight and Joaquim Bozó kills Gangrena. Enter João Redondo da Alemanha (another elderly white male) who fights with Joaquim Bozó. Often, the conclusion of the scene depends on the audience, since Mateus stimulates the public to bet which one of the two characters will win the fight. The bets are made in money, the audience members giving small contributions for one or other character to be the final winner. When the conflict is finally resolved, with one or other killed,[20] the policemen (Inspector Peinha, Sergeant and Corporal 70) enter to arrest the killer. They engage in a hilarious fight scene, with the fighter expelling the policemen from the stage.

Goiaba, Carolina and Gangrena

Goiaba (black fighter) arrives at Mané Paulo's party. Goiaba interrupts the samba arguing that "if no lady comes to dance with me, the party is over". Enter Carolina (Mané Paulo and Quitéria's daughter) and she asks Mateus who has interrupted the "samba". Goiaba, seeing Carolina, asks the musicians to play the samba again. He approaches her asking for a dance. She refuses and Goiaba forces Carolina to dance with him. They dance and parody sexual intercourse during the dance. Carolina leaves saying she will complain to her father. Gangrena (Carolina's grandfather) enters and has a discussion with Goiaba. The argument is followed by fighting, with Goiaba killing Gangrena. Than enters Surdo-Gago (Deaf- Stutterer), Gangrena's brother, to avenge his brother's death. They fight and Goiaba also kills him. Enter Mordido do Porco (Pig Bitten), Gangrena's cousin and he meets with the same fate. Enter Estreita, (Gangrena's widow), who is dating men from the audience. When she realizes her husband is dead, she avenges his death by fighting and killing Goiaba. Sometimes she is arrested by the policemen. On other occasions, the scene ends with her asking for a monetary contribution for the coffin of her husband.

4 - Pretext scenes

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[20] As explained by Zé de Vina, the most common winner is Joaquim Bozó. (Interview, Lagoa de Itaenga, 24 March 2004)

Like the dance scenes, a pretext scene may be considered as a type of *intermezzo* that is performed between longer, more developed scenes. They are shorter scenes with the puppets coming onstage to tell jokes and perhaps to make comical physical actions.

Chico da Poica and Bianô

Chico da Poica (Chico of the Pig) enters. He is a black glove puppet with a dirty appearance. He asks Mateus if he has seen his wife, Bianô. Mateus answers that she had been here talking and stealing hens and beans. Chico da Poica calls his wife, imitating the sound of a pig:

Chico of the Poica: "Bianôôôôôô! Oink, oink, oink.

Bianô answers Chico da Poica from offstage, also imitating a pig and then comes onstage. Chico da Poica then recites a verse for his wife, calling attention to her "delightful smell", relating it to horse excrement and urine. The verse ends with Chico da Poica saying that Bianô "is the woman I *estrumo* (esteem)[21] the most in my life".

After the verse, the music starts: "I saw the machinist with the Doctor, Chico da Poica and Bianô. Oh Bianô, Bianô, Chico da Poica and Bianô." The two puppets dance and leave the stage.

Janeiro -Vai - Janeiro - Vem

Janeiro's *baiano* is heard: "Janeiro comes, Janeiro goes, Janeiro comes in; Janeiro goes out."

Janeiro enters dancing, pulling his neck up and down. His movements follow the rhythm and the lyric of the song. The music stops and Janeiro starts making jokes with female spectators. He says he is searching for a nice girl to date. While looking for a new girlfriend, Janeiro extends his neck in a gradual process towards the audience. Finally, his neck is so extended that his head may touch the spectators who move away from him. This playful action invariably produces a loud burst of laughter. Music restart and Janeiro leaves.

Zé Lopes, referring to the name of the character, pointed out that "the name, Janeiro, is a homage to the first month of the year, the month which opens the year, that is, the month through which we know that a new year is starting".[22]

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[21] Here is a pun. Instead of saying 'estimo' (esteem) he says 'estrumo', related to 'estrume', the horse excrement.

[22] Zé Lopes, Interview, Glória de Goitá, 14 December 2004.

Xangô

A song related to the cult of the *orixá* Xangô (an Afro-Brazilian saint) is heard. Quitéria enters onstage dancing. Suddenly, she starts shaking her body continuously, being possessed by a spirit. She falls backward onto the stage in a trance. Her three daughters enter one at a time and have the same spiritual manifestation. The four puppets lie down at the corner of the stage, one over the other. Enter the *mãe-de-santo* (a woman with spiritual qualities) dancing. She leans her body on one of the possessed ladies in order to exorcise the spirit. The *mãe-de-santo*'s body starts shaking continuously, hitting the wings and the roof of the booth. Finally, she calms down and the young lady gets up. The *mãe-de-santo* touches her right shoulder on the left shoulder of the lady, and vice-versa. The lady leaves. The same sequence is repeated with the other three characters. The music is played throughout the scene, which ends with the *mãe-de-santo* dancing. [23]

In the Zé de Vina shows I attended he did not performed the *Xangô* scene. Nevertheless Alcure points out that in Zé de Vina's show, which she attended, the *Xangô* scene was played by a *Xangozeiro*: "The puppet has a pipe in his mouth and *guias,* that is special necklaces dedicated to the *orixás* [Afro-Brazilian saints], which the devout carry hung around the neck or crossed in the chest." The *Xangozeiro* appears in the scene offering his spiritual services, which include the cure of sicknesses, palm reading, and the exorcism of the spirits. A sequence of characters appears onstage to request his services. Finally, the *Xangozeiro* is arrested by the policemen. As noted by Alcure, this is a clear allusion to the persecution suffered by these cults in Pernambuco.[24]

Caso-Sério, Xoxa and Xibana[25]

Caso Sério (Serious Case) is man who has a bad habit of sticking out his tongue at the people, and does not trust anyone. He enters and, while he is talking to

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[23] This scene is presented by Zé Lopes and João Galego/Marlene Silva.

[24] Alcure, *Mamulengo*, 208-9. In the research done in Recife Public Archive, I could see many documents related to the political repression of these cults, which was carried on until the 1970s.

[25] The scene is represented by both Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes. Nevertheless the two human characters bear different names. In Zé de Vina's Mamulengo they are called Caso-Sério and Xoxa, while in Zé Lopes they appear as Tá-prá-Você and Estreita. Note that Zé Lopes uses the name Estreita for the character appearing in the scene with the bird Jacu. Moreover, in Zé Lopes' show Xoxa appears as the wife of Praxédio. As mentioned earlier, female characters are less fixed than the male ones.

the audience, a snake (Xibana) appears behind him. Mateus advises him of the snake's presence, but Caso Sério does not believe him and keeps talking to the spectators. Finally, Caso Sério sees the snake and they start a fight that ends with Caso Sério been swallowed by Xibana. A sequence of characters enters to fight against the snake, but they have the same fate. Enter Xoxa, an old woman and tames Xibana. Xoxa put her head inside the snake's open jaw, make signals with her hand and the snake obeys; and finally, they dance. The scene ends with the snake following Xoxa off the stage.[26]

5 - Narrative scenes

Os Violeiros (The Guitar-Players) or Os Glosadores

A pair of hand puppets comes onstage. Both have a guitar slung around their necks. One of them is drunk and holds a bottle while the other is sober. They narrate (in form of a song) a story in verse. The sober sings in key, the drunk off key. One is called Tapagem da Cachoeira, and the other, Cachoeira da Tapagem. One is son of Maria Miquelina, the other of Miquelina Maria. One lives in a house number 81, the other in 18, and so on. As can be observed, they act as a mirror-image. One of the stories narrated/sung is about a poor man who makes love with the wife of a rich man. The two characters take it in turns to recite/sing verses. At the beginning, the sober one gets the better results, since his verses are coherent and show proper rhymes. However, as the scene develops, the inebriated puppet gives *aguardente* (a strong spirit) to the sober one and in the end, both are completely drunk. One of the puppets vomits over the audience.[27] The scene ends with the arrival of the police and the arrest of both characters.[28]

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[26] Zé Lopes explanation for this scene is that "it was created by an old puppeteer from this region [Glória de Goitá, Zona da Mata Pernambuco] as homage to an old woman, a famous midwife and witch, whose house was inhabited by lots of snakes and frogs. People said she dominated all of them". (Interview, Glória de Goitá 14 February 2004). As we can be observed from Zé Lopes' recount, the plot of the Mamulengo is being woven through the imagination of the puppeteer's themselves, who look for explanations for the roots of their art. Once again, women appear as having super-natural qualities.

[27] The 'vomit' is passed through a mechanism out of the puppet's mouth.

[28] Another version of this scene presented by Zé de Vina was transcribed by Alcure. In the scene the two puppets present a long and elaborate sequence of verses about a journey of a drunkard. In his journey the drunk faces up to various situations and persons. Finally, he meets Death who carries him to hell. (Alcure, *Mamulengos*, 183-5). The story resembles an epic. Zé de Vina, once more shows his deep repertoire of verses and great memorization ability.

Another scene that can fit within this category is the Caboclinhos already described.

6 - Money collection scenes

Chica-do-Cuscuz and Pisa-Pilão

Very lively music with a fast rhythm begins. Enter Pisa-Pilão (or Pisa-Milho) "grinding the corn" and Chica do Cuscuz, (Chica of the Couscous)"sieving the corn". The puppet movements follow the rhythm of the music with Chica shaking her body and moving the sieve to the right and to the left. Chica do Cuscuz is a couscous-maker who comes onstage to sell her "couscous". The "couscous" consists of verses made-up by the master puppeteer that are inspired by the names of the audience members. The "buyers" pay for the verses with money, which is either collected by Mateus or directly placed in Chica's sieve.

The first verse sung by Chica is always offered to the owner of the venue where the show is taking place or to the contractor of the show:

"Pisei no fogo, espalhei a brasa/ pisei no fogo, espalhei a brasa/

o primeiro cuscuz é pro dona da casa, pisa pilão / olha pilão, pisa meu pilão, vou pisando, vou pilando."

[I trod on the fire, I scattered the coal/ I trod on the fire, I scattered the coal/ the first couscous goes to the owner of the house/ Look at the pestle/ I'm grinding the pestle down.]

From that beginning on, new names of couscous buyers emerge. If the buyers do not appear immediately, Chica (the master puppeteer) sings some already memorized verses, like the one below that it is offered to the women of the audience:

"Carne de porco é sarapaté/ carne de porco é sarapaté

agora eu vou entrar pra fazer um cuscuz pra vender as mulhé/

pisa pilão/olha pilão/ pisa meu pilão/ vou pisando, vou pilando"

[Pigs' meat is *sarapaté*[29] /Pigs' meat is *sarapaté*

Now I will make a couscous to sell to the women/

Look at the pestle/ I'm grinding the pestle down.]

Chica also sings verses announcing who has already bought her couscous, including in the verse the amount received:

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[29] A dish made with pig meat.

"Pra moça sadia veio o bacalhau / pra moça sadia, veio o bacalhau

a família de Zé Gomes me deu três real/

pisa pilão/olha pilão/ pisa meu pilão/ vou pisando, vou pilando."

[For the healthy lady came the mackerel / for the healthy lady came the mackerel / the family of Zé Gomes gave me three *real*[30]/ Look at the pestle/ I'm grinding the pestle down].

The duration of the scene depends on the amount of "couscous" requested by the audience. Sometimes, the couscous is offered by one person to another, such as by a man to a woman (girlfriend or wife) or by one friend to another. If the orders are few, the mamulengueiro chooses people from among the audience he knows have a better economic situation, offering them the couscous. This facilitates the collection of the best possible amount of money during the scene.

The scene ends with Chica-do-Cuscuz showing her gratitude to the audience, which may be expressed in form of a verse, or just a farewell.

The Blind Man and his Guide[31]

Adelaido is a blind man with a bad temper. He enters onstage with his guide, asking for alms and citing nominally some members of the audience.

Adelaido - (cites a name) . . . please, give alms to the blind-man! If you want to give, give! If not, fuck yourself! (Mateus than, collects the money from the person referred to)

Adelaido- Did he/she give, Mateus?

Mateus –Yes, he/she did!

Adelaido – For sure he/she gave?

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[30] *Real* is the Brazilian currency.

[31] The Blind man and the Guide seem to be a stock scene going back to medieval theatre. The French *confrèrie de la Passion* in 1420, performed a series of plays about the miracles of Saint Geneviève. In one Miracle, among the monologue complaints of various victims who present themselves to be healed by the saint, is a short scene between a blind man and his guide - a scabrous and deceitful boy named Hannequin. (. . .) A much earlier manuscript, dating from 1266 contains a similar scene of crude farce known as *Le Garçon et l'Aveugle* (The Boy and the Blind Man) and is set in the Tournai region of France. Its existence suggests that this playlet was traditionally popular and may well have been performed by wandering professional mimes. (Davis, *Farce*, 11) Moreover, "Cego e o Moço" (Blind and the Boy) was one of the most common farce that interspersed the eighteenth century Portuguese, *'presepios melodramaticos'* (melodramatic cribs).

Mateus – Yes, he/she gave!

Adelaido- He/she gave because they want to, since I do not need their charity! They gave because they want to show off!

The scene is repeated for some time, with Mateus collecting money from the people nominated by the Blind man. As pointed out by Zé de Vina, the audience is delighted by the blind-man's bad temper and many spectators give the money in order to see the character's reaction.

Estreita and the Bird Jacu

Estreita is one of the many widows appearing in Mamulengo. As indicated before, the widows are generally introduced with the following baiano:

"Oh Little Widow, Little Widow, put the scarf around your neck. Go and cry for your husband, because he died of heartbreak"

In this scene she recounts how she became very poor after the death of her husband. But, one day, she found a miraculous bird, Jacu, who lays an enormous egg that has "dozens of yolks". Thanks to Jacu's egg, Estreita is able to survive. Then, she introduces Jacu to the audience and the bird lays the egg, which is collected by Mateus or by a spectator. The egg is "sold" to one or more audience members allowing for monetary contribution.[32]

Little Widow and the Coffin

The widow is looking for a new husband asks the male spectators "who wants her". An old retired man enters and asks if she wants to be his wife. She accepts and he invites her for a dance. The couple dances to an animated tune. Suddenly the widow realizes he is dead. She starts shaking his loose body and crying in despair. She asks the audience for money in order for her to buy a coffin to bury him. She leaves. A tune is played while the intermediary collects the money. The widow comes back carrying a coffin and places it on the play board. The following sequence is hilarious, with the widow trying to place her "ex-future" husband's corpse inside it.[33] Finally, she reaches her goal and leaves the stage carrying the coffin.

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[32] This scene is presented by Zé Lopes and Zé de Vina.

[33] Scene presented by João Galego and Marlene Silva. In Pulcinella and Punch puppet theatres, the protagonists present a similar playful action trying to place a corpse inside a coffin.

The collection of money appears at various stages throughout the show. Some examples of the *quête* occurring in other scenes are: Praxédio and Ritinha, who collect money for the baptism of their baby; Zangô, who collects for the coffins of Ritinha and Mr. Angu; during the Dance of Quitérias, when the audience gives money for one or another puppet to dance.

7 - Dance scenes

As mentioned before, dance scenes are accompanied by music and are mostly used to connect two scenes. The most recurrent is the dance of the Quitérias, where three or four female rod puppets come onstage to dance. The puppets have articulated hips which allow for sensual movements. Due to the puppets' provocative manner, in general the participation of the male members of the audience during the scene is very active. Since this scene has no dialogue, it is commonly performed by the helpers and may be presented more than once in the same show. This allows for the master puppeteer to have some rest during the show.

1.2 - Types of Variations

The puppeteer varies his shows by choosing the scenes he will present; by rearranging the order in which the scenes appear; by either extending or shortening the scenes; and finally, by making changes within the scenes. In this case, he may include or exclude characters, or perhaps even fuse two or more characters into one; he may displace stereotyped phrases, comic formulae and jokes from one character to another or include new ones; he may change attributes of some characters, such as name, profession, marital status and so on. In these cases, the changes may produce a modification to the speeches or even the content of the scene. However, the scene structure is always maintained. Like the orally transmitted text, the variations that exist in Mamulengo are products of the conflict between tradition and improvisation.[34] Thus, the traditional scenes cannot vary to such a degree that they became unrecognizable for the audience.

Moreover, the puppeteer can make his show distinct by creating new scenes. These may be made up in advance, or created during the performance itself.

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[34] See: Burke, *Popular Culture*, 89-115 and Kelly, *Petrushka*, 61-79.

Depending on its success in terms of audience response, the new scene may be incorporated into the puppeteer's repertoire.

I now pass on to describe some variations observed in the Mamulengo shows I attended.

Choosing and rearranging the order of the scenes

The process of selecting and ordering the scenes is primarily defined by the number of scenes the puppeteer is able to present. Nevertheless, it is also influenced by the performance context, that is, the time available for the show and the type of audience at whom the show is directed. Moreover, the audience may interfere in the selection of scenes.

In order to understand how the puppeteer makes his shows distinct from one another, we shall analyse the processes of Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes.[35] The eight shows analysed (four from each puppeteer) were performed for a mixed audience (adults and children)[36], and without a fixed finishing time. But the duration of the shows presented variations, and as I shall elaborate upon further, these are mostly related to audience participation. With the exception of one show of Zé Lopes, all were performed in outside spaces.

Firstly, I will point out the sequence of scenes appearing in each of the four shows presented by both puppeteers (Tables 1 and 2). Secondly, by comparing the performances, it is possible to demonstrate a pattern of selection that guides each one of them.

1) Zé de Vina's process

Zé de Vina asserts that nowadays he has about twenty-five passages ready to be performed. In the four performances attended, he presented a total of twenty-two different scenes. As mentioned before, puppets dancing are presented throughout the shows, appearing at different times in many passages. In this case, the dance is one of the many actions occurring in the scene. Nevertheless, there is one scene that has no plot and is basically centered in the figures of three or four rod puppets (the Quitérias), who come onstage just to dance. This is the one I labeled "dance scene". As can be observed in the

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[35] Since I attended just two shows of João Galego and Marlene Silva, I consider this insufficient to establish a comparative study, so I opted to use just Zé de Vina's and Zé Lopes's processes in my analysis.

36 In the shows of longer duration, however, from a certain time (generally 11 pm), the audience was most composed of male adults.

tables, in some of the shows, this scene appears more than once. However, in the final account they are all placed under the general heading of "dance scene".

Show 1 was presented in Feira Nova, a small city of Zona da Mata Pernambuco, on 21 December 2003. The show was performed in an open area in front of a bar. It started at 8pm and finished at 01:30am.

Show 2 was performed at Cachoerinha Sugar Industries, located in the rural area of Escada, Pernambuco, on 24-5 December 2003. The Mamulengo show was one of the many attractions of the Sugar Industry Christmas festival that last the whole night. Due to the lack of sound amplification, and the enormous amount of sound in the area, the show was interrupted many times, thus, it was not possible to measure its precise duration.

Show 3 was performed on a *sitio* (a small farm) located in the rural area of Vitória de Santo Antão, Pernambuco, on 30 January 2004. It started at 9pm and finished at 2:30am.

Finally, Show 4 was performed close to Zé de Vina's house in Lagoa de Itaenga, on 06 March 2004. It started at 7:30pm and finished at 10pm.

The scenes were selected and ordered as follows:

Table 1

Show 1	**Show 2**	**Show 3**	**Show 4**
Number of Scenes 13	**Number of Scenes 08**	**Number of Scenes 15**	**Number of Scenes 11**
Feira Nova 21/12/2003	**Usina Cachoeirinha 25/12/2003**	**Vitória de St. Antão 30/01/2004**	**Lagoa de Itaenga 06/03/2004**
Caroca and Catirina	Caroca and Catirina	Caroca and Catirina	Caroca and Catirina
Simão, Mané Pacaru and Quitéria	Simão, Mané Pacaru and Quitéria	Simão, Mané Pacaru and Quitéria	Vila Nova, Paiaça and Baiana
Joaquim Bozó and João Redondo da Alemanha	Chica-do-Cuscuz and Pisa-Pilão	Joaquim Bozó and João Redondo da Alemanha	Simão, Mané Pacaru and Quitéria
Frescal, Inspetor Peinha, Cabo 70 and Sargento	Joaquim Bozó and João Redondo da Alemanha	Frescal, Inspetor Peinha, Cabo 70 and Sargento	Dance scene
Mane Foié Fotico	Dance scene	Chica-do-Cuscuz and Pisa-Pilão	Politician and voters
Glosadores	João Carcundo and Frevo	Doctor and Sick-man.	Chica-do-Cuscuz and Pisa-Pilão
Chica-do-Cuscuz and Pisa-Pilão	Frescal, Inspetor Peinha, Cabo 70 and Sargento	Dance scene	Joaquim Bozó and João Redondo da Alemanha
Doctor and Sick-man	Caboclinhos	Zangô, Ritinha and Seu Angu	Widow and Policemen
Dance scene	Dance scene	Priest and Sacristan	Frescal, Inspetor Peinha, Cabo 70 and Sargento
Bom- na- Rasteira and Dois-mais-um		Caboclinhos	Zangô, Ritinha e Seu Angu
Priest and Sacristan		Praxédio and Ritinha	Dance scene
Caboclinhos		Blind-men and Guide	Caso Sério, Xoxa and the snake
Zangô, Ritinha and Seu Angu		Janeiro-vai-Janeiro-vem	
Dance scene		Glosadores	
		Vila Nova, Paiaça and Baiana	

By comparing the scenes appearing in the four shows, we can observe the following:

Six scenes appear in all shows. They are: Caroca and Catirina; Simão, Mané Pacaru and Quitéria; Joaquim Bozó and João Redondo da Alemanha[37]; Frescal, Inspetor Peinha, Cabo 70 and Sargento; Chica-do-Cuscuz and Pisa-Pilão and the Dance scene. Two scenes appear in three shows. They are: Zangô, Ritinha and Seu Angu; and Caboclinhos. Four scenes appear in two shows: Vila Nova, Cavaleiro and Baiana; Glosadores (or Violeiros scene); Priest and Sacristan; and the Doctor and Sick-man. That leaves ten other scenes which appear in just one show each: Mane Foié Fotico; Bom- na- Rasteira e Dois-mais-um (another fight scene); The Blind-man and Guide; Janeiro-vai-Janeiro-vem; the Widow and Policemen; Politician and voters; Praxédio and Ritinha; Caso Sério, Xoxa and the snake; and João Carcundo (John Hunchback) and Frevo.

On the basis of this rather limited sample we can say that six scenes are essential for the staging of the show, since they appear in all performances. Hence, they may be considered as the core of Zé de Vina's Mamulengo.

As we can see, the beginning of the show consists of constant features, with the introductory scene (Caroca and Catirina) followed by the "Simão, Mané Pacaru e Quitéria" scene. Only in the fourth show were these two scenes interspersed with the "Vila Nova, Paiaça and Baiana" scene. After this first part, the show presents a more variable sequence of scenes.

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[37] The number of characters appearing in this scene varies. Besides Joaquim Bozó and João Redondo da Alemanha (constant characters), Limoeiro (a black fighter) and Gangrena (a white elderly man) are the second most constant characters appearing in this scene. Depending on the audience response, other "fighters" may appear. They are: Bom-na -Rasteira (Good-with-Trick); Dois-mais-Um (Two-plus-One); Bom-na-Faca (Good-with-Knife); etc. As can be observed in the show 1, a fight scene between Bom-na -Rasteira (Good-with-Trick) and Dois-mais-Um (Two-plus-One) was presented separately. In this case it may be considered an independent scene.

2) Zé Lopes's process

In the four performances attended, he presented a total of seventeen different scenes.

Show 1 took place in the small farm (*sitio*) "Lagoa Queimada", in the rural area of Feira Nova, Pernambuco, on 14 December 2003. It started at 8 pm and finished at 1:30am.

Show 2 was presented in another small farm in the rural area of Glória de Goitá, Pernambuco, on 20 December 2003. It started at 8:30pm and finished at 2.30am.

Show 3 took place in the main square of Zé Lopes' city, Glória de Goitá, on 14 February 2004. It started at 8:30pm and finished at 10:30pm.

Show 4 took place in the Galpão do Mamulengo (Mamulengo Shed), located in Glória de Goitá on 17 March 2004. The show started at 7:30pm and finished at 10:30pm.

The scenes were selected and ordered as follows:

Table 2

Show 1	**Show 2**	**Show 3**	**Show 4**
Scenes presented – 11	**Scenes presented – 14**	**Scenes presented – 12**	**Scenes presented – 13**
Sitio – Lagoa Queimada 14/12/2003	**Sitio - Glória de Goitá 20/12/2003**	**Glória de Goitá 14/02/2004**	**Lagoa Nova 17/03/2004**
Caroca and Catirina	Caroca and Catirina	Caroca and Catirina	Caroca and Catirina
Inspector and Policemen	Violeiros	Inspector and Policemen	Inspector and Policemen
Goiaba, Carolina, Gangrena	Goiaba, Carolina, Gangrena	Goiaba, Carolina, Gangrena	Goiaba, Carolina, Gangrena
Violeiros	Dance scene	Simão, Mané Paulo and Quitéria	Violeiros
Dance scene	Simão, Mané Paulo and Quitéria	Chica-do-Cuscuz and Pisa-Pilão	Simão, Mané Paulo and Quitéria
Simão, Mané Paulo and Quitéria	Doctor and sick-man	Praxédio e Xoxa	Chica-do-Cuscuz and Pisa-Pilão
Chica-do-Cuscuz and Pisa-Pilão	Chica-do-Cuscuz and Pisa-Pilão	Bambu and Death	Tá-pra-você, Estreita and Xibana
Estreita and the bird Jacu	Tá-pra-você, Estreita and Xibana	Janeiro-vem-Janeiro-vai	Caboclinhos
Caboclinhos	Joaquim Bozó and João Redondo da Alemanha	Violeiros	Zangô and Fulô do Mundo
Praxédio e Xoxa	Zangô and Fulô do Mundo	Joaquim Bozó and João Redondo da Alemanha	Dance scene
Dance scene	Caboclinhos	Xangô	Xangô
	Xangô	Dance scene	Politician and voters
	Politician and voters		Doctor and sick-man
	Praxédio e Xoxa		Dance scene
	Dance scene		

By comparing the scenes appearing in the four shows, we can observe the following:

Five scenes appear in all shows. They are: Caroca and Catirina; Simão, Mané Paulo and Quitéria; Goiaba, Carolina and Gangrena[38]; Chica-do-Cuscuz and Pisa-Pilão and the Dance scene. Five scenes appear in three shows: Inspector and Policemen; Praxédio and Xoxa; Violeiros (Guitar Players); Xangô (the incorporation of spirits); and Caboclinhos. Five scenes appear in two shows: Tá-pra-Você, Estreita and Xibana; Joaquim Bozó and João Redondo da Alemanha; the Politician and the voters; the Doctor and the sick-man; and Zangô e Fulô-do-Mundo. Three scenes appear in only one show: Velha Estreita and the bird Jacu; Bambu and the Death; and Janeiro-vai-Janeiro-vem.

According to these samples we can say that five scenes are essential for the staging of the show, since they appear in all performances. Thus, they might be considered as the core of Zé Lopes's Mamulengo. They are: Caroca and Catirina; Simão, Mané Paulo and Quitéria; Goiaba, Carolina and Gangrena; Chica-do-Cuscuz and Pisa-Pilão (quête scene) and the Dance scene (female rod puppet dance scene).

Like Zé de Vina's, the beginning of Zé Lopes's show has virtually the same arrangement, with the introductory scene (Caroca and Catirina) being followed by "Inspector and Policemen" and "Goiaba, Carolina and Gangrena". Only in Show 2, the "Inspector and Policemen" scene is replaced by "Violeiros" scene.

On the basis of this rather limited samples and comparing the two processes, we can say that Zé de Vina's show, which is composed of 40% of the same scenes and 60% of variable scenes, presents more variations than Zé Lopes.[39]

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[38] Like Zé de Vina's fight scene, the number of fighting characters in this scene varies. Besides the constant characters Goiaba (the young black male character) and Gangrena (the white elderly male character), others may appear. The most frequent are: Surdo-Gago (Deaf- Stutterer), Gangrena's brother; the Widow, Gangrena's wife; Mordido de Porco, (Pig-Bitten), Gangrena's cousin.

[39] The differences observed, I think, is related to the experience of the two mamulengueiros. Zé de Vina is an old puppeteer, with a huge experience and a profound knowledge of the various scenes. He is one of the last surviving puppeteers pertained to the old generation. Zé Lopes pertained to a younger generation of puppeteer and had learned the majority of the passages from Zé de Vina, whom he considered as one of his master. The influence of Zé de Vina can be seen in diverse elements of Zé Lopes Mamulengo.

Shortening and/or extending the scenes

To clarify the process of shortening and extending the scenes, I will compare Zé Lopes' second and third shows described above, since they demonstrate this process. The second show took place in a small farm (*sitio*) in the rural area of Glória de Goitá on 20th of December 2003, and Show 3 in the main square of his city, Glória de Goitá on 14th of February 2004. In the *sitio* the performance lasted six hours (from 8:30pm to 2:30am) and was composed of fourteen scenes. In the city square it lasted two hours (from 8:30pm to10:30pm), where Zé Lopes performed twelve scenes. Nine scenes were present in both performances.

By analyzing the nine scenes, I observed that the story line and the number of characters were the same in the *sitio* and city performances. The changes operating in the scenes were mostly related to the interplay between the audience and the puppets (puppeteer) plus the intermediary Mateus. The audience was very active in the *sitio* performance and the puppeteer took advantage of this to lengthen the scenes.

In regard to the fight scene between Joaquim Bozó (the young black male character) and João Redondo da Alemanha (the elderly white male character) performed in the *sitio*, Mateus stimulated the public to bet on which one of the two characters would win the fight. The bets were made in money, the audience members giving what they could offer. It truly divided the audience, which reflected the audience's divisions of age and race. The public participated actively, which provided a good money collection.[40] This scene lasted at least 40 minutes, with Goiaba winning by killing Gangrena.

Moreover, the conversation between puppets, Mateus and audience was much more developed, with the puppeteer, the intermediary and the public feeling very relaxed about exposing their opinions. As discussed on Chapter V, the audience interplay is one of the most important factors in the process of lengthening the scenes, and thus in shaping the Mamulengo show itself.

Changes in the scenes

In order to exemplify a process of change I will compare the "Caroca and Catirina" scene appearing both in Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes shows. Although the scene

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[40] The money collected in this sort of scene goes to the group to complete the basic payment made by the contractor. In this case, it was the owner of the *sitio*.

structure is basically the same in the shows of the two puppeteers, some variations make the two scenes distinct from one another.

In Zé de Vina's shows, Caroca and Catirina are dressed in colourful, bright costumes similar to those appearing in Maracatu folguedo. Their conversation (and conflict) orbits around the fact that Catirina entered in "an unsuitable manner for a married woman", as Caroca suggests, "moving your body inappropriately, and showing off yourself". Catirina replies to the criticism by saying that "I'm married but I'm not dead, and I just want to have fun". After some more disagreements, the couple finally makes up, dances, sings, and leaves the stage.

In Zé Lopes show, Caroca and Catirina are portrayed as farm-workers, as represented by their clothes and props. They are poorly dressed. Caroca carries instruments used in the country, such as a *cabaça* (water container) and a hoe. Catirina carries a bundle on her head and a small white baby (an undressed small white plastic doll) and has a prominent belly, which indicates her pregnancy. The couple's conversation is based around the colour of the baby, which suggests Catirina's "possible infidelity", since the two characters are black, while the baby is white. This gives rise to an argument between them, with Caroca refusing to accept the newborn as his own child. Catirina replies that "when the baby was being delivered, he fell down inside a pan full of white flour, thus remaining white." After debating the fact with Mateus and with the audience, Caroca finally accepts Catirina's explanation. The scene ends with the couple leaving the stage dancing.

Creation of new scenes

The creation of new scenes may occur in advance, or be created during the performance itself. Zé de Vina's "Mané Foié Fotico" passage is a good example to illustrate the latter process. Zé de Vina recounts that during one his Mamulengo performances, he observed that some of the audience members were making jokes about a male homosexual, who was among the public. He recounts the incident as follows:

> Everybody in the city [Lagoa de Itaenga] knew the guy was gay, since he did not hide that from anyone. Thus, someone from the audience started saying he could date one of the puppets, who was on the stage at that moment. The man accepted the jokes and started to interact with the puppet. That gave me an idea! I had made a puppet that I found looked just like a gay, because of his delicate facial features. The puppet had never participated in any of my shows. So, I took the puppet and he entered onto the stage introducing himself

as 'Mané Foié Fotico'. I already had his name in mind because, from the time I had made him, I found he looks like this name. Thus, Mané Foié Fotico entered onto the stage calling the gay guy, 'my fellow'. Mané Foié Fotico talked to the man, recollecting things they had done together. The man answered, playing with the puppet. Then, entered the Inspector Peinha, asking Mané Foié Fotico what he was doing there and saying that he must go home, because he was making a big fuss, and so on! Mané Foié Fotico replied, calling the Inspector "my fellow", and making references to the meetings they have had before. Peinha replied and they started an argument, which finished with Mané Foié Fotico beating Peinha. The scene was very good, the audience laughed a lot! Next weekend I went to present the Mamulengo in a neighboring area, and then someone came and asked me if I was going to present the scene again. So I did, and I created new situations and speeches for Mané Foié Fotico. This is a scene that the public enjoy a lot![41]

This passage illustrates well how the puppeteers use the immediate context and the audience response as inspiration for their creative process.[42]

Nevertheless, the creation of new scenes may also be the result of a strategy to adapt the show for a particular context. One such example is João Galego's "The Teacher and the Pupils" passage. He explains the scene was the result of his experience of performing at schools:

> I wanted to make homage to the teachers, showing the value of their work as opposed to the low recognition they have from the Government. The teachers should be the best paid professionals, but you know how low their incomes are. Moreover, I wanted to give a good example for the children, so, I created this scene to be part of the shows I present for children." [43]

The scene shows a female teacher trying to teach her students how important it is to go to school, to study and to do their homework. But the pupils (represented by two glove puppets) just want to have fun and to make jokes at the teacher and reply to her advice by saying: "we just want to eat the school lunch, to play at the break time, and

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[41] Zé de Vina, Interview, 25 March 2004.

[42] As the research has show so far, Mané Foié Fotico seems to be the first homosexual character appearing in Mamulengo. This may be understood as another influence of television on Mamulengo. From the middle of the 1990s, homosexuality has appeared openly as a subject in Brazilian soap-operas, breaking a long-existing taboo.

[43] João Galego and Marlene Silva, interview, 09 February 2004.

have fun!" After a long conversation with her pupils, the teacher finally reaches her goal. The scene ends with the pupils agreeing with the teacher and obeying her. [44]

João Galego's report is a good example of how the puppeteers adapt their shows to different contexts. With the schools being one of the possible places to perform, and the show being more directly designated for young audiences, variations such as this have become more and more visible in the Mamulengo shows.

Scenes like "Mané Foié Fotico", and the "the teacher and the pupils" may be learned by other puppeteers, and may be incorporated in their shows. As time goes by, they may become part of the repertoire of traditional scenes.

Inclusion, exclusion and fusion of characters

1) Inclusion of a recently created character: In the scene "Janeiro Vai Janeiro Vem", the character is traditionally presented alone. The scene presented by Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes basically consists of Janeiro telling jokes while his neck goes up and down. In João Galego's show, Janeiro appears with his wife, a puppet with the same structure and technical aspects of control. The inclusion of the new character allows for a more developed scene, where the two puppets speak and play with their extending necks.

2) Fusion of two characters: Captain Mané Paulo (the landowner) appearing in Zé Lopes's Mamulengo is clearly the fusion of two characters of Zé de Vina: the Captain Mané Pacaru and the Politician. The former plays the traditional scene "Simão, Mané Pacaru and Quitéria", already described. 'The Politician' is a distinct scene, played by a distinct puppet, where a prefecture candidate comes onstage to announce his campaign. The Politician explains his hilarious political platform to the audience; meets two female characters (voters); and asks for their votes in the next elections.

In the Zé Lopes show, Captain Mané Paulo, besides being a landowner (and playing the traditional scene with Simão and Quitéria) plays the same "Politician and the voters" scene of Zé de Vina's show.

Relocation and combination of comic formulae and stereotyped phrases

It is common practice among the puppeteers to use the same stereotyped comic formulae for different characters. This can occur even in the same show. One frequently appearing is one character's description of his or her supposed wealth,

[44] Scene presented on the show performed on 28 February in Carpina.

which is immediately contradicted by the following line spoken by the same character. This comic formula always appears in the form of dialogue:

Character 1 - I am very rich! I have a very big farm with two thousand kilometres!

Character 2 - Oh, two thousand kilometres! It's big, it's big!

Character 1 - Yeah, two thousand kilometres including the sea. Moreover, in my farm I have two hundred head of cattle!

Character 2 - Oh, two hundred head of cattle, you are really rich!

Character 1 - Yeah, two hundred head of cattle, all in skulls! Also, I have five hundred goats.

Character 2 - Oh, five hundred goats is a lot of goats!

Character 1 - Yeah, all blind-goats.[45] Besides, I have one thousand houses.

Character 2 - Oh, but that is too much, one thousand houses!

Character 1 - Yeah, one thousand houses, but houses of hornets.

This comic formula may present a long list of possessions and the following deconstruction. In Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes shows, the lines of character 1 are spoken by the landowner (Mané Pacaru and Mané Paulo respectively), and the lines of character 2 by Mateus. The landowner's lines are not directed to any "puppet character", since he is just relating his possessions to Mateus. Hence, we may interpret the use of the dialogue in this case as the character "showing off" directly to the audience.

Moreover, in Zé Lopes's show, this joke appears in the speech of another character, Praxédio, the amorous married man, who is always trying to date any young woman from the audience. In this scene, the lines of character 1 are spoken by Praxédio, who tells Mateus (lines of character 2), how he will conquer a new girl-friend. Thus, the narrated list of possessions is one of his strategies to reach his goal.

In João Galego's show, this comic formula appears in the scene of the widow (lines of the character 2) and her "next future" husband (lines of character 1). Here, the dialogue is used in a similar situation to the Praxédio scene. The widow's "next-future" husband is showing off to her.

The structure of the dialogue appearing in the shows is the same. However, the list of possessions (and the following deconstruction) may present variations.

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[45] Blind-goat (cabra-cega) is a popular children game.

Another type of variation is the combination of some lines of different introductory rhyming speech (*loa*). Joaquim Bozó's character nearly always introduces himself with the line: "Sou Joaquim Bozó, morador em grota funda/ quebrador de cabeça, rebentador de carcunda" (I'm Joaquim Bozó, who lives in a deep gutter/ a head breaker and back buster), but after this first line, different adjectives are added to describe the bravery of the character.

In Zé de Vina's show, Joaquim Bozó's speech is as follows:

> "Sou Joaquim Bozó, morador em grota funda/ quebrador de cabeça, rebentador de carcunda./ É isso Zé, carne de porco, sarapaté/ camisa engomada, colarinho em pé/ cheguei derretendo, o cassete na mão e a faca comendo./ Meu bigode é um 'S', uma ponta sobe e outra desce."
>
> [I'm Joaquim Bozó, who lives in a deep gutter/ a head breaker and back buster. / That's it Zé, pig meat and *sarapaté*/with a starchy shirt and stiff collar/ I'm ready to fight/ a stick in the hand and a sharp knife. / My moustache is an 'S', one tip goes up and the other down.]

In Zé Lopes's Mamulengo, it appears as such:

> "Sou eu Joaquim Bozó, morador em grota funda/ quebrador de cabeça/rebentador de carcunda./ Que diabo é nove que dez não ganha./ Bateu na jaca do velho mendonha,/ cabelo ruim de estopa, seu pai na carreira e tua madrinha, no sufoco."
>
> [I'm Joaquim Bozó, who lives in a deep gutter/ a head breaker and back buster. What the hell is nine, that never gets a ten. I hit the jackfruit of the old ugly man/ With hideous hair, your father is in a hurry, your godmother in despair.]

Furthermore, the lines Zé Lopes added to Joaquim Bozó's introductory monologue are also used in the introductory speech of Caroca, also appearing in his show:

> "Chegou Mateus velho do rosário/ com dois cancão na gaiola/ um na parte de dentro/ o outro da parte de fora./ Que diabo é nove que dez não ganha./ Bateu na jaca do velho mendonha,/ cabelo ruim de estoupa seu pai na carreira e tua madrinha, no sufoco."
>
> [Here comes old Mateus of the rosary/ with two birds in the cage/one locked inside/ the other free outside. / What the hell is nine, that never gets a ten. I hit the jack fruit of the old ugly man/ with hideous hair, your father is in a hurry, your godmother in despair.]

The variations outlined in this section may occur in other scenes not included here. To describe the range of their occurrence in the Mamulengo shows would

require much more space than can be given here. Hence, the examples described may be considered a modest illustration of the rich and dynamic process operating. The mamulengueiros' techniques and practices demonstrate the tensions between tradition and creativity.

2 - Mamulengo Text: Word Plays

The structure and contents of the Mamulengo text do not present any great complexity. Even if some of the passages have a completely developed story, often they are episodic and very simple, with the majority of the plots orbiting around hierarchy inversions, disputes followed by fights, death and marital conflicts. Consequently, extensive studies of the plots and structure do not display the texts most interesting elements; in the method of its realization that lay complexity and interest. It is in the puppets (puppeteers) and the intermediary wide use of spicy verbal jokes that constitutes the text's richness.

The Northeast region's vernacular has peculiarities that make it distinct from the Portuguese language spoken in other regions. These peculiarities are specially found in the interior areas, where many expressions and 'invented' words resist the homogenization of the language, and especially that, brought by the mass media. As pointed out by the poet Humberto de Campos, "The people are creators of languages, in the malice of expertise, in the cunning of the marvellous, in the force of the improvisation trying to accomplish their passage."[46] The "passage accomplishment" is expressed in the many forms of popular poetry, such as oral poetry (*repentes*) and oral and written poetry (*cordel*). The images and prosody of popular oral and written poetry play an important part in the Mamulengo text, particularly in Zona da Mata Mamulengo. Furthermore, like most of the popular puppet traditions, the Mamulengo is closely linked with carnivalesque culture, with the mamulengueiros using a large dose of folk humour in their plays.[47] With regard to the text, sex, body functions

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[46] "O povo è um inventa linguas, na malicia da mestria, no matreiro da maravilha, no visgo do improvisso tentando a travessia" (Haroldo de Campos, *Metalinguagem e Outras Metas*, São Paulo: Ex-Libris, 1984, 32). In my view, "tentando a travessia", which I translated as "trying accomplish their passage" means, "trying to express themselves."

[47] The folk carnival humour as brought out in Bakhtin's treatment of Rabelais texts is centered in the images of the grotesque body. As Bakhtin points out:

"The stress is laid on these parts of the body which are open to the outside world (. . .) through which the world enters the body or emerge from it (. . .) the open mouth, the genital organs, the breast, the phallus, the potbelly, the nose. The body discloses its essence as a principle of growth which exceeds its own limits only in copulation, pregnancy, child -birth, throes of death, eating, drinking or defecation." (Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World,* 26)

(copulation, food, drink) and debasement of the symbols pertaining to the state religion are expressed through puns, hyperbole, nonsense, and so on. The verbal jokes, at the same time they increase the focus on the forms of the language, create humorous representations in the minds of the spectators, then, bring about the comedy. Also, they allow for the expression of taboo subjects.

Before proceeding to an examination of the presence of these verbal jokes in the text, I shall briefly examine how the poetic language is manoeuvred to create the humour.

1 - Poetic Language

In Mamulengo, the poetic language almost always acquires the distinct features of the recurrent forms appearing in popular poetry since it is reframed in a comical tone. The humour appears both in the images conveyed by the verses, and in the structure of the verses themselves. The puppeteers make wide use of apparently nonsensical combinations of words, always bearing in mind the rhyme in the final line. Even in more lyric passages, such as *Caboclinhos*, where the characters, besides singing and dancing also declaim verses, the mixture of more poetic images with incongruous ones allow for the comedy. One such example is the verses spoken by the *Caboclos* in Zé de Vina show. As can be observed, the verses' final lines are completed by Mateus:

Primeiro Caboclo - De quarta-feira pra cà eu vivo pensativo e vago/

de eu ver cortar uma cruz benta pelo missionàrio./

Caso maior não se deu, nem se daria, nem se dà/

que até os passarinhos vive triste nos seus ninhos de quarta-feira . . .

Mateus - pra cà.

Caboclos - Tchôôô, corota coeta Seu Mateus. Eita Sr. meu amo!

Mateus - Secundo Caboclo, diga a sua loa!

Segundo Caboclo - A maré rema a canoa pelo meio do navio/

eu tiro as àguas do rio e sopro de proa em proa./

No centro de uma canoa, quando vi fiquei bismado/

For the folk carnivalesque humor in the puppet theatre, see: Kelly, *Petrushka*, 92-107 and Gross, "The Form and Function of Humor", 106-126.

là no fundo do de um ralado, um caranguejo ainda moço/

com uma corda no pescoço que tinha morrido. .

Mateus - enforcado!

[First Caboclo – Since last Wednesday / I've been thoughtful and dreary/

Because of the cut down of a holy cross blessed by the missionary/

A more distressing fact than this / hasn't yet befallen and will not befall /

Even the little birds fell sad singing in their nests from Wednesday . . .

Mateus- . . . till now.

Caboclos – Tchôôô, corota coeta[48] Mateus, yeah, my master!

Mateus - Second Caboclo, says your loa!

Second Caboclo – The tide guides the canoe to crush a big ship/

I take the water out of the river and I blow from prow to prow/

It was when I sow in the centre of the canoe, inside of a deep gulley/

A young crab with a rope around his neck that had died . . .

Mateus - hanged!][49]

The verse (*loa*) spoken by the first *Caboclo* can be understood as a lament related to the transformations operating in the people's religious beliefs, metaphorically expressed by the cutting down of the blessed cross. As the verse indicates, the sadness resulting from this act can be felt by the whole of nature, including the birds. This melancholic image is however deconstructed by the following verse spoken by the second *Caboclo* that conveys a nonsense and funny image of a young crab's death. This sort of manoeuvre is recurrent and plays an important part in the construction of humour.

Besides the changes operating in the linguistic codes, comic is achieved through the combination of others codes. Even if the verses are not comic in their textual feature, such as the one spoken by the first *Caboclo* described above, still, the

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[48] This is a parody of Brazilian Indians' language.

[49] Transcribed from Zé de Vina show, Vitória de Santo Antão, 30 January 2004.

Caboclo' figure, voice and movement inscribe new possible meaning to the spoken verse. In the end it is mostly perceived as comic.

2 - Word Plays: are they just crazy statements?

Although the poetic language significance is indubitable, the most remarkable aspect of the text lies especially in the puppets (puppeteer) and the intermediary's, sharp and spiky comments. Their speeches combine unrestrained and vivid abuse with remarkable nonsense and non- sequiturs often introduced in the form of cross- purpose dialogue. One such example is the dialogue between João Redondo da Alemanha and the intermediary, Mateus:

João Redondo da Alemanha - (cantando) Calù, calù, quantas pregas tem o seu timão azul. (Falando) Mateus, quem ta bagunçando por aqui?

Mateus- É Joaquim Bozó.

João Redondo da Alemanha- Quem?

Mateus - Joaquim Bozó

JoãoRedondo da Alemanha - Mas, e o nome dele?

Mateus- (falando mais alto) Joaquim Bozó.

João Redondo da Alemanha- Ah, Gogó?

Mateus- (gritando) Que Gogó! Joaquim Bozó!

João Redondo da Alemanha- Mocotó?

Mateus- Mocotó, não rapaz, Joaquim Bozó!

João Redondo da Alemanha- Ah, Gogó?

Mateus- Joaquim Bozó!

João Redondo da Alemanha- Ah, botei só!

[João Redondo da Alemanha- (singing) Tress, Tress, how many pleats has your dress? (Speaking) Mateus, who is messing around here?

Mateus – It's Joaquim Bozó.

João Redondo da Alemanha- Who?

Mateus- Joaquim Bozó.

João Redondo da Alemanha- But, what's his name?

Mateus- (speaking louder) Joaquim Bozó!

JoãoRedondo da Alemanha- Mocotó?

Mateus- Not Mocotó, man! Joaquim Bozó!

João Redondo da Alemanha- Oh, yeah, Gogó?

Mateus- (screaming) What Gogó! Is Joaquim Bozó!

João Redondo da Alemanha – Oh, yeah, I put it in without help!][50]

At first sight, the dialogue above seems just wordplay, and in this particular example João Redondo da Alemanha's misunderstanding is justified by the character's deafness. However, to understand the Mamulengo text in its deeper meaning it is necessary to go beyond this apparent arbitrary nonsensical. João Redondo da Alemanha's last line "*botei só*" (I put it in without help) leads us to ask: What did he put in without help? We can reasonably think he is referring to his genitals, which indicates that, although he is an aged man, he is still virile.

Although the Mamulengo plays' obscenity is widely recognised by researchers and scholars, nevertheless these sorts of jokes, among others, have been mostly referred as "crazy statements" that the puppeteers use to "make the public laugh."[51] Obviously audience laughter is the puppeteers' foremost concern. But, by labelling these verbal jokes as "crazy statements" they are reduced to mere absurdities, and in my view, this conceals their most interesting aspects.

Kelly in the section of her book dedicated to the Petrushka puppet theatre's text observes that, "The apparently innocuous absurdity of the comic oxymoron[52] often conceals far from harmless references." She argues that what seems non-sense for a bourgeois group was well understood by the members pertaining to the puppeteer's social group, that is, the Moscow working class. Kelly gives an example of Petrushka speech that well illustrates this apparent nonsensical language: "I had 60 kopecks in my

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[50] This dialogue is part of the scene "Joaquim Bozó and João Redondo da Alemanha" presented by Zé de Vina.

[51] Dutra is one of the few exceptions. In her analyses of the Mamulengo of Mestre Dengoso, Dutra points out aspects mainly related to gender aggression. (Dutra, "Trajetórias de Criação", 94 -103)

[52] Kelly, *Petrushka*, 83. The author explains, the word "oxymoron" is used as "impossible combination of words and not in its narrower English sense" (Ibid., 82).

pocket, but there's a rouble[53] left now" and argues that, "(. . .) the seemingly crazy statement (. . .) may contain a sub textual reference to thieving, the only way in which Petrushka can be supposed to have increased his supply of money."[54]

Although we must be careful in dealing with the problem of comparing two different and distanced cultures, Kelly's observation can be well applied to Mamulengo. Like the Russian puppet theatre, some of the apparent nonsensical jokes appearing in the Mamulengo plays (and in the other Northeast puppet traditions') are anything but naïve. Let us examine another example present in Benedito introductory monologue in the play *O Filho que deu na Mãe* (The Son who beat his Mother) As can be seem, like Petrushka, the Benedito *loa* also alludes to the practice of thieving:

> "Benedito- Boa-noite rapaziada! Epa, Ah! Ah! Ah! Hoje aqui é Benedito José da Luz, bicho véio no eito, tem cabelo no peito que dà doze morado e não afunda, sou cortado de cabresto e vendedo de carcunda."55
>
> [Benedito - Good night folks! Ups! Ha! Ha! Ha! Here comes Benedito José da Luz, old folk on the *eito*[56], who has hair on the chest, where live in twelve people that never sink. I am a bridle cutter and a hunchback seller.]

As Pimentel acutely observes, "a bridle cutter and hunchback seller" refers to the practice of horse thieving, while "who has hair on the chest, where live in twelve people that never sink" refers to lack of hygiene. The "people" meaning the parasites living in the "chest hair" that never sinks (never takes bath).[57] Bearing in mind that Pimentel's interpretation might be the same as that of the João Redondo audience, we can assume that the ambiguity it portrays masks reference to a possible social practice of horse thieving, and lack of hygiene, that probably is well understood within that group. For an outsider it may be just nonsensical, rhyming word-play. Referring to this type of humour in Petrushka, Kelly argues that it operates at more than one level:

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[53] *kopecks* and *rouble* were the Russian currency, *kopecks* equivalent to cents, and *rouble* the currency unit

[54] Ibid., 82-3.

[55] Play from Manuel José Lucas, a puppeteer from Paraiba in: Pimentel, *O Mundo Mágico,* 64. As pointed out before, two variants of this introductory monologue are found in the speech of the character Joaquim Bozó in Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes shows.

[56] The word *eito* means the farm fields.

[57] Pimentel, *O Mundo Mágico,* 88.

(. . .) the apparent childish humour of feeble puns and nonsense masks references to social and sometimes also sexual taboos. It is allied to techniques of Aesopian narrative: to a knowledge watcher it conveys social comments, whilst deceiving the eye of the censor or outsider. Pleasure comes not only from the distorted analogies, but from the sense that these are mischievous, that they touch on forbidden subjects.[58]

Agreeing with Kelly's, we can accept that, the structural device of this type of humour such as Benedito introductory monologue, besides the comicality conveyed in the rhyming and image it portrays, might be seen as a strategy the puppeteers use to communicate freely with their social and cultural group. It is easy to understand the pleasure coming from such device. The outsiders and censors, here meaning not just an "official" censor, but, elite representatives the puppeteers may consider as such (e.g., priests, teachers, puppet researchers) who may laugh of the "ingenuity" and "craziness" of these popular artists that 'just want to make their public laugh', while the public might have other reasons to be laughing.

2.1 – Most Current Topics

Sex

Even if sex is not exactly the central plot of many the scenes, sexual allusions are present in almost all scenes and are conveyed through many forms of analogies. In this way, for the most part, sex appears to be the most represented topic of interest in Mamulengo puppet theatre. Allusions to anal sex (mostly related to male characters) and sexual voracity (mostly related to female characters), are, we could say, obsessional concerns appearing in the majority of the scenes. By the great range of sexual allusions with an emphasis in these two particular aspects, we may accept these as major masculine concerns, since both anal sex and extensive female sexual activity threaten the current notions of masculinity. To describe the entire variety of such references appearing in Mamulengo texts

would deserve a much more extensive work than the one proposed here. Hence, only a few examples are described below.

The characters continually make a pun with the intermediary name, "Mateus", calling him "Noteu". The substitution of the letter "M" by the letter "N", and the

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[58] Kelly, *Petrushka*, 83-4.

suppression of the letter "S", makes the name "Noteu" that corresponds to the expression "*no teu*" (in yours), which is a double entendre with anal sex connotations.

In the passage of Joaquim Bozó's arrest, Inspector Peinha, instead of following the arrest order indicated by Mateus: "*Teje preso com a ordem do Sargento!*" (You're arrested on the Sergeant´s order!), says: "*Teje preso que já tudo dentro!*" (You're arrested and it is all inside). Again, there is double entendre, alluding to homosexual intercourse.

Hyperboles are the linguistic device mostly used by the puppeteers to stress the women's numerous copulations. A remarkable example is Ritinha, Zangô's mother, who when describing her professional qualities (she is supposed to be a dress-maker), is in fact describing active sexual life:

> Mateus – Ritinha, tem um rapaz aqui querendo que voce costure uma calça pra ele!
>
> Ritinha - (Fora de cena) Perai, que eu to muito ocupada! Eu to no ferro, Mateus! Quando saio do ferro, entro na agulha, quando saio da agulha entro no ferro. Porque època de Natal, Sao João, primeiro de maio e segundo de abril, è uma fazeçao de roupa tao grande que eu trabalho de noite a dia, de noite a dia! E eu fico toda 'disacunheite'! Oia Mateus, eu *tirava* 10, 12 calça por noite. Agora to velha, so *tiro* 2 ou 3, eu não enxergo quase nada, mas ainda to boa na agulha e no ferro também. Agora mesmo, Mateus, eu tava no ferro! Eu trabalho de noite a dia, de noite a dia, de noite a dia. De vez em quando,Mateus, eu ainda tiro 10 calça por noite!
>
> [Mateus- There is a boy here and he wants you to sew a pair of trousers for him!
>
> Ritinha (voice in off) - Wait a sec, I am very busy! I am busy with the iron right now, Mateus! When I stop with the iron I'll go back to the needle, and when I stop with the needle I'll go back to the iron. You know how it works. At Christmas Time, Saint John's, First of May, and Second of April, I have so many clothes to sew that I have to work day and night, night and day! And because of this I become all *disacunheite*![59] Aiea Mateus, I used to sew 10, 12 pair of trousers per night. Now that I am old I can only sew 2 or 3. I can hardly see anything anymore, but I am still very good with the needle and the iron as well. Right now I am busy ironing! I work day and night, night and day, day and night again. But, you know, every now and then I still can make 10 pair of trousers a night.][60]

The analogy of the male genital with the tools used by the "dress-maker" allows for the double meaning of the dialogue. The words "*agulha*" (needle) and "*ferro*" (iron)

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[59] 'Disacunheite' is an invented word meaning, "loose" or "tired."

[60] From the Zé de Vina scene "Zangô, Ritinha and Seu Angu".

alludes to penis. Before she appears in the scene, Ritinha (in off) explains her impossibility to go onstage saying she is "busy with the iron right now"; that is, she is having sex. Moreover, in the Northeast region the verb "*tirar*" is both used to mean "to sew" or "to take off". Hence, "to sew 10, 12 pair of trousers per night" is a pun meaning "undressing 10 men each night." Through Ritinha's line, "At Christmas Time, Saint John's, First of May, and Second of April, I have some many clothes to make that I have to work day and night, night and day!", the puppeteer highlights, that sexual activity is more frequent during festivals and holy days.

A more complex of sort of pun is that in which the obsessional concerns of the text are intertwined. In Mamulengo, sex is constantly linked with food. Male genitals are related to food that resembles its shape, such as manioc, banana, yam and sausage. Unlike male genital, female sexual organs has almost no association. The only one to be observed is mango. One example appears of this sort of link appears in the speech of Mané Pacaru. The character, after been expulsed from home by Quitéria, moans to Mates:

> "Mané Pacaru- Oh, Mateus, eu era um marido tão bom para ela! Eu dei a ela tanta banana que eu, e ela faz isso! E ela adora banana! Todo dia eu dava banana comprida pra ela! (chora) Era banana no café, no almoço, no jantar, e ela faz isso!"
>
> [Mané Pacaru - Oh, Mateus, I was such a good husband to her! I used to give her so many bananas! She loves banana! Everyday, I used to give her a long banana! There was banana in the morning, at midday and midnight.][61]

Besides food, analogy to male genitals is also made using animal figures. The most frequently made are snake, worm, and chick. In the following monologue, Xoxa,[62] the old woman who dominates the snake, recounts to the audience how she had lost her fear of "snakes." As can be seen, she is telling how she had lost her virginity. The reference to the quantity of male workers at the farm (twelve) may be understood as a subtle hint of the quantity of sexual partners Estreita have had. Moreover, the reference to the number of the days of the *farinhada* (which lasted from Monday to Saturday) might indicate the quantity of days she was engaged in sexual activity.

> "Com idade de 12 anos, eu perdi o medo de cobra. Porque papai e mamae invento de fazer uma farinhada e passou 12 dias arrancando mandioca com 12 trabalhador.

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[61] From the Zé de Vina scene "Simao, Mané Pacaru and Quitéria".

[62] The same character appears with the name of Estreita in Zé Lopes' show.

Começou a fazer farinha na segunda-feira e terminou no sabado de tarde. A mae foi pra casa de farinha e me deixou em casa debuiando fava. Eu tava debuiando and debuiando quando ouvi um barulho debaixo da cama. Pensei que era algum menino brincando. Peguei uma vara e cutuquei. Quando vi, era uma cobra que ia saindo debaixo da cama. A cobra partiu pra cima de mim. Eu disse: de tres coisas acontece uma: ou tu me morde, ou eu te mordo; ou tu me engole, ou eu te engulo; out u entra ne'u ou eu entro em tu. Ai, pegamo numa briga feia. Quando papai e mamae chegaram, ela num tinha matado a cobra não, mas tava bem 'muricidinha"

[I was twelve years old when I lost any fear of snakes. It was when dad and mammy decided to make manioc flour and we stayed 12 days pulling manioc out together with 12 male workers. The *farinhada* (the act of doing the flour) starts on Monday and finished on Saturday afternoon. My mother went to the *casa de farinha* (the place where the flour is made) and let me alone at home to peel broad beans. I was peeling and peeling when I heard a sound coming under the bed and I took a stick and prodded it. Than, I saw a snake coming out from under the bed! It attacked me and I said: of three possibilities one will happen! Either you bite me, or I bite you; or you swallow me, or I swallow you; or you come inside me, or I come inside you! When dad and mammy returned to home, I hadn't killed the snake, but it was very *muricidinha*[63] (flaccid)!][64]

The musicians' fictive surnames appearing in the scene where Inspector Peinha reads aloud the permission to present the Mamulengo, underline the link with sex:

"Inspector- (reading) Zé Salo Maria José Andrade do Rego Fundo , the drum player! Luiz Maria Josefa do Rego Melado, the triangle player! Bilinga Maria Josefa Filizberta do Rego Preto, the accordion player! All right, the Mamulengo can go on! But, if there will be any drunkenness or riot, I will arrest you all!"[65]

"*Rego*" is a common Brazilian surname, but it has also a connotation of vagina. So, "*Rego Fundo*" has a double meaning of "deep vagina", "*Rego Melado*", of a wet vagina, and *Rego Preto* of a black vagina.

The sexual matters that arise in the plots of the scenes, and other allusions to sex, sometimes have a direct link to procreation. Procreation is frequently referred with hyperbolic images. Catirina, who is pregnant and carries a baby, had already "116

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[63] "Muricidinha" is another invented word. It is a corrupt of "amolecidinha", which means "flaccid" or "loose."

[64] From the Zé de Vina scene "Caso Sério, Xoxa and the Snake".

[65] From the Zé Lopes scene "Inspector and the Policemen".

children, 58 from one *barrigada*"[66], while Ritinha, had already 114 children. Often the colour of one of the children, and sometimes the date of the child's birth, indicates cuckoldry. Sex also may be intermixed with death. The Widows' husbands often died during a dance in which the couple parodies a sexual intercourse. In the João Galego's scene, "Little Widow", the character is dancing with her "brand- new" husband when she notes he is "too flaccid for a man". When finally she realises he has died in her arms, she starts shaking his loose body saying: "I will shake and shake to see if *it* can be stiff again." "*It*" here means her husband's penis. Nevertheless, the widow's constant engagements in new marriages (Ritinha had already 38 husbands, Viuvinha 26) also oppose sex with death: to be alive, means to be copulating.

Eating and Drinking

There are several traditional scenes in which food and drink played a part, and often food and drink are conveyed by hyperbolic images. This again, shows the Mamulengo links with the carnivalesque folk culture.[67] The most obvious connection to food appears in the scene "The Doctor and the Sick-man". In Zé Lopes' show, the character is sick due to the enormous amount of food and drink he has consumed:

> "Doente – Eu tava com uma fome danada, entao fui la no lixão! Achei meio saco de laranja, e eu chupei. (. . .) Depois, eu achei um saco cheio de repolho, de cenoura e comi. Ai, me deu uma sede tremenda e fui no riacho e bebi toda a agua da barragem! Depois tomei cinco litros de Pitu."
>
> [Sick-man – I was so hungry that I went to the *lixão* (dump).[68] I've found a half bag of orange and I ate them. Later, I've found a bag full of cabbages and carrots, and I ate

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[66] One *barrigada* means "one belly" to refer to the children born from the same pregnancy. In Zé de Vina's "Zangô" scene, a female character (Ritinha) presents almost the same line saying that she had "114 children". As I mentioned before, the relocation of speech from one character to another is another type of device used by the puppeteer to vary his show.

[67] Bakhtin notes that "eating and drinking are one of the most significant manifestations of the carnivalesque body." Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 281. In the prologue of *Gargantua*, Rabelais writes: "(. . .) Oh, the sweet fragrance of wine! How much more reconciling, smiling and beguiling wine is than oil! Let the world say that I spent more on wine than oil!" (Book 1, Prologue), quoted in Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 284. Burke also outlines the importance of food and drink in the carnivalesque humor. (Burke, *Popular Culture*, 178-204.)

[68] In the urban areas of Brazil, indigent people use to collect food from the waste dump. This particular feature indicates the character's poverty.

them. After, I was so thirsty that I went to the stream and I drank all the water in the dam! Later on I went to the bar and I drank five liters of *Pitu* (spirit).]

In Zé de Vina's "The Doctor and the Sick-man" the emphasis is in drinking rather than eating. The character, after he has consumed many liters of spirits, vomits "blood" over the public. In João Galego' show two drunkards enter onstage singing verses that make an apology for the act of drinking. During the singing they continuously throw a bottle to each other. The song's refrain goes like this:

"Cananeiro, cananeiro, lele oh, mané sinha / a cerveja se acabou tras Pitu pra nós tomar"

[Cananeiro, cananeiro,[69] lele oh, mané sinha/ the beer is finished, bring Pitu to us to drink.]

Food may also be the reason for the couples' quarrel. In the Praxédio and Ritinha (or Xoxa) scene, the wife asks the husband for the goods he was supposed to bring home: "sausage, beans; manioc flour, tobacco" and so on. But instead, Praxédio had spent the money on women. Also, food is one of the mayoral candidate's promises to his voters. As can be observed, the reference to food is used with an ironic sense to emphasis the mayoral Candidate's feature:

"Candidate- Pra quem não tem dinheiro pra fazer a feira, eu mando a feira todo o mês. Só que tem uma coisa, eu mando a feira é sem carne, sem farinha, sem fuba, sem café e nem feijão!"

[Candidate- For the poor I will send provisions. But, there is one thing: there will be no meat, no flour, no corn, no coffee, nor beans!]

Moreover, dead bodies may be related to food. Benedito passes off the body of the Doctor he had killed as food and tries to sell it as sheep meat:

Benedito - (to the musician) Oh, tocado. Queres comprar carne verde?

Tocador- Não.

Benedito – Por quê?

Tocador- Porquê não quero.

Benedito- Me ajuda, home! Isso é só um bodinho que eu comprei ontem muito barato na feira de quarta-feira. O meno meio quilo?

Tocado- Quero não."

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[69] *Cananeiro* is an invented word related to *cana* (sugar cane) and refers to the person who makes *cachaça,* a spirit made out of sugar cane.

[Benedito - Hey, Tocador (musician), do you want to buy fresh meat?

Musician- No.

Benedito – Why not?

Musician - Because I don't want to.

Benedito- Hey, help me, man! This is a sheep I bought yesterday, very cheap at the Wednesday fair. Buy at least a half kilo!

Musician - I don't want it!][70]

Debasement of Religious Symbols

The degradation of religious elements[71] is particularly outlined by the priest characters', physical and psychological feature. As already mentioned, the priest is often depicted as a lascivious character, and sometimes this characteristic is highlight by the representation of his penis. Moreover, religious symbols are frequently debased by analogies and puns. One example is the "Priest scene" of the puppeteer Solon, in which Simão goes to church to confess but, instead of repeating the priest's prayer, he mixes it with food, thus creating his own prayer:

"Simão- Oh, seu vigário, eu quero me confessar.

Padre – Meu fio, apois faça o meu pelo siná.

Simão- Pelo siná da Santa Cruz, leite de guaraná com cuscuz.

Padre – Mas meu fio, isso não é pelo siná.

Simão- Pelo siná da Santa urêia, carne de porco, toucinho de ôveia (ovelha)"

[Simão- Hi, Mr. Vicar, I want to confess.

Priest – Very good, my son. So, make the sign of the cross.

Simão- By the sign of the holy cross, milk of guarana and couscous.

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[70] Pimentel, *O Mundo Mágico*, 118

[71] The debasement of elements of official culture, including the state religion, is trademark of folk humour. Bakhtin writes: "The essential principle of the grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity. Thus 'Cyprian's supper' and many other Latin paroies of Middle Ages are nothing but a selection of all the degrading, earthy details taken from the Bible, the Gospels, and other sacred texts." (Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 19-20).

Priest – But, my son, this is not the sign of the holy cross.

Simão - By the sign of the holy ear, pig meat, bacon and deer.][72]

Apart from these sorts of more elaborate analogies, debasement of religious elements appears frequently in the form of short punning. One very popular pun is the changing of the expression "*Graças a meu Deus*" (Thanks to my God), into "*Graças a meu dedo*" (Thanks to may finger). Needless to say this pun has a sexual connotation. Puns using the names of saints are also common. *Nossa Senhora do O* (Our Lady of O) is transformed into the "*O da Nossa Senhora* (Our Lady's O), with the 'O' meaning the Our Lady' vagina. *Santo Antonio do Cadete* (Saint Anthony of Cadete) is distorted to *Santo Antonio do Cassete* (Saint Anthony of Cassete).[73] *Cassete* here means penis. Moreover, the word ejaculatory, that means fervent prayers, is debased to the term "*ejaculorum*", which has a double meaning related to the word ejaculation.

Racial Aggression

As previously mentioned female character representations convey clear-cut values; they reflect the patriarchal system and are depicted accordingly. Together with sexual aggression, racial aggression appears frequently. But, while female degradation is mainly represented by the roles they acquire in the play, racial aggression is mainly expressed by verbal jokes, with some of them showing a high level of denigration. In fact, the contrast between the black characters' role and the racial prejudice conveyed by these verbal jokes are, without doubt, the major ambivalence of the Northeast puppet theatre.

Apart from Simão, all the other heroes of Northeast puppet theatre are black. As Pimentel notes, "by plots and by the portrayal of Benedito, the [puppeteers] intention to valorise the black race is obvious."[74] At the same time, the jokes directed towards the black characters are debasing and hostile. In the Mamulengo of Zona da Mata, they are mainly, but not exclusively, spoken by João Redondo da Alemanha. As

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[72] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 130.

[73] Taken from the play *Você Ja Viu Negro Prestar?* from the mamulengueiro Otacilio Pereira in *Mamulengo* 3 (1974): 24-29.

[74] Pimentel, *O Mundo Mágico*, 11.

explained by Zé Lopes, "João Redondo da Alemanha hates black people, mainly Joaquim Bozó, who always comes to confront him."[75] Let us examine some examples:

"João Redondo da Alemanha – Nego não toma banho, lambuza. Nego não segue procissao, persegue. Mulher que ama nego ama cachorro também, pois cachorro tem rabo e nego nem rabo tem."

[João Redondo da Alemanha – The Negro does not take a bath, he smells. The Negro does not follow procession, he pursues. The woman who loves a Negro loves a dog the most because dog has a tail, and the Negro does not even have a tail.][76]

"João Redondo da Alemanha – Mateus, acenda a luz e me de a espingarda.

Mateus – E pra que a espingarda?

João Redondo da Alemanha – Pra matar um urubu que pousou na minha horta."

[João Redondo da Alemanha – Mateus, turns the light on and gives me a rifle!

Mateus - Why do you need a rifle?

João Redondo da Alemanha – To kill the vulture that landed in my garden.][77]

In the above lines of the black character, the degradation comes from his association with animals. In Brazil, dogs are associated with lack of character, and the vulture with a bad smell. In the play *Já Viu Negro Prestar?* (Have you ever seen a helpful Negro?) The stereotypical idea of black people's laziness is evident and therefore, their punishment seems a normal attitude. One of the verses appearing in the play goes like this:

"Café é ceia de branco,

paletó de negro é peia."

[White people keep warm with hot Coffee,

Black people are kept warm with a good thrashing.]"[78]

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[75] Zé Lopes, interview 14 February 2003. We may see a connection between the character's particular features and Nazi theories of pure race, since, as his name denotes, João Redondo da Alemanha (Round John from Germany) comes from Germany.

[76] The character's speech takes place during a fight between him and Joaquim Bozo. After each line, João Redondo da Alemanha hits Joaquim Bozo with a stick. From the Zé de Vina scene " Joaquim Bozo and João Redondo da Alemanha."

[77] Ibid.

Most of these jokes are stereotypical phrases (and verses) in widespread use in Brazilian society. They appear in songs, in the *repentes* (poetic duel of verses), in the circus clowns repertoire, among others. Rodrigues Carvalho, in his study of the influence of Africans in Brazil, describes a great range of these stereotypical jokes, and notes that, "in the popular stories, in the legends, and in many forms of popular expressions, those of African descent seem to suffer the endless humiliation due to slavery."[79] As discussed in Chapter I, Brazilian society developed through a process of racial discrimination, with the colour of the skin as a fundamental element to segregate, and to denigrate people.

In Zé Lopes' view, the presence of these sorts of jokes in plays does not emphasize the prejudice against black people. On the contrary, "it shows what is in people's minds and on their tongues. The Mamulengo represent the people though and the puppeteers, like the poets, make public the reality of Brazilian people." As I have been discussing throughout this study, through the Mamulengo the puppeteers give public expression to forbidden spheres of human life: spheres of the sexual and vital body functions (copulation, food, drink), debasement of the symbols pertaining to the state religion and gender and racial prejudices. As Zé Lopes says, it expresses the imaginary of the people.

The Mamulengo text is, above all, a comic text. Comedy is the puppets' and puppeteers' particular way of achieving communication with the audience. Thought subversive in some of its orientations, the Mamulengo text is aggressively conservative in others. It is, in fact, ambivalent and irreverent. There is little sense in discussing whether the Mamulengo puppet theatre, including the text, contributes to the maintenance of cultural norms by working as a type of "steam valve" which releases built up tension, or if it functions as a counter hegemonic.[80] Certainly, it could work in either way, but this is a much more complex question which involves a far larger context than that which is addressed in this study. Nevertheless, by the jokes' content and the forms of language employed in their construction, we can accept that the audience must have knowledge of the political and cultural background in order to

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[78] *Mamulengo*, 3 (1974), 26.

[79] Carvalho, "Aspectos da Influência Africana", 54-5

[80] On this subject see: P. Stallibras and A.White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, (London: Methuen, 1986)

understand the jokes. Moreover, it is fundamental that the audience members also share the ideological standpoint of the jokes in order not to be offended by them.[81] The audience's socio-cultural background deeply affects the reception of Mamulengo and shapes the forms of interaction between the puppeteers and their public and, consequently, the Mamulengo performance (and text) itself.

[81] Needless to say that here are excluded spectators who approach the Mamulengo for cultural, artistic and/or academic reasons.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE AUDIENCE

> There are people who weep, are sad and aroused watching puppets, though they know they are merely carved pieces of leather manipulated and made to speak. These people are like men who, thirsting for sensual pleasures, live in a word of illusion; they do not realize the magic hallucinations they see are not real.
>
> King Airlangga, *Meditation of Ardjuna.*[1]

In the course of the performance, many times the audience forgets it is looking at an object, which is given movement and speech by its operators, and sees the puppet as possessing life. Through the deployment of visual and auditory codes, the audience sees the puppet "through perception and through imagination, as an object and as life; that is, it sees the puppet in two ways at once."[2] The process of audience perception of the puppets in performance has been discussed by many puppet theatre scholars. Jurkowski calls this process "opalescence" or "opalisation" of the puppet and describes it as "the double existence of puppet, which is perceived both as a puppet and scenic character."[3] Green and Pepicello named it "oscillation" and argue that the audience's attention oscillates between two things: "object as actor (i.e., having life) and acted upon (i.e., an inanimate thing)."[4] Tillis calls this "double-vision" and argues that the audience's simultaneous acknowledgement of the puppet's two aspects is a defining characteristic of "every puppet, in every age, in every theatre and tradition" whether intentionally or not. For Tillis, it is exactly the pleasure brought by this paradox – an object with life – the core of the puppets extensive and lasting appeal.[5]

According to Tillis, the double-vision process does not require of the audience any level of aesthetic or philosophical reflection, nor need the audience to be aware of it happening. The demands, he argues, are that the audience be receptive "to the

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[1] This is an ancient reference to the Javanese puppet theatre present in the *Meditation of Ardjuna*, written by the court poet King Airlangga (A.D. 1035-1049), quoted in Tillis, *Towards an Aesthetics*, 6.

[2] Ibid., 64.

[3] Jurkowski, *Aspects of Puppet*, 78.

[4] Green and Pepicello, "Semiotic Interrelationships", 157.

[5] Tillis, *Towards an Aesthetics*, 63-5.

abstracted signs of life that constitute the puppet, and be desirous of seeing the world through the prism of human consciousness; from such reception and desire, all else will follow."[6]

Tillis's double-vision concept indicates the very basis of the role played by the audience in any puppet theatre. In agreeing with Tillis, we can say that in any puppet performance the audience collaborates with the puppeteers in that its imaginative will constructs the supplementary images that allow for the possibility of the theatrical event.

Nevertheless, like the puppet theatre itself, the audience is not a unified, monolithic entity and, although Tillis's concept is tremendously important to understanding the intrinsic psychological aspect of audience perception, it is just the first step to understanding the many roles the audience can assume, considering the diversity of the audience and the diverse forms of puppet theatre.

Susan Bennett, in her book *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*, makes the important point that the audience's experience of theatre relies on two frames: the outer frame and the inner frame. The outer frame, she argues "contains all those cultural elements which create and inform the theatrical events", in which Bennett includes the selection of material for production and the audience's definitions and expectations of a performance. The inner frame "contains the dramatic production in a particular playing space" and encompasses production strategies, ideological overcoding, and the material conditions of a performance. It is the intersection of these two frames, "which form the spectator's cultural understanding and experience of theatre."[7]

As Bennett points out, the spectator comes to any theatrical event as a member of an already constituted "interpretive community" and also brings a horizon of expectation shaped by cultural backgrounds, the play selected and the place where the performance is taking place, among other things. All such elements are bound to influence the spectator's preparation for the theatrical event and construct the outer frame. With regard to the inner frame, Bennett remarks that its core is the combination and succession of visual and auditory signs which the audience receives and interprets throughout the performance. Some of these signs are fixed but the majority are in flux, and therefore "signify on a number of possible levels (for example

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[6] Ibid., 66.

[7] Bennett, *Theatre Audiences,* 149.

denotative/connotative)." It is the combination of these signs, Bennett notes, which allows the audience "to posit the existence of a particular fictional world on stage with its own dynamic and governing rules."[8]

Bearing in mind the complex process of the theatrical reception as described by Bennett, we can say that the audience's reception is influenced by, as well as measured against, its internal horizon of expectations of a performance. One such example outlined by Bennett is how the audience's pre-knowledge of the text: "where the text of the performance is known to some or all of the spectators, the *mise en scène* will likely to be read against that knowledge. In that way, the audience can judge the presentation of the fictional world as more or less meeting their expectation."[9]

If we consider an audience composed of spectators that regularly attend a particular theatrical event, such as the traditional public of a particular puppet tradition, we can affirm that this process is even more complex. This audience not only knows the "text" (in this case in its strong majority an oral text), but all the other elements (e.g., the characters' physiognomic and psychological features; their roles and stereotyped speeches; the music; etc.) that shaped this particular tradition. Consequently, the audience's judgement of the performance will be done against the conventional notions of the dynamic and governing rules that form this particular puppet tradition.

Another important aspect of theatre audiences' reception outlined by Bennett is its collective nature. She notes that, as a collective experience, inter-audience relationships also play an important role in any theatrical event's reception and remarks:

> Semiotic analysis has stressed that communication between spectators usually determines a 'homogeneity of response' (Elam 1980:96) despite variations in horizon of expectation and/or cultural values brought to the theatre by the individual spectator. In almost all cases laughter, derision, and applause are infectious. The audience, through homogeneity of reaction, receives confirmation of their (sic) decoding on an individual and private basis and is encouraged to suppress counter-readings in favour of the reception generally shared (Elam 1980:96-7, Ubersfeld 1981:306)."[10]

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., 151.

[10] Ibid., 163-4.

Nevertheless, Bennett argues that while the theatre audience is a "collective consciousness"[11] it is also a number of individuals. Even though collective response to a performance is often homogeneous, the individual's response undoubtedly makes up the centre of the spectator's enjoyment.

Considering again the traditional audience referred above, we can say that in such a milieu the spectators are more likely to receive and interpret the signs that form this particular tradition in a more uniform way, since, the spectators' horizons of expectations are more closely linked.

The process of theatrical communication is obviously not only based on the audience's perception, since the audience's decoding of the 'fictional world' depends also on the artist's ability to choose and combine the signs that will fulfil the audience's expectation. In applying Bennett's consideration outlined above McCormick and Pratasik, referring to European nineteenth and twentieth century puppeteers, bring to light an important aspect of the showman's adaptability to its audience. They note: "Showmen who performed to a more mixed and occasional public worked more closely to the codes of actor's theatre, whereas those performing regularly to the same spectators built up their own formulae and codes."[12]

Therefore, even if we agree with Tillis consideration that the spectators' double-vision over the puppets (object/life) needs no level of 'aesthetic or philosophical reflection', we cannot deny that a literate audience, here understood as an audience with previous knowledge of the elements and conventions of a particular tradition, is more able to instantly link the abstract signs that form this particular tradition to their corresponding semantic meaning. Hence, Tillis's synchronic vision of audience perception of the puppet is useful as a prologue when extended to a diachronic study of the roles played by different audiences in the diverse forms of puppet theatre.

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[11] Ibid., 64.

[12] McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppet*, 79.

1 - The Role of the Audience in Traditional Puppet Theatre

In the majority of puppet theatre traditions, as with many other forms of dramatic representations placed outside the formal bourgeois theatre,[13] the role played by the audience generally crosses the boundaries that divide spectators and actors/puppets and sometimes even the limits that separate the stage and the auditorium as distinct spaces. Consequently, in this sort of theatre the audience's role cannot be understood just in its subjective (and mostly passive) role in the reception process outlined by Tillis, but should be perceived in its active and productive role.

Even though the role played by the audience in many popular puppet traditions would certainly be a rich field for studies on theatrical reception and the audience co-creation process, the active cooperation of audience and artists in puppet theatre has been neglected by most of the theatre's theorists. As noted by Bennett, "conventional notions of theatre and theatre audiences too often rely on the model of the commercial mainstream. Perhaps too readily theatre-going is thought of as middle-class occupation by definition". Thus, a non-traditional[14] theatre and therefore a non-traditional audiences "demands new definitions."[15]

Proschan, in his article "The Co-creation of the Comic in Puppetry" observes that in traditional puppetry audience participation is much more extensive than in the theatrical forms found in the "modern elite theatre", and notes that:

> Every traditional puppetry performance is collaboration between puppeteer and audience. Each puppetry tradition has its own rules governing the physical relations of stage and audience, the proper forms that spectators' participation should take, the degree to which control of the direction and content of the performance rests with the puppeteer or audience members.[16]

Nevertheless, Proschan argues that the audience's participation is particularly active in comic puppetry traditions, "or in comic episodes or intervals of more serious performances", where the audience can take an extensive array of roles during the

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[13] About the role played by the audience in this type of theatre see: Augusto Boal, *Teatro do Oprimido e Outras Poéticas Políticas* (1991).

[14] Note that Bennett uses the term "non-traditional" as opposed to "commercial mainstream", which is different to Proschan's concept of 'theatrical tradition".

[15] Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, 1.

[16] Proschan, "The Cocreation", 30.

performance. This process reveals a number of ways and mechanisms by which audience involvement is "evoked by, shaped for, and incorporated into the performance."[17]

The role played by the audience in folk theatre, including puppet theatre, was first discussed by theorists of the Prague Circle. These first studies were initiated by Petr Bogatyrev and Roman Jakobson. Bogatyrev was concerned with audience composition and the spectators' role in popular/folk performances, such as Petrushka puppet theatre, peep-shows and folk theatre. In these shows, the audience was in close proximity to the performers and was not constricted by the conventions of the formal theatre. Instead, the folk audience had an active participation in the ongoing performances, and this characteristic demanded new approaches.[18]

Bogatyrev and Jakobson's ethnographic studies carried out at Russian fairgrounds[19] were intermingled with two important and opposed concepts that lay beneath the Prague Circle theorists' discussion in regard to audience participation in theatrical performances:

> One is the difference between 'audience' as a social role subject to social constraints and expectations, and 'perceiver' as an individual role governed by psychological functions. The other is the difference between the 'intervention' (or, in later Prague terminology, 'activation') of the audience or its members in the ongoing performance, and 'cocreation' of meanings and the audience's interpretative work"[20]

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[17] Ibid., 31.

[18] Ibid., 33.

[19] Petr Bogatyrev, "Programma per la Raccolta di Dati sul Teatro Popolare," in *Ill Teatro della Marionette* , ed. M. Di Salvo (Brescia: Grafo, 1980), 77-9. The field research program is structured by interviews in order to research folk theatre, fairground performance traditions and puppetry. According to Proschan, many elements of the folk theatre, identified by the fieldworkers, later came to constitute central problems of the developing semiotic of theatre: "Questions related to the location of the roles within the actors; forms of the text recitation; actors' gestures and movements; audience participation during the performance; the relation of the puppet character and its movement and voice, among many others, were points brought up by them." (Proschan, Frank, "The Semiotic Study of Puppets", 11).

[20] Proschan, "The Cocreation" , 34.

Nevertheless, these concepts were never clearly distinguished by Bogatyrev and Jakobson, nor by their later colleagues of the Prague Circle. As Proschan interprets, "that omission is itself, perhaps, testimony to their interrelatedness"[21]

Forming the basis of Bogatyrev's interpretation of the process involving audience perception and active role was his understanding of signs and their function, which were specially influenced by Bühler, and Bakhtin.[22] Bühler, a psychologist interested in social rather than individual psychology, was concerned with the situational model of human actions, emphasising that the individual is not passive but participates in the formation of the environment.[23] In his book *The Theory of Language: The Representational Function of Language*, Bühler identifies three functions for the verbal message: the *expressive* (or *emotive*) "inhering in the relation between sign and speaker"; the *referential*, "inhering in the relation between sign and topic", and the *connotative*, "inhering in the relation between sign and address." In regard to the latter, Bühler argues that, instead of a merely passive reception of sign and its meaning, the perceiver has an active apprehension of it.[24]

Finally, Bogatyrev's ideas of semiotics were influenced by Bakhtin's book *Marxism and Philosophy of Language* where the Russian philosopher constructed his concepts of human perception: "perception is not a passive individual process but an interactive social one, that is, a process in which meaning is not given but created, and not imposed by the speaker but negotiated together by speaker and hearer."[25]

These concepts were central in Bogatyrev's, and other Prague Circle scholars' studies of performance audiences. As Proschan remarks, for them the leading source of meaning is convention:

> (M)eaning is learned, historically derived, and socially situated, rather than arising mysteriously from unconscious habit located neither in time nor in space. It is therefore necessary that one be familiar with a sign system before one can properly

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[21] Ibid. We can establish a correlation of the interrelatedness of these concepts with the intersection of the two frames (outer and inner) that form the spectator's cultural understanding and experience of theatre outlined by Bennett.

[22] Ibid., 34.

[23] Karl Bühler, *The Theory of Language: The Representational Function of Language*, trans. Donald F. Goodwin (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1990), 32.

[24] Ibid., 34.

[25] Proschan, "The Cocreation", 38.

> understand it, and in many cases necessary that one be taught or even initiated.(. . .) If one must be trained or experienced in order to apprehend and appreciate a performance properly, it is clearly all the more important that one must be initiated into the conventions of audience participation in those performance traditions such as puppetry that depends heavily upon the active intervention of audience members.[26]

The discussions of Bennett (1999) concerning the theatre audience; and those of Proschan (1987) and the Prague Circle theorists, particularly by Bogatyrev, regarding the audience's role in traditional puppetry are very useful in understanding the complex process involving audience intervention and interpretation in the Mamulengo shows.

2 - The Audience in Mamulengo

In the majority of Mamulengo shows attended in the Zona da Mata region, a high level of interaction between puppeteers/puppets, the intermediary and audience members was observed throughout the performances. In this context, the text is mostly an oral sketch, with the dialogues built during the performance itself and developed out of audience participation. Moreover, the audience can be the very source of inspiration for the puppeteer's creative process during the ongoing performance, such as in the case of the Mané Foié Fotico scene discussed earlier. Also, it is sometimes the audience that decides which scenes occur, what happens within the scenes and the conclusion of the scenes. Finally, the level of audience participation greatly influences the duration of the show. Consequently, we can assert that in this context a Mamulengo show is the result of a co-creation process, in which the artists and the public use their knowledge of the Mamulengo elements and conventions, and, finally, share their view of the world. As stated by Santos "once the audience participates there is the inspiration needed for the improvised creative process, from which the show is formed, integrating actors, puppets and spectators."[27]

But how is the co-creation process developed in Mamulengo puppet theatre? What are the strategies used by the puppeteer to stimulate audience participation? How does the audience respond to the puppeteer's stimuli? How does the puppeteer work with what the audience offers? As will be discussed later, mamulengueiros use

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[26] Ibid., 38-9.

[27] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 17.

various strategies in order to provoke audience participation. Nevertheless, the Mamulengo audience is as varied as the Mamulengo itself, and the composition of the audience significantly influences the strategies used by the puppeteer to communicate and provoke audience participation.

Therefore, a second range of questions must be asked in order to understand audience reception and the co-creation process: What are the expectations of the audience in regard to the show? Is it a literate audience? Do audience members share the cultural values of the puppeteers? Is the audience composed mostly of younger or adult spectators? By examining these questions, we can further understand the complex process involving audience participation in Mamulengo performances.

2.1 - Rural v Urban Audience: a significant distinction?

Although the importance of the role played by the audience in Mamulengo puppet theatre has been recognized by scholars (Borba Filho: 1987; Pimentel: 1988; Santos: 1979; Gurgel: 1986), the few transcripts of Mamulengo shows and other popular puppet theatre of the northeast completely omit indications of audience interventions in the performances.[28] Pimentel's transcripts of João Redondo puppet theatre are the only exception, since Pimentel registered examples of interplay between audience members and the puppets and the intermediary during the shows. Nevertheless, Santos makes important observations regarding audience participation in Mamulengo.

Santos remarks that "the Mamulengo, be it rural or urban, is directed at a specific group. It did not satisfy the emotional and intellectual needs of an intellectual and bourgeois audience. (. . .) It is clear that the Mamulengo audience is the people, the lower strata of society."[29] Nevertheless, Santos understands the rural audience as the 'natural' public for Mamulengo, saying that in rural areas[30] where the audience "is mostly composed of rural workers, artisans and small traders" the Mamulengo is performed in its "better style", expressing its "dramatic and visual vitality and richness" with the audience completely engaged in the ongoing performance that can last up to eight hours. Santos stresses that the 'superiority' of rural Mamulengo is expressed both by the duration of the show and the intense interaction of the audience

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[28] For the transcript of Mamulengo texts see: Borba Filho (1987); Alcure (2001); Santos (1977). On João Redondo puppet theatre, see: Pimentel (1988) and Gurgel (1986).

[29] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 46.

[30] What Santos considers a rural area includes the farms, small villages and small cities.

throughout the performance that results in a "touching spectacle carried with telluric force." [31] In regard to the urban context, Santos states that:

> Because of the rhythm of life and interest of the citizens, there are many differences between the rural and urban audience, the latter being less attracted by popular puppet theatre. In Recife, for example, the population prefers the products of mass media, such as cinema and television. This attitude shows a tendency to forget the culture produced by the people." [32]

We cannot deny the influence that the mass media has been having on the production and reception of the products of popular culture, mainly, but not exclusively, in an urban context. It is fair to say that the culture produced in an urban context is more likely to be influenced by the mass media, since its producers and receivers are much more in contact with it. But, when Santos states that the urban audience "is less attracted by popular puppet theatre" it is important to ask what he considers an 'urban audience'. Is it possible to label it as a unified entity?

In Brazil, where the division between classes is very strong, it is not possible to talk about 'one city'. Instead, we have to recognize the various 'cities' coexisting in the shared urban space. Moreover, the extensive rural exodus that has been taking place in Brazil from the 1970s until today makes the distinction between rural and urban even more complex.

Research shows that the producers and receivers of Mamulengo are not exclusively from the rural areas, and are not a single and homogenous group. However, and here one must agree with Santos, they consist mostly of the socio-economically deprived, culturally marginalised members of the popular classes, even if today we observe an increase of Mamulengo artists and audience members coming from the middle class. Therefore, it may be more appropriate to talk about audience composition in terms of social class rather than in urban and rural terms.

Furthermore, as discussed at the beginning of this section, the audience's previous knowledge of the elements and conventions of Mamulengo puppet theatre greatly affects its reception and participation process, and both literate and illiterate audiences can be found in rural and urban contexts.

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[31] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 46-7.

[32] Ibid, 36.

As indicated in Chapter I, from the end of the nineteenth century until the present time, Mamulengo shows have been performed in Recife, and we might accept this fact as an indication of a good response from the urban audience to the puppet theatre. In a recent study, Patricia Angelica Dutra shows the intense interrelation between Mestre Dengoso's puppet theatre and urban life. Dutra's thesis is a study of the "Mamulengo of Professor Benedito of Mestre Dengoso", a puppeteer who lives in one of the poorest shanty towns of Recife, ironically called *Chão de Estrelas* (Ground of Stars).[33] Dutra states that besides presenting traditional Mamulengo characters and scenes, Dengoso also creates new ones (characters and scenes) which reflect not just everyday life in *Chão de Estrelas*, but the life of the poor living in a big city, such as Recife.[34] In regard to the characters appearing in the Mamulengo of Dengoso, Dutra states that together with the traditional characters (Benedito, Simão and Caboclinhos, among others), the puppeteer has a great range of characters drawn from the *Chão de Estrelas* context. This, Dutra notes, "brings to light meanings that help us to understand the connections between the puppet theatre characters and the people from the community."[35]

Dutra describes Dengoso's process of creation and inclusion of these new characters. She gives the example of a woman nicknamed "Magra" (Skinny) and her boyfriend "Cabeça" (Head), who had inspired the puppeteer. As Dutra notes, "Magra" is a very popular person within the community since she is a very alive and funny person. To represent "Magra", the puppeteer uses a tall, thin puppet in contrast to the small one that plays "Cabeça", who is, in fact, shorter than his girlfriend. On the stage, the disparity of the puppets' sizes instantly provokes audience laughter.[36] Apart from "Magra" and "Cabeça", Dengoso has many other puppets/characters based on the inhabitants of the local community (Maria, Letícia, Sinhá, Botanha da Barraca, etc.). All of them are "very well-liked among *Chão de Estrelas* audiences."[37] Referring to these characters, Dengoso

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[33] Dutra notes that "Mamulengo of Professor Benedito" is the name of the puppet theatre of José Justino known as "Mestre Dengoso". As the puppet theatre name indicates, Professor Benedito is the main character of Dengoso's Mamulengo. The title of "Professor" is a clear reference to "Professor Tiridá" the main character of Ginu Mamulengo. (Dutra, "Trajetórias de Criação", 17)

[34] Ibid., 31.

[35] Ibid., 36.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

says: "The people (audience) commonly ask me: Dengoso, bring out such-and-such character for us to laugh!" Moreover, Dengoso remarks that sometimes people come inside the booth to ask him to represent someone who had never been represented before, or someone new in the community, giving information how the person is.[38] As can be noted, Dengoso's process of creation can be made in advance or improvised during the performance itself, but is heavily based on audience expectation.

Besides the new characters and the new scenes, the close connection between Dengoso's puppet theatre and everyday life in *Chão de Estrelas* can also be seen in the traditional scenes. According to Dutra's descriptions, in Dengoso's Mamulengo the conventional themes presented in fight-scenes, the policemen scenes, the scenes representing marital conflicts, among others, are interspersed with *Chão de Estrelas* daily problems, such as flood, lack of water, arguments and fights involving the people of the community.[39]

Dutra describes various shows performed by Dengoso in different places of metropolitan Recife[40] and points out he had adapted his show for these contexts explaining that "the puppeteer's capacity to attract and involve the audience is the result of his long experience, through which he has developed strategies and formulae depending on where, when, how, what and for whom the show is directed."[41]

Finally, Dutra stresses the vital role played by the *Chão de Estrelas* audience in Dengoso's puppet theatre. She argues that the members of the community are so active during the performances that, "in a certain way, we can say that Dengoso has incorporated this public as an important element of his shows, and, as he [Dengoso] remarks 'I rent a truck (when he performs outside *Chão de Estrelas*) and the people here go with me. They give strength to the show'."[42]

Dutra's accurate study on Dengoso's puppet theatre once more demonstrates that the intense interaction of the audience in Mamulengo shows (observed by Santos in a rural context) is also possible in an urban one.

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[38] Ibid., 36-7.

[39] Ibid, 88-109.

[40] Dutra describes shows in amusement parks, streets, fairs, schools, among others.

[41] Ibid., 155.

[42] Ibid., 156.

On the other hand, coexisting with Dengoso's traditional audience, another type of public can be observed in the urban context. Santos point outs that one significant portion of the Mamulengo audience in Recife is composed of tourists, both Brazilians and foreigners.[43] This audience, Santos notes, "is completely dissociated from the Mamulengo show, watching it for mere folkloric curiosity. Consequently, the spectators are mere observers, keeping themselves distant without any participation in the ongoing performance." For Santos, the cultural distance between the Mamulengueiros and audience is expressed both in the language spoken by the puppets and the subjects brought into the show. [44]

Santos's observations reinforce the notion that the communication between puppeteers and audience, or the lack of it, is closely related to the cultural background (values, ideology, economic status and so on) of these two groups.

The cultural distance between puppeteers and audience members may also result in less passive reactions than the ones observed by Santos, bringing to light tensions that permeate class relations. In describing some reactions of middle-class audiences from Rio de Janeiro towards Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes shows,[45] Alcure points out some aspects that in her opinion blurred the communicative process between this type of audience and the Mamulengo performances of these puppeteers. One is the general idea that the puppet theatre is directed exclusively at children, and "this expectation oriented the audience reception". Consequently, many adults took their children to attend the performances, expecting to see a show for a youthful audience and the reactions towards the shows were sometimes awful. Alcure observes that the preferred themes of Mamulengo, namely "money, fighting and sex", and the linguistic and visual codes that bear them, that is, coarse language, extra-marital relationships, body degradation (e.g., vomits, burps, worms coming out from the puppet's mouth, etc.), among others, "scandalised" the audience members. Consequently, expressions such as: "how many swear-words!"; "what rudeness!";

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[43] As indicated on Chapter I, the tourist policy of Recife city council is mostly based in the rich folk tradition of Pernambuco state, including Mamulengo. Santos' observations seem to be related to performances carried out in projects such as the one developed in *Casa da Cultura* in which the mamulengueiros performed every week for an audience composed of tourists.

[44] Santos, *Mamulengo,* 36. The author observes that the language spoken by the puppeteers "is almost a dialect", which makes it unintelligible for Brazilians from different regions, including the tourists.

[45] Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes performed in Rio de Janeiro in 1998.

"you should be ashamed of yourself!"; "this is not appropriate for children"; and so on, could be heard throughout the performances.[46]

Alcure remarks that this situation restricted the puppeteers and therefore, it worked as a determining factor in the rearrangements made by them in the following shows. She explains that in order to keep performing in some places in that city, such as schools and theatres and particularly for young audiences, many adaptations had to be made by Zé Lopes and Zé de Vina.[47]

On the other hand, Alcure refers to a performance of Zé Lopes at the São Cristovão fair on the periphery of Rio de Janeiro, where the puppeteer felt "at home" and consequently, felt free to play as he used to in his homeland. As Alcure notes, the show was very successful with intense participation by the spectators who "dialogued constantly with the puppets. The drunker members of the audience were excited and danced in front of the booth. (. . .) They offered *cachaça* [spirit] to the puppets, touched the female puppets skirts, and raised the dead puppets."[48]

Alcure links the success of the show in São Cristovão to the huge number of people of Northeast descent and to the vast majority of working class people among the audience members. This once more indicates that the "place" is much more than a location in a physical space, but rather a space intermediated by ideologies, cultural values and practices.

From the discussion above, it is clear that an analysis of the audience co-creation process cannot be done out of context, since the audience, like the Mamulengo show, is not a unified entity. As Herbert Blau notes: "An audience without a history is not an audience"[49]

The following section contains two analyses: the first examines the co-creation process with literate audiences, audiences composed mostly of individuals who have attended many Mamulengo shows and, consequently, know the elements and rules that form this puppet theatre. The analysis is based on the shows of Zé de Vina, Zé Lopes and João Galego/ Marlene Silva, which I attended and recorded during field work. The data collected is complemented by interviews with audience members.

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[46] Alcure, "Mamulengo", 54-6.

[47] The adaptations outlined by Alcure are described further, in the section "Young Audiences".

[48] Ibid.,58.

[49] Herbert Blau, *The Audience*, (London: Johns Hopkins Press, 1978), 34, quoted in Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, 140.

The second analyses the strategies used by the puppeteers to adapt their show for younger audiences. The data is based on one show of João Galego and Marlene Silva performed especially for children, and one show of Zè Lopes which, although not exclusively directed at children, had a majority of young spectators.

The observations made by Alcure in regard to the adaptations made by Zè Lopes and Zé de Vina shows in Rio de Janeiro referred to above, and the transformations made by Januário de Oliveira (Ginu) puppet theatre when he started performing specifically for children will complete the collected data.

2.2 - The Co-Creation Process with a Literate Audience

The Context

The shows referred to in this section are directed primarily at adults, even though they are also attended by children. Generally they are performed in an outside space both in urban and rural areas. They are presented at night time, without a fixed finishing time. Usually, they begin by 8pm and may last for more than six hours. The audience is composed of males and females of different ages. However, from a certain hour (generally 11.00pm) the audience tends to be composed mostly of male adults.

Usually, the contractors of these shows are small traders, generally owners of bars that use Mamulengo as a commercial strategy for attracting customers. This also occurs in rural areas, since in many small farms there are bars that function as a complementary resource for the rural workers' small incomes. The contractor pays a small fee to the group, with supplementary money collected by the artists throughout the performance.[50] Thus, both the contractor and puppeteers have an interest in extending the show, since this may represent better collections for the artists and more consumption of the trader's goods (e.g. alcoholic drinks, refreshments, and food).

As pointed out before, the mamulengueiros have about twenty different scenes, but they are rarely presented all together in the same show. The selection and sequence of the scenes depend on the performance context, that is, the place, the audience and the available time for the accomplishment of the show. Since in the context described above the show has no time limit, its duration depends heavily on

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[50] Referring to the *sitios* context, Santos mentions that some performances are paid for entirely by the contractor, generally a person of higher economic status. In this case, the shows are part of a family celebration, such as birthday. (Santos, *Mamulengo*, 47)

the audience's participation. Verbal exchanges between puppets, the intermediary and audience members, among other elements, determine the extension of the scenes, and consequently, of the show. Moreover, as indicated earlier, the audience is directly involved in the selection and ending of some scenes.

From all this, we can deduce that it is active audience participation that consolidates the performance's success, a satisfactory financial return for both artists and contractor, a rich aesthetic experience for the audience members and, consequently, a consolidation of the puppeteer's recognition by their public.

Audience Reactions and Interventions

In these shows, audience participation is intense and constant and is expressed both by collective reactions (boos, whistles, shouts), or more individualized reactions. In regard to the latter we can summarize the reactions as follows:

1) To answer the questions asked by the puppets or Mateus

2) To give advice to the puppets

3) To make positive and/or negative comments on the puppets' speeches and actions

4) To offer food and drink to the puppets

5) To make physical contact with the puppets to indicate to which puppet he/she refers and to express affection (a caress) or anger (a push or slap)

6) To make bets (with money) directing the puppets' actions

7) To become involved in the selection of the scenes

8) To control the puppeteer's performance, asking him to play according to traditional expectations.

This dynamic form of interaction is governed by three aspects that are interconnected and complementary and therefore, often overlap: audience specifications and expectations; themes and language used in these Mamulengo shows; and finally, the puppeteers' strategies to provoke audience participation.

Audience Specifications and Expectations

In the case of a literate audience, the individual members are acquainted with the diverse elements (auditory and visual) that shape this puppet theatre and have already been initiated into the conventions of participation in the shows. Therefore, individuals feel free to participate actively in the ongoing performances.

The artists (puppeteers, the intermediary and musicians) and the majority of audience members are part of the same social group. They are working people who inhabit the interior areas of Pernambuco state, living in the cities, towns or rural areas. As such, artists and spectators experience similar economic limitations and also share the same cultural background and values. In addition, the intense activity of these artists in the cities of this region facilitates familiarity between the artists and public. Also, the majority of people in a specific audience know each other.

Since Mamulengo is a comic puppet theatre, the audience knows that laughter is its final objective. This pre-disposition for laughing is fundamental to the development of the show and has a decisive influence in its reception. In his study of humour, Freud points out that:

> The favorable condition for the origin of comic pleasure is brought about by a general happy disposition in which one is in the mood for laughing. (. . .) A similar favorable condition is produced by the expectation of the comic, or by putting oneself in the right mood for comic pleasure. (. . .) He (sic) who decides to attend a comic lecture or a farce at the theatre is indebted to this intention for laughing over things which in everyday life would hardly produce in him a comic effect. He (sic) finally laughs at the recollection of having laughed, at the expectation of laughing, and at the appearance of the one who is to present the comic, even before the latter makes the attempt to make him (sic) laugh.[51]

To the intrinsic aspects involved in the reception of the comic outlined by Freud, we may add others that are related specifically to the context mentioned here. The shows are set in a milieu that reinforces audience participation. Firstly, on these occasions, people have a clear predisposition to have fun and to enjoy themselves. For male adults the event is an opportunity to drink, chat, and even play cards, dominos, or other table games.[52] Some of them arrive at the show already mildly tipsy on *cachaça*, or get drunk during the performance itself. An increase in the level of alcohol consumption corresponds to an increase in audience participation. Some of the most interesting verbal exchanges occur between puppets, the intermediary and the more

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[51] Sigmund Freud, "Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious," in *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. A.A. Brill (New York: The Modern Library, 1938), 790.

[52] The parallel games and activities are interspersed with the attendance of the show. In the *sitios*, dance activities also occur. (Santos, *Mamulengo*, 47).

drunken audience members. For the married women and elderly people, a Mamulengo performance is an opportunity to get out of the house and have fun; for parents, an occasion to take their children out for a shared entertainment; for young people, a chance to date.

The communicative process begins during the preliminaries to the performance. Unpacking puppets and accessories, assembling the stage (booth) and setting up the performance venue attract the audience's attention. This activity means that those already in attendance have some stake in the ensuing performance, and at same time it attracts others spectators.[53] Puppeteers' friends approach to talk and help with the assembly of the stage. Children come to observe the puppets and to ask about one or another character, and to look inside the booth. Musicians are already playing animated tunes, reinforcing the festive atmosphere.

The performance starts. The colourful images conveyed by the visual elements, such as the puppet figures, props and booths, as well as the puppets' dances and hilarious movements, all add to the relaxed atmosphere, promoting a sense of "suspension" of the spectators' everyday existence, and for the adults, in their overworked lives. This all relies mainly on the text, here understood to be the text co-created through the audience byplay, the strength that sustains the ongoing performance. By this, I do not intend to devalue the importance of the other elements since, as already pointed out it is by the interconnection of the various codes that puppet theatre is possible.

Proschan's observation helps to clarify the arguments relating to the role played by language in the co-creation process in the context referred to here. He remarks that:

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[53] Proschan, in his analysis of the roles that the audience assume during a puppet theatre performance, presents four distinct identities: The "Investor", when "the audience members have some stake in the performance itself"; The "Instigator", when "the audience is responsible for instigating actions or for directing events"; The "Definer", when the audience is asked to "direct *interpretations*", that is, to define "situations and meanings"; and "Ratifier", when the audience is asked "to endorse, corroborate, or contradict meanings and interpretations" suggested by the puppets. As Proschan explains, "assuming each of these identities from time to time, audience members implicate themselves further and further in the action and outcome of the spectacle before them. (Proschan, "The Cocreation", 40-2). Using Proschan's terminology, we can say that in this initial involvement some of the audience members may assume the role of the "Investor".

> (The) conventions specific to a particular group or community may not provide as much of a comic resource as other conventions of more general distribution. For instance, body humor, in which folk puppetry abounds, or slapstick and buffoonery, refer to what we might be tempted to call universal understanding, rather than local conventions, and we would expect to encounter them frequently in itinerant or multi-cultural performance settings.[54]

Body humor, slapstick and buffoonery are comic resources less dependent on the linguistic codes, and from this may come their 'universality'. These comic devices represent rich sources of humour in any Mamulengo show. However, in the shows presented in the context referred to here, comedy and consequently communication are mostly based on language. Audience involvement and participation comes chiefly from the puppeteer's capacity to whip up enthusiasm with his sharp and malicious comments and stream of verbal jokes. Once more, this emphasizes the fundamental role played by language in Mamulengo (as in almost all popular puppet theatre traditions).

As mentioned above, from a certain hour (generally from 11.00pm on) the audience tends to be composed mostly of men, since the women and children go back home. This change in audience composition influences the show, since the puppeteers select scenes and emphasize subjects that are more directly related to masculine expectations and imagination. Therefore, more fight scenes, more explicit sexual allusions and obscenity are observed.

Themes and Language

The shared interests and expectations of both performers and audience members in such a context provide rich opportunities for humour. The humour arises from the history and experience of the group for instance in the form of jokes.[55] Consequently, current humour may come from references to past, present or expected events, as well as to local authorities and individuals. Moreover, the subjects touched upon, including the taboos, express cultural and ideological views that depend on shared understanding. Hierarchy inversions, disputes between brave men, sexuality and bodily allusion together with themes related to Northeast culture (festivities,

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[54] Ibid., 39

[55] Ibid.

folguedos, religion and superstitions) are subjects closely linked to the audience's cultural experience.

Hierarchy inversion appears in different forms, outlining the diverse strategies used by the characters representative of the people in their confrontation - and almost always in their victories - against the authorities. It does not matter if the confrontation is expressed in a more explicit way (fight followed by death), or in a subtler manner (treason, tricks, exposure to ridicule): the audience immediately identifies with the power inversion. This close identification provokes active interventions that reinforce the roles played by the characters representing the people.[56]

Tension also occurs between the characters representative of the people. Swearing, fights between the *valentões* (the macho men) and even death, are provoked by various causes, such as women, racial and age preconceptions, drunkenness, or simply by a point of demarcation, such as the choice of music at a ball.[57] In the fight scenes, the adversaries are usually, on the one side, a young black man, and on the other, an elderly white man. The characters' attributes can be seen as clearly defining different races and ages. As examined below, the spectators' empathy with one or another group promotes interventions that decide the winner of the fight and thus, the ending of the scene.

As previously discussed, sexuality, bodily functions, and obscenity provide rich sources of comic exploitation and are expressed in the puppets' figures, movements, actions and speeches. In the shows performed in the context referred to here, sexuality is without doubt, the subject matter most frequently explored and appears in almost all the scenes. Puns and nonsense language generally mask

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[56]As indicated in Chapter I, the socio-economic-cultural formation of northeast Brazil was based on a strong class division, on one side the elite and on the other the people. Even today, the lack of access for the working class to common services such as education and public health is still observed, perpetuating the differences that separate these two groups.

[57] Until today in the interior areas of the Northeast region, the notion of "masculinity" is closely connected to the elements presented in these scenes. Mario Sette points out how the "brabos" (bullies) abounded in Recife in the nineteenth century and explains they were types of foremen for important colonels, majors and doctors, that is, the elite representatives. The author describes the fights between them. He notes: "The knives scratched the air and were poked into the bellies. The clubs made drawings in the air beating the adversaries. The houses' doors closing, people running, children crying and the injured lay down suffering. These were daily spectacles." Mario Sette, *Moxabomabas e Maracatus* (Recife: Fundação de Casa de Cultura, 1981), 85-6.

references to sexual taboos and may be seen as a strategy the puppeteers use to communicate freely with their audience.

One such example occurred in the scene *Joaquim Bozó and João Redondo da Alemanha* performed by Zé de Vina, in which an allusion to anal sex is made through apparently incongruous dialogue. Inspector Peinha enters to arrest Joaquim Bozó, who has just killed João Redondo da Alemanha and other elderly male characters. The Inspector develops the following dialogue with Mateus:

Inspetor Peinha - (se dirigindo ao Sargento) Sargento, vamos fazer uma arromba!

Mateus - Uma arromba, ou uma ronda?

Inspetor Peinha - Mateus, vou prender o negro! (se referindo a Joaquim Bozó). Como é que eu digo pra prender ele?

Mateus - Diga: Teje preso com a ordem do Sargento!

Inspetor Peinha - (se dirigindo a Joaquim Bozó) Esteje dentro!

Mateus - Assim, não rapaz! É, teje preso com a ordem do Sargento!

Inspetor Peinha - Teje preso ou empurra e eu não agüento!

Mateus - Mas rapaz, é teje preso com a ordem do Sargento!

Inspetor Peinha - Teje preso que já tudo dentro!

[Inspector Peinha - (addressing the Sergeant) Sergeant, let's do an arromba! (a break and enter.)

Mateus - You mean an *arromba* or a *ronda* (a night watch)?

Inspector Peinha - Mateus, I'm going to arrest the nigger (referring to Joaquim Bozó). How should I approach the situation?

Mateus- Just say - You're under arrest on the Sergeant's order!

Inspector Peinha - (addressing Joaquim Bozó) Be inside!

Mateus - Not like that, man! It's: You're under arrest on the Sergeant's order!

Inspector Peinha - You're under arrest or push it and I can't stand it!

Mateus - Oh man, it's: You're under arrest on the Sergeant's order!

Inspector Peinha - You're under arrest and it is all inside!] [58]

Peinha's commands allude to a progression of actions related to anal sex: *arromba* (a break and enter); *esteje dentro* (be inside); *empurra e eu não agüento* (push it and I can't stand it); and *já tudo dentro* (it is all inside). The punning allows for the double entendre, meaning that Inspector Peinha has experienced Joaquim Bozó's penis.

When actually spoken in the scene, the dialogue seemed only a word play. In addition to its apparent incongruity, the fast rhythm, pitch and timbre applied by the mamulengueiro to the Inspector's voice made the dialogue incomprehensive for an outsider like me.[59] Nevertheless, the majority of the audience members reacted with outbursts of laughter after each Peinha's malicious comments directed at the Joaquim Bozó. Sharp and spicy comic formulas like this warm up the audience and actively encourage its participation.

Formulas of Audience Activation

In addition to the devices related to the themes and language outlined above, the master puppeteers make extensive use of other techniques that stimulate audience participation. These formulas of activation are well codified and are passed down directly from one puppeteer to another. The most recurrent are the opening of the performance, the way in which the characters are introduced, games involving audience members, frame-breaking, and stimulation of direct audience involvement in scenes.

a) The performance opening

Often the show opens with the character of Mateus, who approaches the booth dancing and singing. In many cases he is followed by drunks, who dance with him.[60] The drunken dancing immediately makes some members of the audience laugh and provides the opportunity for the first verbal reactions (i.e. swearing, shouts, etc) setting up the entrance of the puppets.

b) The character formula of introduction

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[58] Scene transcript from Zé de Vina's show performed in Vitória de Santo Antão, 30 January, 2004.

[59] The sexual allusion of the dialogue was just understood by me after a detailed analysis of the recorded material.

[60] As mentioned further, drunks dancing were also observed by Alcure in Zé Lopes performance at São Cristovãao fair in Rio de Janeiro.

The way in which the characters are introduced in the scenes allows for direct contact between puppets and audience. The puppets speak directly to the audience members and to Mateus and often refer to the contractor of the show (the "owner of the house") and to one or more audience members. This allows for repartee between puppets, Mateus and spectators, and also, between audience members themselves, setting up the following events.

c) Games involving audience members

Games in which audience members are directly involved may be proposed by a specific puppet. The example described below occurred in the Zé de Vina show. As explained by the puppeteer, this was a common game played by the circus clowns which he adapted to the puppet theatre. Zé de Vina reveals he has other games of this sort and in his opinion, they help to induce audience involvement in the show. In this performance, it could be seen that the game focused the audience's attention on the show. Prior to the game, the audience was somewhat dispersed and very noisy and the game helped it to concentrate. The game occurred after the first puppet scene played by Caroca and Catirina and unfolded as follows:

Simão enters and introduces himself to the audience. He says he will play a game and asks Mateus to find three boys who would like to get one real each. Mateus asks the children and three boys agree to be part of the game. Mateus brings the boys to the front of the booth and tells Simão he has found three boys. Simão gives him a stick and says directly to the audience:

Simão - Silence, please, for the boys to concentrate! Mateus, give the stick (*pau*) to the first boy!

Mateus (to the first boy) - Hold the stick! Are you afraid to hold the stick? Have you never held a stick? (Here is a pun, since the Portuguese word *pau* has a double-meaning: stick and prick. The boys and the public laugh.)

Simão - Look Mateus, the name of the first boy is Good! (Mateus whispers something to the first boy).

Simão - The name of the second boy is Bad! (Mateus whispers something to the second boy).

Simão - The name of the last boy is Rick! (Mateus whispers something to the third boy).

Simão - Listen everybody! Pay attention! One, two, three, now! What is the name of the first boy?

First boy - (shouting) Good!

Simão - What is the name of the second boy?

Second boy - Bad!

Simão - And what is the name of the last boy?

Third boy - Rick!

Simão - Three cheeky boys holding a stick! [61]

d) Frame-breaking

As the show develops, so the interaction between puppets, Mateus and the audience intensifies. Puppets mention specific audience members throughout the show. They ask questions, ask for advice, provoke the spectators with malicious and ironic comments and respond to audience interjections.

During the course of this communicative process, the puppets seem to try to join the realm of humanity by discussing personal traits of members of the audience, and then suggesting that, although puppets, they too have a normal life. The puppets place themselves in the life of the community, while including audience members in their "pretend" experiences. Therefore, the puppets displace themselves from the time/space of the theatre, breaking the frame of theatrical convention. Since frames work as interpretive tools, the breaking of a frame results in a moment of confusion which can often be humorous.[62] This incongruity (puppets equal real people), while having a humorous effect, at the same time allows for delicate subjects to be expressed without fear of angry retribution since, "although the puppets possesses human knowledge, they are not bound by the same rules of social interaction, since they are, after all, only puppets."[63] Hence, the puppet is free to present a corrosive portrait of those who, as distinct from the puppet, are living beings,[64] and to make quips upon delicate subjects.

This freedom is extended to the audience, since the people know that they are protected by the theatrical make-believe and also that they are interacting not with human beings, but with 'wooden beings', even if at times this perception oscillates.

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[61] Scene transcript from the show performed in Feira Nova, on 21 December 2003.

[62] Gross, "The Form and Function", 106.

[63] Ibid, 120-121

[64] On this subject see also Tillis, *Toward an Aesthetic*, 33-36.

Examples of this type of frame-breaking happen throughout the show and appear in almost all scenes. The variants presented below are a rough but convenient classification, since they often overlap in the course of a performance. They are:

1) The characters try to establish themselves as members of the local community

This allows for the accomplishment of social critiques that are mainly, but not exclusively, directed at the local representatives of the elite and are always presented in the form of comic parody.[65] One such example is the scene "Politician and Voters", where a candidate for the next municipal election comes onstage to present his political platform:

"Candidato a Prefeito - Boa noite a todos! Sou coronel, político e quero dizer que esse ano tem eleição novamente e conto com todos vocês! Estou pedindo voto pois quero ajudar o povo.

Homem 1- Mas qual é o seu partido?

Candidato a Prefeito - Meu partido é o PPP, Partido do Povo Perdedor, e estou dando tudo que o povo precisa! Nas ruas que não tem calçamento, eu mando cavar mais buraco!

Mulher 1 - Mas que candidato dos cachorro é esse!

Candidato a Prefeito - Se eu ganhar as eleições, as águas vão chegar geladinha nas torneiras, porque hoje em dia, em vez de água, só chega vento!

Homem 2 - Você tá parecendo Marinaldo! (o prefeito da cidade)

Candidato a Prefeito – Não sou nem parente dele! E tem mais! Eu sei que os homem aqui nessa cidade toma café na cuinha, mas se eu ganhar, vocês vão tomar no cuião! (publico ri). E se chover, não se preocupem, pois eu vou dar sombrinha pras mulheres e capo os homens (capa para os homens).

Homem 3 - Tem muito homem aqui que nem precisa disso, pois já não tá funcionando mesmo! (risos)."

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[65] This type of parody Obraztsov calls "the generalized parody", a parody of "a group of people who have common professional, social, or other distinguishing features, in which it is those group features that are caricatured (. . .)". Sergei Obraztsov, *My Profession* (1950), 167, quoted in Tillis, *Toward an Aesthetic*, 35.

[Mayor Candidate - Good evening to everybody! I'm Colonel, politician and want to tell that this is an election year again and I count on you all! I am asking for your vote because I want to help the people!

Man 1- But which is your party?

Mayor Candidate - My party is PPL, Party of the Poor Losers, and I am giving all that people needs! In those unpaved streets I am ordering to be dug more holes!

Man 1- What sort of a son of a bitch candidate is this?

Mayor Candidate - If I win the elections, the waters will flow coolly from the tap (this appeals a lot in a tropical climate), because in these days only wind is coming from the tap!

Man 2 - You look like Marinaldo! (The actual mayor of the city)

Mayor Candidate - I am not even his relative. And there is more! I know that the men in this city take coffee in small cups, but if I win they will take it in bigger cups! (Allusion to the anus, meaning that the mayor will fuck them. The audience laughs). And if it rains, don't worry I will give umbrellas to the ladies and capes to the men!" (The sonority alludes to the idea that he will emasculate them).

Man 3 - There are lots of men around here who don't even need it, because they are not working any longer! (Laughs) [66]

It can be observed that daily problems of the community, like the lack of water in houses[67] and the bad conditions of the pavements, are mixed with comic jokes such as "*tomar no cuião*" (take in bigger cups) and "*capo os homens*" (capes to the men). The mayoral candidate's absurd platform at the same time allows the puppeteer to express critical remarks about the local political authorities, allows for the spectators' reaction, as in the commentary referring to male sexual impotence.

Criticism is also directed at actions carried out by the community members. The acidic commentary made by Quitéria, referring to the installation of an electric fence surrounding one of the houses on the street where the show was being performed is a good example:

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[66] Scene transcript from Zé Lopes' show, performed in Glória de Goitá, on 20 December 2003.

[67] This was a real problem in Glória de Goitá. The houses located in the poor areas of the city were constantly without water. As indicated earlier, we observe the same connection between Dengoso Mamulengo and daily problems in his community, Chão de Estrelas.

"Quitéria - Mateus, agora eu to rindo mas pouco antes eu tava chorando! Sabe que o portao da casa da filha de Antonio Inacio ta dando tanto choque que morreu 10 passarinhos! Mateus, eu também levei um choque quando fiz a feira hoje! Comprei 0,50 cents de coentro e nao deu nem pra fazer o molho!"

[Quitéria - Well, now I am smiling but right before I was crying! Mateus, do you know that the gate in front of Antonio Inacio's daughter's house is so electrified that has killed 10 birds! [68] Mateus, I also got a shock in the market today! I bought 50 cents worth of coriander and it wasn't enough for the sauce!] [69]

It is in repartee such as this that the puppeteer and the puppet become inseparable. Through the puppets, the puppeteers express their concerns about poor people's problems in their everyday life which they also suffer, since they are part of this social group.

2) The puppets include the audience members in their "pretend" past experiences.

In the majority of these references, individuals are depicted in a ridiculous manner. Thus, the comic focus is shifted from the puppets to the spectator(s) referred to. Since the audience is composed mostly of people who know each other, this comic effect is intensified. Some examples are:

2.1) Spectators are included as members of the puppet's family

While telling the names of her 116 children to Zangô, Ritinha includes audience members. Following each name, she adds a comment related to breast-feeding:

"Ritinha - O primeiro chama-se Marimbondo (um espectador). Olha moço, ele mamava tanto que, pra ele largar a mama eu metia o tamanco na boca dele! Só assim pra ele parar de mamar.

Zango - E depois de Marimbondo, a senhora lembra de algum outro filho?

Ritinha - Sim, Zé Pequeno (Outro espectador). Oia, Ze Pequeno mamou tanto, mamou tanto que meu peito ficou que nem um caroço!

Alguém do público - Eh, Ze Pequeno, tu é mesmo safado!"

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[68] In order to prevent the entrance of thieves, the installation of electric fences in the houses' front gate is becoming a common practice in Brazil. This is a controversial subject for the risk it represents for children and animals. Here, the puppeteer adds a critical comment about the electrical fence Antonio Inacio's daughter had installed in front of her house to keep out intruders.

[69] Scene transcript from Zé de Vina' show performed in Lagoa de Itaenga, on 06 March 2004.

[Ritinha - The first one is Marimbondo (a man from the audience). Look boy, he used to suck so much, but so much, that I was obliged to hit his mouth with a clog! Only then would he stop sucking. (The other spectators start making jokes about him.)

Zangô - And apart from Marimbondo, do you remember any other child?

Ritinha - Yes, Zé Pequeno (another man from the audience). Aiea, Zé Pequeno sucked me so much, but so much that my breast used to look liked a peach stone.

Someone from the public - Hey Zé Pequeno, you are really shameless!]

Ritinha continues to recite several other names of her sons, all drawn from spectators' names.

2.2) Allusions to sexual contact with audience members

These are common references and may be expressed in a direct or subtle manner. In a performance of Zé Lopes carried on in a *sitio,* the owners offered dinner to the artists before the show in which yam and meat were served. Reference to the "yam" of Inácio Correia (the sitio's owner) was made throughout the show, always with a sexual allusion:

"Catirina - Comi o inhame grosso que Inácio me deu."

[Catirina - I ate the big yam Inácio gave me.]

Quitéria - Gostei demais do inhame de Inácio Correia! Dona Filhinha (esposa de Inácio) me disse que que todo dia Inácio da inhme pra ela comer."

[Quitéria - I like Inácio Correia's yam so much! Dona Filhinha (Inácio's wife) told me Inácio gives yam to her to eat every week.]

"Joaquim Bozó - Inácio insistiu pra eu comer o inhame dele, mas quem gosta de inhame é Bilinga (um dos músicos)."

[Joaquim Bozó - Inácio insisted that I eat his yam, but the one who likes yam is Bilinga" (one of the musicians)]. [70]

3) Audience misframe of the puppet show

The puppets' actions and reactions, though highly stylized, are reminiscent of human actions and reactions. Consequently, at certain moments, spectators may become so engrossed that they misframe the puppet show. Some individuals may

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[70] Scene transcript from Zé Lopes' show performed in the *sitio* Lagoa Queimada on 14 December 2003.

temporarily lose sight of the fictitious nature of the theatre, perceiving the puppets as human beings, not as portraying human beings.[71] Take for instance the numerous occurrences that involve a member of the audience insulting and attacking the puppet villains,[72] or a particular puppet who has provoked spectators' anger. Moreover, besides these common reactions just outlined, others were observed: during the shows, people sometimes offer food and drink to the puppets and may even get sexually excited in front of some figures.

In regard to this type of frame–breaking, Gross notes that "the audience members are amused when they discover that they have been perceiving puppets as humans, and not puppets acting like humans. In a successful show, the audience members oscillate back and forth between these two perceptions."[73]

Following are some examples of this sort of frame-breaking observed in the shows attended.

3.1) Physical attacks on the puppets

One case of physical aggression occurred in the scene *Estreita and the Bird Jacu* presented by Zé Lopes.[74] Estreita recounts to the audience how she found Jacu, a bird that lays an enormous egg. In her narrative, Estreita includes three spectators: Carminha, Papudo and Cláudio. The story is full of sexual allusion mainly directed at Cláudio:

> "Estreita: Um dia eu, Carminha, Papudo e Cláudio fomos pescar no rio. Daqui a pouco, Cláudio entrou dentro da lama e ai, começamos a ouvir: ui, ui, uuui! Fomos ver o que era, e era Cláudio tinha sentado em cima de um muçu (cobra). E ele ficou aperreado! Ai, Carminha e eu ouvimos um piado, e era um pinto! O pinto tava mole, pois quando o pintinho sai do ovo num sai todo molinho, molhadinho? Então, levei o pinto pra casa, e hoje ele tá grande, gordo, já é um pássaro!"

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[71] About this subject see discussion in Gross, "The Form and Function", 120-121.

[72] Incidents such as these happen frequently in traditional puppetry. Pasqualino, referring to the traditional audience of Opera dei Pupi, observes that, apart from shouting insults, the audience members throw miscellaneous objects, showing "the rejection of negative values expressed by Gano di Manganza, the traitor". (Pasqualino, "Marionettes and Glove Puppets", 261). Needless to say that the most famous incident of this sort involves Don Quixote, who draws his sword and rescues Don Gaiferos from the Moorish puppets.

[73] Gross, "The Form and Function", 121.

[74] Scene transcript from Zé Lopes' show performed in the sitio *Lagoa Queimada*, Glória de Goitá, on 14 December, 2003.

[Estreita: One day I, Carminha, Papudo and Cláudio went to fish in the river. We lost sight of Cláudio and then we saw he had entered some mud. We start hearing: 'Ui, ui, uuui!' It was Cláudio softly screaming because had sat on a snake! Then, Carminha and I hear a cheep, and there was a chick! The chick was very loose, since when the chick comes out of the egg, isn't it wobbly and wet? Then I took the chick to my house, and today, it has turned into a big bird called Jacu!]

The audience laughs at the double meaning in Estreita's monologue, since "snake" and "chick" are allusions to the penis, the "snake" indicating the erectus penis and the "chick" the flaccid penis thus, suggesting that Claudio had, in fact, experienced a penis. Estreita says that she will bring the bird out to show to the audience and requests Cláudio's help:

"Estreita- Oh Cláudio, quando eu empurrar o passaro e perguntar: entrou? Se ele entrar você diz: entrou!"

[Estreita – Hey, Cláudio, I will push the bird onstage and ask to you: Did it enter? If it did, you have to admit: Yes, it did enter!]

Perceiving the malice of the joke, Cláudio refuses to participate in it. The audience reacts by weaving commentaries related to his refusal. The mamulengueiro, noticing the spectators' euphoria, teases Cláudio further:

"Estreita- Mas Cláudio, não tem nada de mais não, é que o pássaro tá gordo e fica difícil de entrar! Mas é entrar no palco, Cláudio! (gargalhadas do público)"

[Estreita – But Cláudio, take it easy! The thing is that the bird is fat, hence, it is difficult to get it to enter . . . but, I meant to enter onstage, Cláudio! (Outburst of laughter from the public)]

Cláudio approaches the stage and starts swearing at Estreita, crying out furiously: "what are you suggesting? I am not a frango[75]!" (He hits the puppets with his hand and leaves. Soon after, realizing his misperception, Claudio starts laughing and comes back to hold the egg Jacu has just laid and pass the egg down among the audience members. Those who hold the egg must give some monetary contribution to the group.

After the show, in an interview with Claudio about his reaction during the scene, he declares:

For a moment it seemed that everything was real, that Estreita was making fun of me, and I really got mad! I don't know how it happened . . . then I realized I had hit the puppet.

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[75] "Frango" (chicken) refers to a homosexual.

> Just after that, I was ashamed of myself, of how dumb I was in doing that. But at the same time I laughed at myself. I have seen some people doing things like that in other Mamulengo shows I attended, but it had never happened to me, it was the first time![76]

Claudio's remarks reinforce Gross's observation outlined above. He was amused when he discovered that he had, for a moment, perceived Estreita as human, not as a puppet acting like a human. Estreita's actions, although highly stylized, resembled human behaviour and actions, and this led Claudio to misframe the show. The audience oscillation (back and forth) between these two perceptions (puppet as human x puppet as puppet) is a trademark of a successful show.[77]

3.2) Sexual excitement amongst the male audience

Another example of total engrossment occurred in the dance scenes of the "Quitérias", where some members of the male audience seemed to believe in the puppets' human nature and sensuality. As already mentioned, the "Quitérias" are rod puppets with articulated hips that allow for sensual movements. When the puppets dance, the most common movement is the rotation which allows for their panties to become visible. At one such moment, one spectator cried out: "I saw their panties!" At that time of the show, male spectators made up the bulk of the audience and from that comment, an air of excitement among the audience could be observed. They started to whistle and to cry out the following comments to the puppets: "Hot!"; "I want to sleep with you today!"; "Give me a kiss!", and so on. One man approached the booth and told Mateus he would give "one *real*" for only one of the puppets to dance, indicating with his hand his favorite puppet. Mateus collected the money and requested the mamulengueiro to remove the other three figures, leaving onstage only the chosen one. At this moment, the mamulengueiro manipulated the puppet with even more care, allowing her to show her sensual movements. The public cried out, whistled and made obscene comments to the puppet as if it were a living person.

The scene carried on for at least twenty minutes, with intense audience participation. Some men in the audience offered "reward" money to the puppeteer to alternate the "Quitérias" on the stage, and thus, cater to their fantasies. [78]

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[76] Claudio Duarte Pinho, Interview, *Sitio Lagoa Queimada*, Glória de Goitá, on 14 December 2003.

[77] Gross, "Form and Function", 121.

[78] We can establish connections between the dance scene of the Quitérias and the bailhinhos (little dances) of Bonecos de Santo Aleixo. In both scenes, female puppets come onstage to dance, allowing for money

e) Direct audience interference in scenes

1) Participation in the ending of scenes

This happens mainly in the fight scenes between the "brave males", where young black characters fight against elderly white ones. In general, the blacks are the winners, but the elderly may also win.[79]

Mateus encourages the public to bet on which one of the two characters will win the fight. As he collects the bets he announces to the puppeteer which puppet has been favoured. The scene continues with a succession of adversaries entering, which allows for a good money collection. Generally, the audience members bet evenly between one and another adversary, expressing their preferences through the bets and comments. Let us examine an example, with an emphasis on audience commentaries:

On the stage, Dois-mais-um (Two-plus-one), the black character, holds a club and Bom-na Rasteira (Good-on-tripping) the elderly white, holds a knife. The characters fight while Mateus announces the bets among the audience. One man calls to Mateus, saying:

"Man 1 - I want to bet on the black one! I am not black, but I want him to take the knife off this wretch! (referring to the elderly character).

Mateus - How much do you bet?

Man 1- Fifty cents on the black guy to kill the old man! But he has to hit him hard with the club!

Mateus - (directed to the puppet) Look, Two-plus-one, here is a 50-cent bet on you to take the knife from Good-on-tripping and to hit him hard with your club!

Man 1 - (encouraging the puppet) Yes, that's it! Go and kill this wretch! I do not like old people, not even my father!

Mateus - (encouraging the public to bet on the elderly character) And who will bet on Good-on-tripping to win the fight!

Man 2 - I have already bet one *real* on him to win!

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collection from the audience members. About the Bailhinhos see: Passos, "Mamulengo e Bonecos de Santo Aleixo," Adagio, 30/31 (2001), 61. Moreover, as mentioned on Chapter II the Quitérias may be related to the Pastorinhas (Little shepherd) of the Profane Pastoril. Like Quitérias, the Pastorinhas provoked the male audience with sensual movements allowing for a good money collection.

[79] Zé de Vina, interview, Lagoa de Itaenga, Pernambuco, 25 March 2004.

Man 1 - So, I will give one *real* more for the black guy to get the knife and to kill Good-on-tripping!"[80]

Finally, Two-plus-one kills Good-on-tripping. Enter Gangrena, another elderly white character, and the fighting and bets start again. Besides the bets, the audience members expressed verbally their views regarding one or other character throughout the scene. Through these commentaries, psychological, social and ideological values are expressed.

2) Participation in the process of selecting the scenes

When one particular scene which is being presented does not please someone in the audience, he or she may interrupt and request Mateus, or the mamulengueiro himself, to change the scene. In this case, the interlocuter offers an amount of money, indicating which scene he or she would like to see. When there is disagreement among the spectators, Mateus suggests the audience offer money to determine if the scene should continue or should be replaced with another one.

One example of audience intervention occurred in Zé Lopes' show. The *Caboclinhos* entered and started to dance and sing. After few minutes, a man cried out: "Take these puppets off! What we want to see is fighting! I'll give 50 cents if they leave!" An elderly woman disagreed, saying: "You shut up and let them dance!" Mateus then asked her how much she would offer for the Caboclinhos to carry on, but she did not answer. Then, another woman offered 80 cents to keep the Caboclinhos onstage. Clearly, these two last examples function as strategies for collecting money.

3) Forms of control

The literate audience is able to recognize when some change made by the puppeteers has gone beyond acceptable boundaries. Consequently, reactions may be expressed which indicate to the puppeteer how far he can go with the changes to traditional scenes (plots, characters and other elements) and insist that he perform according to the traditional expectations of the audience. In this case, the audience exercises a type of control, showing to the puppeteer that he cannot modify scenes to such an extent that they become unrecognizable.[81]

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[80] Scene transcript from Zé de Vina's show presented in Feira Nova, on 21 December 2003.

[81] This type of control was noted by Bogatyrev in regard to Russian folk audiences. See: Proschan, "The Cocreation", 39.

One instance of this sort of control occurred in Zé Lopes' show, where the puppeteer mixed two scenes: "Politician and Voters" and "Xangô":

Quitéria is onstage and starts "being possessed by a spirit" and finally, falls down in a trance. Her three daughters enter one at a time and have the same spiritual manifestation. Normally, the next character to enter would be the *mãe-de-santo,* who appears to exorcise the spirit from the bodies of the characters. However, entering in her stead is the Politician, who, in Zé Lopes' show, is also Captain Mané Pacaru, Quitéria's husband. The Politician/Mané Pacaru starts presenting his political platform, when an elderly man from the audience cries out: "But, how come you mix politics with spiritual matters!" Since the Politician/Mané Pacaru had already begun his discourse, the puppeteer had no other option but to finish it as soon as possible. Later, the Politician/Mané Pacaru sees his wife and daughters lying down on the stage and calls the *mãe-de-santo.* The character enters and finally discharges the spirit from the bodies of the characters.[82]

Zé Lopes explained it was the first time he had tried to mix the two scenes. For him, the fact that in his show, the Politician is also Mané Pacaru, and that the characters possessed by the spirits are members of Mané Pacaru's family, could justify the mixture of the two scenes. Nevertheless, the spectators' reaction made him regret his decision.

To conclude, we can say that where there is a high degree of homogeneity in the audience and between the audience and the artist in terms of social class, we observe the puppeteers shape their performances according to fairly clear-cut values and assumptions, expressing the ideas, points of view and events that integrate reality and the imagination of the group. The Mamulengo represents the update of a shared memory that can be understood as a reconstitution of personal and social experiences that develop within the group, in order to offer a picture made of analogies in which its members recognize themselves.[83] Through the Mamulengo, the individuals affirm the recognition of a common identity, and consequently identify themselves as a group in whose memory the puppet theatre is manifest.

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[82] Show presented in Lagoa Nova, on 17 March 2004.

[83] On the role of memory in the formation of individual and collective identities see: Maurice Halbwachs, *Collective Memory* (1992) and Ecléa Bosi, *Memória e Sociedade: Lembranças de Velhos* (1978).

Zé Lopes' show in the *Sitio Lagoa Queimada*



Fig. 4.1 - Before the show starts, people gather around the musicians who are already playing animated tunes, reinforcing the festive atmosphere.





Fig. 4.2 and 4.3 - Families arrive with their children to attend the show. Inside the house, the owners set an altar and invite the guests to pray. The religious ceremony was part of the Christmas celebration since the event took place ten days before Christmas.





Figs. 4.4 and 4.5 – On the left, the external view of the bar in which food, alcoholic drinks and refreshments are sold. On the right, two men inside the bar



Fig. 4.6 - The performance starts. On the left, Mateus (Caetano) calls the attention of the audience. On the right, the accordion player (Bilinga) is ready to start playing.





Figs. 4.7 and 4.8 – Inacio Correia (the owner of the sitio) having fun with the guitar player's versed dispute.





Figs. 4.9 and 4.10 - Cida (Zé Lopes' daughter) collecting money during the show.



Fig. 4.11 - From a certain hour the audience is composed mostly of male adults.

Offering Food



Fig. 4.12 - A man offers a pastry to one of the guitar-players in Zé Lopes' show in Glória de Goitá, 20 December 2003.



Fig. 4.13- Mateus talking to the three boys selected to play a game involving the audience participation in Zé de Vina's show in Feira Nova, 21 December 2003

Misframe of the Puppet Show: Cláudio and Estreita





Figs. 4.14 and 4.15- After being the subject of a joke done by Estreita, Cláudio approaches the stage and starts swearing at the puppet.





Figs. 4.16 and 4.17- Later, Cláudio helps Estreita and holds the egg the bird, Jacu has just laid.



Fig. 4.18- Cláudio passes the egg among audience members, in order to collect money for the group.

2.3 - Mamulengo for Young Audiences

Mamulengo is commonly referred as puppet theatre for all ages. In the shows presented in "traditional" contexts, like the one described above, even if the shows are more directed to an adult audience, we can say that puppeteers do not make a serious distinction between adults and children, since the younger spectators are simply part of the general crowd. Nevertheless, in specific contexts (i.e., at schools, birthday parties, theatres, daytime shows in outside spaces, etc.) they are especially viewed as children's events and the shows are shaped accordingly.

In Europe, the distinction between adult and child spectators was a phenomenon that started in the nineteenth century. The practice varied in time and manner in the different European countries and in different contexts within the same country.[84] McCormick and Pratasik link the upsurge in puppet theatre shaped specially for children with the new ideas about childhood developed by the end of eighteenth century. They contend: "The focus on the child and the idealization of childhood belongs to this period, and it was only a short step from observing the predominantly youthful composition of audiences to the idea of the puppet theatre as a form of entertainment tailored to the needs of the young."[85] Attending to the needs of children meant transmitting "positive and instructive" values. Showmen and Marionette companies adapted their shows for this new milieu. One example of adaptation cited by McCormick and Pratasik was Josef Leonhard Schmid, who:

> [When he] applied for a license to open the Munich Marionette Theatre [Münchner Marionettentheatrer] (. . .) emphasized that he wanted to get away from the crudities of the Hanswurst puppets of the fairgrounds and streets and present a material more suitable to the young, with low prices so that even poor families could bring their children to the theatre.[86]

As can be deduced from Josef Leonhard Schmid's petition, street glove-puppet theatres did not fit the moral and educational values deemed suitable for this new idea of 'children', and the glove-puppet heroes had to be adapted to this new audience. As pointed out before, the crudity and sensuality of the Mamulengo characters were

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[84] About this subject see: McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppets*, 79-83.

[85] Ibid., 80.

[86] Ibid., 81.

immediately rejected by the middle-class audiences in Rio de Janeiro, and these characteristics are the first to be dropped from the shows staged especially for children.

In a piece of research about the Mamulengo in Brasilia, Brochado notes that all puppeteers performing at schools in that city refer to a "veiled censorship" applied by the school heads and teachers over their shows.[87] Valter Cedros, a puppeteer from the new generation, referring to the primary school context, mentions that "any expression of sensuality, like a 'hot' kiss or a male puppet putting his head under a female puppet skirt" is immediately rejected by the staff. As he explains, the puppeteer's acceptance of the schools' censorship is the guarantee for future contracts.[88]

Another censored theme mentioned by the puppeteers from Brasilia, refers to religious issues. Nowadays in Brazil there is a clear increase of Evangelical Protestant Churches which contrasts to the hegemony of the Catholic Church in the past. Therefore, themes and characters related to Catholic beliefs, like those of the priest and devil figures, or any reference to Catholic saints, are also rejected in schools with a preponderance of Evangelical believers. Carlos Machado, another puppeteer from Brasilia mentions two examples of this sort of censorship suffered by him in a schools context:

> I had already arranged with the school to present my Mamulengo. I was assembling the stage when the school's head saw the devil figure. Immediately she canceled the show. (...) In another school where I had performed in the morning shift, I was asked to suppress the devil scene in the afternoon show. I had no other alternative but to suppress the devil, and I did so. But, I think this type of control expresses a total ignorance in regard to Brazilian culture, since these figures and themes, more than belonging to such and such a church, are part of the Brazilian imagery.[89]

As can be observed, in performing for younger audiences, the puppeteers have to made many adaptations to their shows.

As research has shown so far, the first reference to a traditional Mamulengo puppeteer adapting his show especially to younger audiences dates from the middle of the 1970s.[90] This

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[87] Brochado, Izabela Costa. "Distrito Federal: O Mamulengo que Mora nas Cidades – 1990-2001" (Mater diss., University of Brasilia, 2001) 23-9.

[88] Ibid, 27-8.

[89] Ibid, 28-9.

[90] Note that here I am referring specifically to Mamulengo puppet theatre, and not to general puppet theatre.

was Januário de Oliveira (Ginu) who, in an interview with folklorists, remarked that he had started performing at schools and children's birthday parties by that time.

In the interview, Ginu describes one play and makes reference to another two he had created especially for children. The first was called *Papai Noel na Data Máxima da Cristandade* (Santa Claus on the Utmost Christian Date) and presents Santa Claus narrating in a candid voice (in the interview the puppeteer does the voice of Santa Claus) firstly, the birth of Christ and later, describing the miracles Jesus performed especially on children. The children cured by Jesus (one was blind, the other crippled) were good and obedient and hence deserved Jesus' miracles. Santa Claus goes on to stress the importance of education in any person's life and to encourage the children's love for their nation, Brazil.[91]

As for the other two plays referred to by Ginu, one was a conversion of a famous Brazilian children's song into a puppet show. The song entitled *Atirei o Pau no Gato* (I Hit the Cat with a Stick) was transformed in the puppet play into *Dona Chica e o Gato Romão* (Mrs. Chica and the Cat Romão). The third play mentioned by Ginu was an adaptation of "Little Red Riding Hood" for the puppet theatre. Unfortunately Ginu did not give any detailed information about these plays.

In his description of the three plays mentioned above, Ginu makes no reference to any traditional Mamulengo characters taking part. Nor do they seem to be connected to any traditional Mamulengo scene. Consequently, although we are not in a position to be absolutely certain, Ginu's remarks lead us to surmise that these plays cannot be considered to be adaptations of any Mamulengo show. Instead, they represent completely new repertoires the puppeteer created especially for young audiences.

In the section of his book dedicated to Ginu's Mamulengo, Santos refers to the shows the puppeteer performed especially for younger audiences, but does not give any additional information about the plays. Nevertheless, the author remarks that: "In the shows for children, Ginu expressed a moralistic side that was incompatible with

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[91] Januário de Oliveira, interview Museu da Imagem e do Som, Recife, Pernambuco, December 1975. From Ginu's narrative, we observe that the values expressed in the play were closely related to the Nationalists' values emphasized at that time. During the Military Government (1964-1985), principles of love, respect and loyalty towards the Nation were carried on through songs and advertisements broadcast on TV and radio, and also emphasized by educational programs.

his lifestyle and his art. They were shows carried out with boring didacticism and lack of imagination and they do not reveal Ginu's high quality Mamulengo."[92]

Santos notes that Ginu's decision to perform especially for children was closely related to health problems (lung disease, hepatitis, glaucoma and arthritis) the puppeteer started suffering by 1974, which led him to "please whoever could guarantee his everyday bread, and hence, make concessions to the system."[93]

Ginu, like all popular puppeteers, was concerned first and foremost with earning a living. He was known for his intelligence and perceptiveness and he seems to be the first mamulengueiro to identify the young spectators as a specific market, therefore creating new repertoires that, in his view, were more suitable for this new audience.

Another traditional puppeteer that seems to have adapted his shows especially for children was Solon. In an interview to a local newspaper in 1976, Solon remarked that, apart from the traditional Mamulengo, he also presents shows in which he expresses moral values, since "they are stories to be presented for children, hence, they have to be 'light' and have to bring with them moral values". The example given by Solon was a play called Mané das Batatas (Mané of the Potato). By Solon's short description, the moral values he was concerned with were mostly related to social justice:

> Mané of the Potato was a naive rural worker who had worked hard to save a small fortune. Afterwards, through a law suit, the money was taken from him by the greedy landowner. With the development of the play, the situation turns even more dramatic, involving the audience completely. Often, the children scream and give orders to the puppets.[94]

In contrast to Ginu, the show described by Solon seems to have a connection with his Mamulengo show, since the captain (landowner) and Mané das Batatas were popular characters in Solon's Mamulengo. Like Ginu, João Galego/Marlene Silva and Zé Lopes shows especially performed for children are also adaptations of Mamulengo puppet theatre.

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[92] Santos, *Mamulengo*, 112.

[93] Ibid.,111-2

[94] *Diário de Pernanbuco*, 23 October 1976, sec. 2, p.1.

João Galego/Marlene Silva Adaptations

The show to which I will refer was performed on 28 February 2004, in a square on the periphery of Carpina, Zona da Mata of Pernambuco. It started at 6.00pm and lasted for one hour. The show was contracted by the City Council and was attended by about 150 children. The show was performed by the whole group, which consisted of João Galego (the master puppeteer), Marlene Silva (the intermediary), one helper (puppet operator) and three musicians (accordion, triangle and drum).

The structure of the show closely resembled one designed for a more adult audience. Apart from the exclusion of fight scenes and the inclusion one new scene, "The Teacher and the Pupils", a passage the puppeteers created specially for the younger audience already mentioned, we could say the scenes presented were basically the same. Nevertheless, the scenes were presented with a noticeable reduction in the characters' speeches and dialogues. Instead, the emphasis was on the puppets' movements, which were often accompanied by music. The result was a spectacle akin to "music-hall", with the puppets coming onstage dancing, briefly presenting themselves and then developing the scene mainly through their movements and actions.

To present an exhaustive description of João Galego/Marlene Silva show is beyond the scope of this study, hence, I outline the scene sequence and their most significant changes:

The Structure of the Show

Pretty Little Clown enters and greets the public:

"Boa tarde criançada, aqui com voces é o Palhaço Belezinha e vamos nos divertir!"

[Good evening kids! Here I am, Pretty Little Clown and let's have some fun!]

Caroca's tune is heard. Caroca enters and dances with Pretty Little Clown. They leave. The music changes to Simão's tune and Simão enters, dancing. He introduces himself and says he is jobless. Captain Mané Pacaru then comes onstage and they develop a short dialogue in which Simão tells Mané Pacaru he is looking for a job. Mané hires Simão and they dance. Quitéria then enters onstage and she is informed by Mane Pacaru that Simão is their new employee. The three puppets dance together and go offstage.

It is immediately noticeable that Quitéria's adulterous relationship with Simão and the ensuing quarrel with Mané Pacaru have been omitted. Instead, the focus is on the hiring of Simão, which is celebrated by the three puppets dancing.

The next scene, *Chica-do-Cuscuz and Pisa-Pilão*, was presented without the verses. Nevertheless, the scene was very lively with the children clapping hands and keeping the rhythm of the song and the puppets' movements. The scene was followed by the *The Teacher and the Pupils* referred to above.

In *A Viuvinha* (The Little Widow) scene, João Galego played up the widow's interaction with the coffin. She unsuccessfully tried to place her husband's corpse inside it, provoking the children to laugh.

The next scene was *O Pássaro Maracanã e a Menina* (The Bird Maracanã and the Girl). The bird has an extending neck and again, the emphasis was on the bird's movements. Its neck moved up and down while dancing with the girl.

The snake scene was one of the most appreciated. *Salamanca*, the snake, swallowed every character that appeared to fight against her. The children participated intensely, giving advice to the puppets about the snake's presence. The music was played throughout the scene, providing the rhythm for the snake movements.

Finally, João Galego presented the scene *Adão e a sua Enxada* (Adam and his Hoe). The scene opens with Adam weeding the ground while Eve dances. Adam then talks about the importance of work in everyone's life. The show ended with the *Trio de Forró* (mechanical puppets).

Audience Participation

The children were extremely active, talking and shouting throughout the performance. Their behavior often challenged the puppeteer and the intermediary's capacity to control and direct audience participation.

Marlene Silva remained outside the booth throughout the performance, directing and controlling the children's participation. Though Marlene acted as an intermediary, her role was nevertheless different to the one played in the show presented for adults. If in the latter Marlene was connected both with the puppets and the audience, like Mateus of Zé de Vina and Zé Lopes' Mamulengo, in this show Marlene's actions were exclusively directed towards the audience. She seldom spoke to the puppets.

Marlene's commands were larger in scale, stimulating collective interventions rather than individualized ones. Due to amplification, her voice was well heard by the spectators, who generally followed her tips. The most frequent were:

1) She always introduced the scenes by saying: "And now with you all, the scene . . . (name of the scene) . . . and please, a round of applause!
2) She asked for clapping at the end of the scenes, as well as to mark the songs' rhythm.

These types of commands are very similar to the commands of the presenters of children's TV auditorium programs (e.g., Xuxa, Angelica, Eliana, etc.) that are broadcast nationally. Hence, we might reasonably consider the possibility of an influence of these programs on Marlene's choices.

Zé Lopes' Adaptation

Zé Lopes' adaptation of the repertoire differs to that of João Galego and Marlene Silva in that, instead of following the traditional structure of his show, Zé Lopes selected specific scenes that, in his view, were more suitable for younger audiences. The chosen scenes were the ones that highlight the puppets' movement and actions, instead of the ones more dependent on the puppets' speeches. Hence, although using a different process, we can observe the same emphasis on the puppets' kinetic qualities by both puppeteers.

The show was performed in the neighboring area of Zé Lopes's residence in Glória de Goitá on 14 March 2004. It started at 5 pm and finished at 6:30 pm. It was performed for a mixed audience but with a majority of young spectators.

The scenes performed in this show were: *Simão, Mané Paulo and Quitéria*; *The Caboclinhos*; *Estreita and Xibana* (the snake); *The Violeiros* (Guitar Players); *Bambu and Death*; and *Doctor and Sick-man*. The last was presented with a clear educational purpose, with the Doctor giving advice about health eating.[95] As in the João Galego/Marlene Silva show, in the scene *Simão, Mané Paulo and Quitéria* the extra-marital relationship between Quitéria and Simão was omitted completely. Moreover, in Zé Lopes' show, Simão was transformed into a clown-type character, performing clown's gags, singing traditional children songs and encouraging the children to sing along with him.

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[95] Alcure notes the same characteristic in the Doctor scene during the shows presented for younger audiences in Rio de Janeiro. (Alcure, "Mamulengo", 59).

Moving to Zé Lopes' shows presented in Rio de Janeiro, Alcure notes that before the performance, the puppeteer talked to the audience about his process of puppet constructions and also about the subjects and contents of Mamulengo puppet theatre. As Alcure remarks, this helped to contextualize the Mamulengo and to minimize the distance between Zé Lopes and the audience's pattern of speeches.[96]

Alcure mentions one show performed in a school for children from two to six years old, and notes the puppeteer was anxious "because he had never performed for such a young audience." Zé Lopes opted to present scenes with "lots of dancing and music", together with the snake scene, which is "very good for creating suspense". In this scene, the puppeteer used the scenic space in diverse ways, "lifting the booth front cloth which allowed the children to see the snake biting his leg." This device had a great impact on the children who approached the booth to "save the puppeteer."[97]

As has been discussed and demonstrated throughout this section, the Mamulengo show involves cooperation between puppeteers and audience. The puppeteers, with their desires and practical needs to communicate and please their audience, constantly adapt their show according to the diverse contexts. Through their knowledge and praxis, strategies are constructed and reshaped. The popular puppeteers are experts in the matter of surviving in which is included the survival of their puppet theatre.

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[96] Ibid., 57. Alcure's observations reinforce the assumption that, although only one language is spoken in Brazil, linguistic regionalisms create, if not a specifically a dialect, different patterns of speeches that can blur the communicative process. This also occurs in the case of the Mamulengo performed for audiences composed of tourists outlined by Santos.

[97] Ibid., 59.

CONCLUSION

The core purpose of this thesis was to examine and analyse the Mamulengo, a traditional and popular puppet theatre, within the social-cultural context of Pernambuco, in the Northeast of Brazil from the end of nineteenth century until the beginning of the twenty-first. Therefore, we have examined the context in which this puppet theatre has emerged and developed and its connection to and influence on the configuration and transformation of Mamulengo. We have also looked at how the social-cultural-historical context is expressed, and at the same time reinvented on the puppet shows. As this thesis has shown, the Mamulengo puppet theatre is formed by a set of elements and governing rules, formed by a complex system of signs that communicate and make possible the response of the audience. Through this analysis it was possible to describe a "grammar" for the production of the shows and therefore, to reveal the knowledge that the master puppeteers (and other artists) bring to their practice activity (the "know-how" of their profession), bringing to light the structure of this puppet theatre that is common to all performance. From that, it was possible to proceed with further identification to expose the variations within this structure by comparing the shows of the same puppeteer within different contexts, and also the shows of different puppeteers. This exposed the transformation Mamulengo has undergone over the course of time.

In Chapter One, we have seen that Mamulengo both informs and is shaped by the context of its production, expressed through the text (plots and linguistic style) and characters (general and specific typologies). The plots and characters express a society resulting from an intense process of miscegenation (of races and culture), in which hierarchical divisions were based on race, gender and class distinctions, and consequently, they convey the prejudices, tensions and contradictions arising from that differentiation. As discussed in Chapter Three, black characters are represented as brave and responsible for many forms of hierarchy inversions, but at the same time, verbal jokes express a high degree of racial prejudice. We have also examined how the female characters' roles and visual attributes express patriarchal values, and therefore, women are misogynistically represented. Together with the more generic representations, the mamulengueiros also bring to the scene the Northeast's historical figures, such as the *cangaceiros* Lampião, Maria Bonita, among others. We have seen

the influence of the cattle farming, which gave rise to the cattle cycle, and the significance that the cowboy acquired in the Mamulengo practiced mostly in the inland areas, in which the protagonist hero Benedito (the cowboy) and his Ox, are the very core. Also in chapter One, we have examined the role of the Catholic Church in the formation of Brazilian cultural manifestations, and how in Colonial Brazil religion pervaded all aspects of life and provided unity to disparate cultural and ethnic elements, which gave rise to many traditional cultural manifestations.

We have also examined the impact of urban expansion (particularly in Recife) on popular cultural expressions, in which they acquired new features and visibility, and therefore suffered new forms of control through legislation and the communication media at that time (newspapers). We have examined some articles in which the elite representatives' prejudice against the popular classes' cultural practices, including Mamulengo, were clearly expressed. Nevertheless, we have also seen that the same cultural expressions that were persecuted were one of the main attractions of the Christmas festivals organized by Recife parishes until the middle of the twentieth century. We have also followed the impact of transformations in the Northeast operating from the middle of the twentieth century in the Mamulengo, such as the strong reduction in the number of contracts in the rural areas due to the rural exodus and also the expansion of the mass media (products). Nevertheless, we have seen the strength of Mamulengo in adapting to the new context, and the incorporation and transformation of mass media products into Mamulengo shows. Finally, we have looked at the cultural policies carried out by the Brazilian and Pernambucan Governments in order to stimulate popular cultural expression. I have expressed my views over the necessity of official institutions to create instruments capable of stimulating the practices of traditional cultural expressions, since this study has shown that the decrease in the number of mamulengueiros has been caused much more by poverty and the lack of material resources than by lack of interest and meaning to its audience. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, by using the term "popular culture" an opposing concept - "high culture"- emerges, and, although they are not opposed in a clear-cut and mutually exclusive way they show up divisions within the cultural system. The unequal treatment (and different views) that has been accorded to "popular culture" and "high culture" in Brazil is clearly expressed by the dissimilar allocation of financial resources that have been directed to the production of cultural expressions of "educated artists" and "popular artists."

In Chapter Two we have examined the diverse sources that are the basis of Mamulengo. The discussion carried out in this chapter points to another possible approach to the history of Mamulengo. I have questioned the hypothesis of the Medieval crib as the primarily source of Mamulengo, considering two aspects: first, the lack of precise evidence and second, the close similarities between Mamulengo and traditional European glove-puppet. These similarities may also be seen as a reflection of certain tendencies inherent in the glove-puppet, since analogous mechanisms can operate without any obvious link. Even so, through the striking correspondence between many Mamulengo scenes and those of traditional European glove- puppetry, we have strong evidence of close contact, which probably occurred in the early period of Colonial Brazil. I am aware of the fact that this area deserves more detailed research. Paucity of records is without doubt a problem for Brazilian puppet researchers, since the puppet theatre was not considered a subject worthy of research, and therefore, documents and artefacts were not collected until the middle of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, my research in the Pernambucan state archive, even if limited, has made clear that this is a fertile area for future research that perhaps may fill in some of the gaps of Mamulengo history.

We have also examined some close links between African puppetry and Mamulengo, which might indicate that the mamulengueiros' assumption that African slaves were a fundamental source of Mamulengo might not *just* convey a symbolic meaning, but *also* be a material possibility. This is another aspect of the sources of Mamulengo that has only been examined superficially in this thesis. We have examined some evidence of Mamulengo and African puppetry's "superficial" commonalities and similarities. But, as this thesis has tried to demonstrate, their common ground is remarkable in some features. We have seen that the reference to sexual subjects and their representation by the plots and puppet figures appears frequently in Mamulengo and some of the African puppet traditions, such as *Ekon* of the Ibibio people of Nigeria, and *Gelede* of the Anago Yoruba people of Nigeria and Benin. We also have examined examples of mechanical puppets depicting work activities and everyday life scenes, which appear both in Mamulengo and in *Gelede* puppet tradition. We have looked at the significant number of rod puppets made entirely of wood, that, as far as research has shown, do not appear in any other puppet tradition, but Mamulengo and African, particularly in the *Ekon* puppets. Finally, we have seen that the music has a similar function, especially with regard to the presence

of the characters' introductory songs. This is particularly observed in the Masquerades of the Segou Region, Mali, and in the puppet tradition of the Tiv ethnic group of Nigeria. The links between African puppetry and Mamulengo is proving to be a worthwhile area for future research.

Also in Chapter Two, we have examined how the northeast *folguedos* are brought to the Mamulengo stage, adapted to the scale and language of the puppet theatre. We have seen that with passing of the time, many of them have disappeared from the puppet theatre, appearing nowadays more as memory present in the mamulengueiros' recollections. The decreasing presence of the scenes portraying the *folguedos* is some indication of the changes that have being occurring in the northeast context with the loss of space for the more traditional popular cultural expressions resulting from the massive circulation of mass media products. Nevertheless, some of the scenes have endured, such as the *Caboclinhos* and the *Glosadores*/Guitar players.

In Chapter Three we have looked at the elements that shaped the Mamulengo as a puppet theatre. We have discussed how the Mamulengo is a collective enterprise that requires specialised components. We have seen how the elements are created, selected and combined according to a set of rules in order to create the show and to communicate with an audience. We have examined some changes occurring in the elements and rules of the Mamulengo throughout time, some variations among the shows of the same mamulengueiro performed in different contexts, and also, variations between the shows of different mamulengueiros. Through detailed descriptions, we have looked at the various types of booths, along with the huge variety of figures appearing in the Mamulengo, their materials, construction, size, technical aspects of control and articulation. We have also discussed how the puppet's physical attributes affect its kinetic quality and finally, how the puppet physiognomic features are directly linked to the character represented. We have examined how the characters' typologies are built by the combination of physical feature, movement and gesture, voice quality, and speech; by the information conveyed by the music; and by the speeches of the other characters and the intermediary. We have also examined how the various codes are combined to form the characters' typologies. We have seen, for example, that the policeman and landowners (authorities) are generally stiff figures, represented by rod puppets with no articulation in the body's axis, and few articulation points in the limbs. Following that rigid body structure, and consequent limited kinetic possibility, the voice quality of these characters operates in bass tonality. We have

seen how the young females are always white, beautiful, well dressed, have few speeches and are represented by rod puppets, since their function is above all to dance conveying sensual movements. In contrast, the elderly females are ugly, talkative, and are mostly represented by glove puppets due to their more active roles in the scenes. As we have discussed, the majority of Mamulengo characters are stock types, and as such their physical and psychological attributes express universal human concerns and desires, shaped into local types: the smart and sly servant; the exploitative landowner; the lascivious priest; the charlatan doctor; the brave black fighter; the ridiculous male elder; the sexually voracious widow; the quarrelsome wife; the Death and Devil figures; and finally the animal characters that represent the animals of the region.

We have discussed the primary role of the language in Mamulengo puppet theatre, and consequently the characters' speeches and voice qualities. We have analysed the plots of the diverse scenarios, and how they are reformulated by the puppeteers in their shows. We have seen the outstanding role of improvisation in the construction of the text, expressed in the puppets (puppeteers) and the intermediary's extensive use of word play, and their connections with the carnivalesque genres.

In Chapter Four, we have discussed the role of the audience in traditional puppetry, and followed this with two analyses of the Mamulengo audience. We have seen the active participation of literate audiences, and the strategies used by the puppeteers, and intermediary to stimulate and to shape the audience interventions, which can be found both in rural and urban contexts. Finally we have analysed the strategies used by the puppeteers to adapt their shows to younger audiences. We have seen how the shows have undergone changes to educate and improve young people, and consequently, the suppression of the sexual references and fight scenes (so important in other contexts) from the Mamulengo shows performed for children.

This thesis has examined the Mamulengo in its original place (Pernambuco state), created and performed by popular puppeteers drawn from the lower classes, and who have learned directly from master puppeteers. Nowadays, compared with three decades ago, there is a visible reduction in the Mamulengo activity located in this context, which is the result of the transformations operating in the Northeastern (and Brazilian) society, such as the rural exodus, the spread of television, the lack of financial return. Such a decline naturally points to a question: has there been any kind of revival of the Northeast traditional puppetry, as it occurred in the second half of twentieth century in European puppetry traditions?

Referring to European popular puppetry, McCormick and Pratasik note that "the boom in popular puppetry between 1860 and 1900 subsided very quickly in the early 1900s and the society that emerged after the First World War was no longer so suitable for an artisanal activity."[1] Following the authors' arguments, we can say that, what appears to be the end of such activity has never comes to a conclusion, and as it is well known, popular puppetry has endured. Throughout the twentieth century there has been a fluctuation in popular puppetry activity, differing within the country and period,[2] with some traditional companies disappearing, whilst others have had to adapt in order to survive. As McCormick and Pratasik point out, the adaptations extended to various domains, from the reduction in the number of the company members, to the development of a new repertoire, including pieces directed at young audiences, a phenomenon that started in Europe in the late nineteenth century.

Parallel to the process of survival of European traditional puppetry companies, there has been a process of revival of traditional puppetry that, like the process of survival, has acquired diverse features. It is far beyond the scope of this conclusion to enumerate and discuss the diverse forms mentioned by McCormick and Pratasik. An outline of some of these processes can illuminate aspects of Mamulengo.

McCormick and Pratasik point out that, in the 1960s, the interest in popular culture "led to a new breed of traditional puppeteer who often came of an educated background." These artists approach puppet theatre to affirm the values of popular culture, but their major objective are to perform, and not "merely to conserve in a museological sense." In this way, their shows are not reproductions of the traditional puppeteers, rather they maintain the spirit of the popular with the addition of their own ideological and/or moral commitment. One such example is Win Kerkhove, from Amsterdam, who was inspired by the traditional street puppeteer Jan Kabalt to set up his own puppet theatre. Jan Kabalt was a traditional puppeteer performing *Jan Klaassen* shows (the protagonist of the glove-puppet tradition in Holland) in the streets of Amsterdam. In Kerkhove's hands, Jan Klaassen has acquired a distinct

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[1] McCormick and Pratasik, *Popular Puppet*, 206.

[2] One such period was the Second World War. According to McCormick and Pratasik, during this period there was an increase in puppet theatre activity, since "people needed entertainment, and the presence of many soldiers gave a fresh impetus to the notion of performance for adult audiences." (Ibid.)

feature: "Kerkhove sees Jan Klaassen as belonging with Petrushka, Guignol and other figures in his antagonism towards the establishment and its representatives, but also subscribes to the view that Jan Klaassen has a moral message to transmit, and his own work is politically committed."[3]

Another form of approach of new people to traditional puppetry (which may not be entirely separate from the one described above) is a recognition of its specific skills of performance and communication. As noted by McCormick and Pratasik, these people "have returned to the notion of puppetry as a craft or *métier* and come to value the work of surviving performances and to appreciate the importance of the passing-on of skills. Some attached themselves to old puppeteers, observed them and even became their pupils."[4] This is the case of Bruno Leone, among others, who has learned the Neapolitan Pulcinella tradition with Nunzio Zampella, the last surviving puppeteer to perform in the *guaratelle* tradition. Thanks to Leone, Zampella "texts" were preserved on audio-recordings.[5] Moreover, Bruno Leone has set up a school, and has formed a new generation of Pulcinella puppeteers, passing on the skills and knowledge he had learned from his master. Parallel to the traditional Pulcinella repertoire, Leone has created new shows, in which Pulcinella is set in diverse contexts, thus expressing the puppeteer's political views. On Leone's stage, Pulcinella can be found standing up for the Brazilian *cangaceiros*, and the Mexican Indians *Chiapas*, and also, fighting against Bush.[6]

Talking into account the different contexts, we observe a similar process occurring in Brazil from the 1980s with regard to the Northeast popular puppet theatre. Parallel to the reduction in the number of northeastern traditional puppeteers, there has been an increase in puppeteers who have turned to traditional northeast puppetry as a base for their theatrical activities. This has occurred both in the capitals of the Northeast states, and in the southeastern capitals. Likewise in Europe, many of these people came of an educated background, and therefore have introduced new materials (and concerns) to the traditional forms.

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[3] Ibid, 214.

[4] Ibid, 214-5.

[5] Bruno Leone, *La Guarattela. Burattini e burattinai a Napoli* (Bologna: Cooperativa Libraria Universitaria Editrice, 1986), 11-21.

[6] The information about the new repertoire were taken from the research I have done on Bruno Leone's work carried out on 2002 in Naples.

In an earlier study I have examined the Mamulengo in Brasília, DF, which was the result of research carried out between 1989 until 2001.[7] As research has shown, the first Mamulengo performance in that city occurred in 1981 and was by Carlinhos Babau (Carlos Gomides), a puppeteer from the new generation who had learned his skills from Master Antonio Babau, a traditional puppeteer from Paraiba. Gomides worked with Babau for more than eight years adopting, later, the artistic name of its master, thus choosing to be called Carlinhos Babau. When Master Antonio Babau died, Gomide became a solo traveling puppeteer, performing in many southeastern cities, including Brasília.[8] There, Gomides met Chico Simões, an actor and theatre director already involved with popular theatre. As Simões reports, when he saw Carlinhos Babau's puppet show, he knew that it was "this sincere and direct type of communication between the puppets and audience,"[9] that he was looking for with his theatre. Chico Simões thus decided to travel with Babau and became his helper. After some time, they went to the Northeast region n, and in Pernambuco, they meet Fernando Augusto dos Santos (*Mamulengo Só-Riso*), and Master Solon. Chico Simões remained in Olinda, performing with Santos and Solon, with whom he has learned a great part of his skill. After a time, Chico Simões returned to Brasília, and became an active puppeteer in the city, performing in streets, schools, theatres, and so forth, and influencing and, assisting to form an even newer generation of 'mamulengueiros' in Brasília, such as Carlos Machado (*Mamulengo de Brasília*), Valter Cedro (*Mamulengos*), Agnaldo Algodão (*Mamulengo São Saruê*). As I concluded my research, there were at least six Mamulengo groups with permanent activity in that city.

Nowadays, Chico is internationally recognised as a Mamulengo puppeteer, and has performed at many festivals in Europe and South America. Although his puppet show has maintained the structure of the traditional Northeast solo puppeteers (closer to João Redondo than the Mamulengo of Zona da Mata), Chico Simões has absorbed new materials from diverse sources, such as manipulation techniques from European

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[7] Brochado, "O Mamulengo que Mora nas Cidades", 2001.

[8] For about seventeen years, Carlinhos Babau has being performing with his own family comprising his wife (Shirley Gomides), and seven children. They set up a company, *Carroça de Mamulengos*, that has incorporated not only the traditional puppetry, but many elements from Northeast popular culture. The company has traveled all around Brazil in a bus the family acquired about seven years ago, and is considered one of the most important groups working with traditional and popular culture.

[9] Chico Simões, interview, Brasília, March 2001.

glove-puppeteers, and actor body training techniques from the Anthropological Theatre of Eugenio Barba, among others. The changes brought by Chico Simões to his show also extend to the characters' behaviour, and consequently to the "message" conveyed by them. The protagonist of his puppet show, Benedito, presents the same physiognomic features and role as the Northeast puppet protagonist: he is a black, small, glove puppet cowboy employed on the farm of the landowner João Redondo. But, as occurred with Jan Klaassen in Kerkhove's hands, Benedito has gone through some changes in Chico Simões' hands, becoming a more "civilised" character. The fighting and killing so common among the traditional Northeast puppet shows was almost completely dropped from Chico Simões' Mamulengo, which does not mean that Benedito does not confront his antagonists, such as the landowner and the snake. But, instead of beating and killing, Benedito uses his "brain" or his "intelligence", as he says in the show. Moreover, the treatment he directs towards his wife, Margarida, is much more kind and helpful, sharing with her the care of their baby son. Finally, like Leone's Pulcinella, Benedito also expresses the puppeteer's political concerns. Just to give one example, by the time the Brazilian Government carried out the process of public company privatization, the protagonist often brought the subject to the scene, confronting João Redondo who wants to buy "everything the government is selling."[10] As Simões states, "I cannot reproduce the traditional puppet shows, since some of the values conveyed by them do not express my own values."[11]

In addition to the incorporation of traditional puppetry by people from educated backgrounds, some of the heirs of traditional puppeteers (e.g., sons, nephew, etc) had moved to São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in search of a broader audience. This is the case of Josivam de Chico de Daniel, who carries in his name the lineage of a family of traditional puppeteers: Josivam is son of Chico Daniel, and grandson of Daniel, two well known puppeteers from Rio Grande do Norte. About five years ago, he moved to São Paulo performing in the streets, hospitals and schools. Waldeck de Garanhuns, a Pernambucan mamulengueiro, has been living in São Paulo for about two decades, and is today one of the most famous traditional puppeteers performing in that city.

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[10] Transcribed from the show: "O Romance do Vaqueiro Benedito com a Filha do Coronel João Redondo", in Brochado, "O Mamulengo que Mora nas Cidades", 83.

[11] Chico Simões, Interview, Brasília, March 1999.

These examples are some indication of the continuation of the Mamulengo at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The Southern cities of Brazil are more cosmopolitan, than the Northeastern ones, in which various levels of culture, and also, culture from diverse parts of Brazil are intermixed. As we have seen throughout this thesis, the traditional northeast puppeteers are quite ready to take on and assimilate new materials in order to enrich their shows, and to accomplish effective communication with their audience. The presence of this new generation of puppeteers in such a broadly varied social-cultural context, at a time in which speed and availability of information increase every day, points to another question: how is this process of absorption operating in these new contexts? How are the puppeteers dealing with the notion of "traditional" Mamulengo? Is there any attempt to freeze and create the "typical" Mamulengo show? How are Simão, Quitéria, Mané Pacaru, Benedito, João Redondo, the Caboclinhos... entering in the twenty-first century? What are they telling, and how are they moving, dancing, fighting, loving? Are the audiences hearing, reacting, laughing, playing?

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Vitória de Santo Antão, Pernambuco, on 30 January 2004 (70 min)

Lagoa de Itaenga, on 06 March 2004 (130 min)

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Sitio Lagoa Queimada, Feira Nova, Pernambuco, 14 December 2003 (80 min)

Sitio Fundo, Glória de Goitá, Pernambuco, 20 December 2003 (40 min)

Glória de Goitá, Pernambuco, 14 February 2004 (100 min)

Glória de Goitá, 17 March 2004 (30 min)

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14 February 2004 (60 min)

João Galego (João José da Silva), Carpina, Pernambuco:

17 January 2004 (30 min)

09 February 2004 (30 min)

Marlene Silva (Maria Candida da Silva), Carpina, Pernambuco:

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13 March 2004 (30 min)

14 March 2004 (35 min)

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APPENDIX ONE

Transcripts of Mamulengo Scenes

1- Simão, Mané Pacaru and Quitéria

The orchestra plays the Baiano music of Simão: "I'm going to Limeland, Simão, to catch limes, Simão. The fruit is nice, Simão, the flower smells, Simão"

Simão enters, dancing and singing. A whistle is heard. The music stops and Simão says his loa:

Simão- Hey everybody, good evening! My job is to greet you all! Simão Countess Lime Glove Bough Stem Flower Albuquerque Pejê Yoke Timber Sugar Loaf[1] has arrived. Francis is yours and Mary is mine, isn't it Mateus?
Mateus- Exactly!
Simão- I'm broke, sluggish and slow to catch the bats in the belfry; my nose is out of joint and my pocket is out of pocket. My wife left the house and I lost its key and to say the least I am jobless!
Mateus- Oh, he is jobless!
Simão- If an employer passes by looking for an employee, call me because I'm helpless!
Mateus- Helpless or jobless?
Simão- So, if you know of someone round here looking for an employee, phone me.
Mateus- And you got a phone by any chance?
Simão- Sure I do. My telephone number is..., pay attention!
Mateus- I'll pay attention!

[1] "Simão de Lima Condessa Cabo Ramo Fulo de Cravo de Albuquerque Pejê Pau de Cangalha Pao doce."

Simão- Is 00000111111. Are you listening? Are you writing it down?

Mateus- I'm writing it down!

Simão- So, keep writing! 777778667777 (the audience laughs) anything you need just call me!

Audience member (Man 1) - Is it a telephone number by any chance?

Man 2- That's because his is bigger than everybody else´s (Allusion to Simão's penis). (Audience laughs).

Simão- So, if you know anything about a job, just call me, ok Mateus?

Mateus- All right!

The music begins again and Simão sings: "Look the orange, look! Look orange and lemon, orange and lemon, on the ground, look the orange and lemon"

Simão leaves. A Whistle is heard and the music changes

Music: "On the Trapiçuma Beach/ my hooker groaned/I got pissed off and saw red / I'm the operator./ On the Trapiçuma Beach/ my hooker groaned/I got pissed off and saw red / I'm the operator"

Enters Captain Mané Pacaru

Mané Pacaru- Good evening, Mateus! My job is to greet you all. Here comes Captain Mané de Almeida, aka Mané Pacaru. I'm looking for an employee. I am very rich! I have a very huge farm two thousand kilometers including the sea. Moreover, in my farm I have two hundred head of cattle!

Man 3- You are indeed really rich!

Mané Pacaru- Yeah, two hundred head of cattle, all in skulls.

One of the musicians - The drum player needs a job!

Mané Pacaru- No deal with the drum player! He is already employed at the Mamulengo.

Another musician - The triangle player needs a job!

Mané Pacaru- No deal with the triangle player either! He got a job showing off his stand in the market.

Mateus – Seu Francisco, the accordion player is in need of a job!

Mané Pacaru- The accordion player neither! He got a job in Lagoa de Itaenga. Him neither!

Man 4 - Nequinho (a man from the audience) needs someone to fetch nuts for him.

Nequinho - No, I don't!

Mateus- I know a young man of great responsibility, it's Simão!

Mané Pacaru - No way! Employee "sem-mão"(without hand) [2] I don't want!

Mateus - His name is Simão! A young man of great responsibility.

Mané Pacaru- Then call him because I cannot stay without employees. (Mateus calls Simão)

Simão- (off) Who is there?

Mateus- There is a man here who is looking for an employee to work for him!

Simão- (off) I 'wanna' be an employee, but not willing to work at all!

(Simão enters and meets Mané Pacaru)

Mané Pacaru- (Seeing Simão and addressing the audience) I notice he's an honest youth and he will fit in with me![3]

Mané Pacaru- Mr. Simão, do you read?

Simão- I know how to read too much!

Mané Pacaru- Up to which grade did you study?

Simão- I spent 18 months behind the school.

Mané Pacaru- Simão, tell me one thing, you got papers?

Simão- Papers I do have.

Mané Pacaru- Where are they?

Simão- But I didn't take them.

Mané Pacaru- Simão, tell me one thing, you got an Identity Card?

Simão- The entity is 64 years old and his car is in bad shape![4]

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[2] Here is a pun. Mané Pacaru changes "Simão" by "sem-mão" (without hand), which are phonetically similar.

[3] Here is another pun. In colloquial Brazilian Portuguese "Dá-pra-mim" has a double meaning of , "fit in with me" and also "give him (her)self to me", which has a sexual meaning.

[4] Again a pun derived from the alliteration in the word "Identidade" (identity card) with "idade" (age), what justifies his answer. Here, Zé de Vina inserts comments about himself, saying his age and the problem he was facing with his teeth.

Mané Pacaru- Do you have a military reserve Identity card (carteira de reservista)?

Simão- My eyesight? Well, a doctor took out one eye, but the other is in good shape![5]

Mané Pacaru- Mr. Simão, do you know how to add?

Simão- Yes, Boss, I add skillfully!

Mané Pacaru- How much is 5 plus 4?

Simão- 4!

Mateus- Pay attention, boy, 5 plus 4 is 9!

Simão- Is 9, boss!

Mané Pacaru- Alright! Do you know how to withdraw?

Simão- I do (Simão withdraws from the scene)

Mateus- Oh, Simão, it is not to withdraw from the scene! Come back!

Mané Pacaru-(to the audience) This man is crazy! (To Simão) Oh, Simão, do you know how to multiply?

Simão- I do. (He grows in size and touches his head on the roof of the tent). I'm multiplying!

Mané Pacaru- Mr. Simão, do you know how to divide?

Simão- I do

Mané Pacaru- How is it made?

Simão- Do you have a wife?

Mané Pacaru- I do.

Simão- What else do you have?

Mané Pacaru- I have a sister in law.

Simão- Got a maid?

Mané Pacaru- I got.

Simão- So we divide: You stay with your wife, and I with the sister in law and the maid.

Mané Pacaru (jumping in joy) Now I am happy, I got a trustworthy man! That is what I need!

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[5] Again an alliteration: Simão mix "reservista" (a military reserve Identity card) with "vista" (eyesight), that justifies his answer.

Mané Pacaru hires Simão, listing all his duties on the farm. He says that he is going to travel and asks Simão to take care of the farm, the house and his wife, stressing that he is not to allow her to dance with anyone. Tell him that when his wife arrives, he should tell her that he went on a trip but will be back soon. (They leave.)

(Instrumental music begins. Quitéria appears. She dances, rolling her dress and moving the ribbons and the necklace around her neck. A whistle is heard. The music stops.)

Quitéria- My job is to greet you all, here comes Quitéria! I am greeting all in this street and in this city; greeting our friend Antonio Ignacio, and all the audience members. Now I am smiling but right before I was crying! Mateus, do you know that the gate in front of Antonio Inacio's daughter's house is so electrified that it has killed 10 birds! Mateus, I also got a shock in the market today! I bought 50 cents worth of coriander and it wasn't enough for the sauce!

After her introductory speech, Quitéria asks Mateus about her husband, Mané Pacaru. Mateus says he went on a trip but left an employee. Mateus calls Simão who enters the scene. Simão, staring at the boss's wife, bends backwards as if delighted by her beauty. He then begins to court Quitéria and asks her for a dance. The music begins again and the two of them dance in a very salacious way, resembling the act of sexual intercourse. Mané Pacaru returns and, catching them in *flagrante delicto*, demands an explanation of his wife. Simão worriedly leaves the scene.

Mané Pacaru- What does all that mean? Dancing with my employee!? Haven't I told you that my wife is not supposed to dance by any means? My daughter doesn't dance either, neither my employee. Unfaithful wife! Shameful wife! I am holding myself from shooting you thrice, all hitting the same damn spot.

Mateus - Go easy Mané Pacaru!

Mané Pacaru- (to Quitéria) Look, you are no longer my wife. Leave home this instant, 'cause I want to see you no more. Piss off! When I am fed up I am speechless. (Mané Pacaru begins to shiver all over, as if in a fit)

Mané Pacaru- Leave home right now! Get lost!

Quitéria- Have you stopped talking, Mané?

Mané Pacaru- I have! And now you can go!

Quitéria- no way! If someone is supposed to leave, this one is you!

Mané Pacaru- Why?

Quitéria- Because everything here belongs to me! It is all my parents' heritage. When I met you, you had nothing. It was all drinking, smoking and playing the triangle along with João Tambourine in the ball of Lagoa de Itaenga. Therefore: out you go! (The audience laughs and makes comments supporting Quitéria. She bumps her body against Mané Pacaru expelling him from the scene)

Quitéria- (Addressing Mateus) Didn't I tell you, this man wasn't going to work out? (Quitéria Leaves)

Mané Pacaru enters whining, complaining about his fate to Mateus. He says that Quitéria is ungrateful, that she does not appreciate everything he has done for her:

Mané Pacaru - Oh, Mateus, I was such a good husband to her! I used to give her so many bananas! She loves banana! Everyday, I used to give her a long banana![6] There was banana in the morning, at midday and midnight. It was banana in the breakfast, in the lunchtime, dinnertime, and still she does that. Oh Mateus, please call her. Maybe if I sing she'll be back. I'm gonna sing a tune I used to sing in order to win her. (He begins to sing a melancholy tune): "In the morning, when the sun rises lighting up the ocean, I remember my sweetheart, on her arms I want to rest."

A woman from the audience- Now you cry, you shameless thing!

Mané Pacaru- I am crying for what belongs to me (keeps singing) "It was a copious river, it was a crook, its waters one couldn't cross. When I remember my sweetheart, on her arms I wanna rest." (He lays down on the stage. Enters Quitéria)

[6] A sexual allusion. The word banana meaning "penis".

Mateus- Mané, your wife is back!

Mané Pacaru- Thank my finger! [7]

Considering her husband's pleas for reconciliation, Quitéria agrees that he may stay. However, she demands that from now on he will allow her to have a good time, enjoy herself and drink. Mané Pacaru agrees, saying that "what one cannot see, the heart will not suffer". Then Quitéria sends him home saying she will stay a little bit longer in the party. Mané Pacaru leaves. The music begins and Quitéria dances.[8]

[7] Another pun. Here the character changes the word "Deus" (God) by "dedo" (finger). Instead of saying "thank God", he says "thank my finger" (Graças a meu dedo), which is another sexual allusion.

[8] Scene transcript from Zé de Vina' show performed in Lagoa de Itaenga, on 6 March 2004.

2- Zangô, Ritinha and Mr. Angu[9]

Music: "Aye, the sea rose, aye the sea ebbed, the Creole's hair was taken away by the river. Aye, the sea rose, aye the sea ebbed, Creole's hair went into the water and got all wet."

Zangô enters dancing.

Zangô- Folks, my job is to greet you all! Here I am...(the puppet interrupts his *loa* and talks to some boys of the audience) Stop that noise there! I already have a toothache and you keep making all this noise![10] (The boys laugh)

Zangô- Mateus, I am rather upset!

Mateus- Rather or very?

Zangô- It does not matter, in fact, is my clog tight or lost!

Mateus- Not lost, loose!

Zangô- Mateus, have you been stealing chicken?

Mateus- The triangle player has, not me!

Zangô- Mateus, tell me something. Since you go around these cities near here, such as Lagoa de Itaenga, Glória de Goitá, Chão da Alegria, Apoti, do you know by any chance a woman called Ana Rita, known by Ritinha?

Mateus- Oh, I do! Isn't she a dressmaker, who sews men's trousers every single day?

Zangô- That is she! She is a dressmaker! She sews, starches, washes, irons, irons and washes. Would you call her for me?

Mateus- Sure! Right now! (He makes a mimic using the *canzà* – a shaker - that he is holding in his hand using it like a telephone) Oh, it seems she does not answer!

Man 1 - She is probably sleeping or attending a mass in Rome!)

Mateus- Ritinha!

Ritinha- (off) Hi Mateus!

Mateus- There is a boy here and he wants you to sew a pair of trousers for him!

Ritinha- (off) - Wait a sec, I am very busy! I am busy with the iron right now, Mateus! When I stop with the iron I'll go back to the needle, and when I stop with the needle

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[9] Scene transcript from Zé de Vina show, performed in Lagoa de Itaenga, 27 March 2004.

[10] In the day of the show, Zé de Vina actually had a toothache.

I'll go back to the iron. You know how it works. At Christmas Time, Saint John's, First of May, and Second of April, I have so many clothes to sew that I have to work day and night, night and day! And because of this I become all *disacunheite*![11] Aiea Mateus, I used to sew 10, 12 pair of trousers per night. Now that I am old I can only sew 2 or 3. I can hardly see anything anymore, but I am still very good with a needle and the iron as well. Right now I am busy ironing! I work day and night, night and day, day and night again. But, you know, every now and then I still can make 10 pair of trousers a night.[12]

Zangô- She is a very hard working woman, Mateus.

At this moment, Zé de Vina's voice can be heard calling his wife Zefa. Mateus says that Zefa is "providing", that is, providing *cachaça* to the musicians. Zé de Vina complains, asking the musicians to go easy on the liquors, after all "too much *cachaça* can spoil and dry you up!" All this dialogue happens with the puppet Zangô on stage. The puppet remains motionless while Zé de Vina is complaining.

Zangô- Oh, Noteu (in yours)!

Mateus- Noteu, what! My name is Mateus!

Zangô- Ok, Mateus! Where is Ms. Ritinha?

Mateus- She is still busy with the needle!

(Ritinha enters)

Ritinha - Good evening, young man. Are you calling me?

Zangô- Yes, I am. Before I introduce myself, I would like to know if you know a girl called Rosane? (A woman from the audience)

Ritinha- Oh, I surely do! She helps me to sew. I put the needle; she takes the line off! She often takes more trousers off than me! (The audience laughs)

Zangô – Ms. Ritinha, are you married, single or are you in concubinage?

Ritinha – Actually, I was married 38 times.

Zangô – Did you have children?

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[11] 'Disacunheite' is an invented word meaning, "loose" or "tired."

[12] From the Zé de Vina scene "Zangô, Ritinha and Seu Angu".

Ritinha – In fact, 116 boys in my first big belly! (Public laughs)
Zangô – And from these 116 children, can you remember the name of any of them?
Ritinha - The first one is Marimbondo (a man from the audience). Look boy, he used to suck so much, but so much, that I was obliged to hit his mouth with a clog! Only then would he stop sucking. (The other spectators start making jokes about him.)
Zangô - And apart from Marimbondo, do you remember any other child?
Ritinha - Yes, Zé Pequeno (another man from the audience). Aiea, Zé Pequeno sucked me so much, but so much that my breast used to look liked a peach stone.
Someone from the public - Hey Zé Pequeno, you are really shameless!]

Ritinha continues to recite several other names of her sons, all drawn from spectators' names. Following each name, she joins a comment related to breast-feeding.)

Zangô- Do you remember a son called Zangô? A very beautiful boy, big eyes, beautiful hair, with a very beautiful plate on his teeth, actually, a very charming seducer!
Ritinha – (trying to remember) - Zangô, Zangô...I think I can remember something...I think I can remember something!
Zangô – (Very angry because his mother cannot remember him) you are completely out of your mind! I am Zangô! And you are my mother and I am your son! So, "bliss" me, mother! [13]
Mateus – Not "bliss" me, but bless me!

At first, Ritinha does not really believe that he is, in fact, her son. At last, she recognizes and blesses him. They hug and kiss each other. She asks him where on earth he has been all this time. Zangô answers he was around the world. After some talking, Ritinha realizes her son is not totally reliable but, despite this, she accepts him. So, she tells him that she got married again to a "very young 79 year old man called Mr. Angu". Then, Ritinha calls Mr. Angu and he comes in. He has his face covered by

[13] Here is another pun. The correct expression would be "a bençao mae" (bless me mother). But, instead of using the word "bençao" (bless) Zangô used "besta", which means "stupid".

hair, like the majority of old people. Zangô does not like the old man. The two of them have a quarrel and Zangô kills Mr. Angu. When Ritinha realizes she is a widow again she has a nervous breakdown, shaking her body intensely. Finally Ritinha falls down dead (the puppet - without the hand of the manipulator inside the glove - remains hanged on the stage play board). Zangô can not believe his mother is dead. He holds and shakes her. Zangô says he has to get some money from his stepfather for his mother's coffin and asks Mateus to help him collect money among "his friends in the audience". Zangô leaves the stage and Mateus starts collecting money. The Devil enters and carries off Ritinha and Mr. Angu. Zangô returns and asks Mateus about the couple. Mateus explains that the Devil carried them away. Zangô starts "praying" for his mother, which is in fact a curse, making the situation even worse:

Mother of mine, you are dead/ what will happen to you/ I wish I could see your end/ at the vulture's beak. / Heah, what a good thing, she is dead/ she is dead, what a good thing. / It is *xibim*, *xibim*/ it is *xibim*, *xibim*/ it is upwards, from the bottom to the top/ from up till down/ it is *xibim*, it is *xibim*.

Mateus looks at Zangô cursing his mother. Mateus hits Zangô on the head with a stick. Zangô falls down dead on the front of the stage. The Devil comes in again and carries him off.

3- Praxédio and Xoxa

Praxédio is an amorous married man, who is always trying to seduce young female members of the audience. He enters and beggins his introductory monologue:

Praxédio: Whenever I want to date/ I look for a beautiful girl/ with whom my heart beats. / With her I want to talk / but if her father does not give me the permission/ I kill, I fight, I shout. / I order him to buy cards/ to play on the public square. / The men who have beautiful wives can play / the ones who haven't...

Mateus - Pass over.

Praxédio - Good evening. My job is to greet you all. Here comes, Praxédio Mané de Araruna, a handsome man from Arripuna. Today I am in the mood to get a girl to date! Mateus, the women here know how to date?

Mateus - They surely do!

Man from the audience – Even I have dated your sister!

Praxédio – Mateus, I already have a girlfriend! Look Mateus, that one over there, in a red blouse! (He refers to a girl in the audience) Hey girl, hey pshhhhh. Look Mateus, when I blink one eye, she blinks the other eye. Isn't it dating, Mateus?

Mateus - It surely is.

Praxédio - So I am already dating. Look Mateus, I am rich! I have a farm with five hundred head of goats!

Mateus - Oh, five hundred goats is a lot of goats!

Praxédio - Yeah, all blind-goats.[14] Besides, I have one thousand houses.

Mateus - Oh, but that is too much, one thousand houses!

Praxédio - Yeah, one thousand houses, but houses of hornets! Look Mateus, I am already dating!

Mateus - But, man, you are married!

Praxédio - Oh Mateus, I am crazy about Antonio Pedro's daughter (someone from the city).

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[14] Blind-goat (cabra-cega) is a popular children game.

Praxédio starts mentioning names of various audience members' daughters. Enter Xoxa (Praxédio's wife). Although Praxédio is on stage, she does not see him. She talks to Mateus and asks about her husband. Mateus shows Praxédio to her.

Xoxa - So Praxédio, what is going on? What is all this about? You just arrived and are already seducing the girls? Shame on you! After two years living away from home, you come and that is how you arrive? Where have you been all this time?

Praxédio - I was working. (He hears a baby boy crying) Who owns this crying baby?

Xoxa - He is our son.

Praxédio - I doubt it. I've been two years out, how can this boy be mine?

Xoxa - He is yours, my old fellow! Netinho (a man from the audience) and me, went once to peel beans under a jack tree. So, there we were peeling, and peeling, and the sun was very hot, so, because of the heat, I had a little nap and during the nap I had a dream! And the dream was about you! So, during the dream I got pregnant! (Audience laughs making fun of Netinho).

Praxédio – This boy is not mine!

Xoxa – I'll repeat, Praxédio, he is yours, my old fellow!

Man 2 – See! That is what happens when you leave a woman alone!

Praxédio (Directing the audience) - Is this boy mine?

(Many comments come from the audience. Some people say that the boy is his, some says the boy is Netinho's).

Mateus – Praxédio, do you remember the month you left home?

Praxédio - I do.

Mateus - Which month?

Praxédio - It was around February.

Xoxa - Look Mateus, count with me: He left home in February. So, February we can not count on anymore. March, Marcel, Marcele we leave out. April, apricot, April Fool, it is also out! May, my, mine; October; November; and December! That was the month the boy was born!

Praxédio - (miming as if he were counting the months with his fingers) Yeah, sure, the boy is mine! And, look, Mateus, look at him! He looks just like me. Have you already baptised the boy, Xoxa?

Xoxa - No, I did not. I was waiting for you.

Praxédio - So, let's baptise him.

Xoxa - Wait a moment. First of all, I want to know if you bought tobacco.

Praxédio - Yes I did, but Bilinga stole it. (The accordion player)

Xoxa - I would like so much to eat a sausage. Did you buy sausage?

Praxédio – Yes, I did get a big sausage.

Xoxa - And where is it?

Praxédio - Carrapicho ate it. [A woman from the audience]

Xoxa keeps asking Praxédio about the food he supposed to bring home. Praxédio keeps giving excuses why he did not so. A baby crying is heard. Xoxa leaves and soon returns with a small baby (a plastic doll), and asks Praxédio to hold the baby and to put him to sleep. Praxédio holds the baby and starts singing a lullaby. The baby cries even louder. Praxédio sings very aloud (as if he was shouting) and shakes the baby with quick and rude movements.

Xoxa - Not like this, Praxédio! Give me the baby.

Praxédio - Let's get this little devil a baptism. Hey Mateus! Go and ask for money for the baptism.

Mateus starts collecting money from the audience. The orchestra plays the song of the baptism.

Music: "It is today, it is today, mum, the day of my baptism, mum./ I want, mum, I want to throw myself on the samba."

The scene finishes with the puppets dancing.

4- Scenes derived from the Autos

The following two scenes seem to be reminiscent of the Northeast *Presépio de Fala* (Talking Cribs), and are not performed nowadays.

4.1- *Rico Rei e Avarento* [The Rich Mean King][15]

The Rich-man is a landowner who does not speak with, does not like and does not give any donations to poor people. He has an employee called Mestre Salas (The Master of Ceremonies).

A poor old man enters onstage and knocks on the door of the Rich-man asking for alms. The Mestre Salas says that, even though his master is a very rich person, he does not give charity. The beggar leaves. A second beggar enters and the scene is repeated. Finally, Lazo enters, the Rich-man's brother. Lazo asks the Mestre Sala to announce him to his brother. Mestre Sala does so. The Rich-man replies that he does not have any poor brother, and orders Mestre Sala to expel the beggar, otherwise he will kill him. Lazo insists that he wants to talk to his brother. The Rich-man enters onstage, argues and kills Lazo and leaves the stage. Two angels enter. They pray and carry Lazo to Heaven. Mestre Sala and the Rich-man come back onstage followed by the Devil, who starts running after the Rich-man. The Devil finally catches the Rich-man, who cries out to Mestre Salas: "Collect everything that I have: my farms, the cattle, those pretty houses, those cars, my money, collect everything and sell it and give the money to the cripples and the poor people, because I do not want them anymore". The Devil says that it is too late now, carrying the Rich-man offstage.

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[15] As mentioned on Chapter I, this scene is probably derived from the auto "O Rico Avarento e o Lázaro Pobre" (The Mean King and the Poor Lazarus) that was performed in Pernambuco in the second half of the sixteenth century. Although the name "Lázaro" does not appear in the title of the Mamulengo scene, the character was conserved with the name "Lazo" a corruption of Lázaro (Lazarus) the biblical beggar covered in sores.

4.2- São José (Saint Joseph)

Saint Joseph comes onstage followed by the Virgin Mary who is holding the Christ-Child and is seated on a donkey. They go from house to house asking for food and a place for the holy family to spend the night. They are repeatedly turned away by the owners of the houses. Finally, an old woman recognizes the Holy Family and thus offers food and her house to them to spend the night. Mary, the donkey and the old woman leave the stage. The three kings enter singing and reciting verses for the Christ-Child. The scene ends with Saint Joseph and three wise men singing and dancing.[16]





Fig. 5.1: Virgin Mary and the Christ-Child. Fig. 5.2: The three kings. Puppets of Antonio Biló. (Museu do Mamulengo. Photos: E. den Otter)

[16] The description of the scene was made by Zé de Vina in interview, in Lagoa de Itaenga, 06 March, 2004. It can be observe connection of this scene with the Spanish crib puppet theatres of Tia Norica and Belén de Alcoy described in Chapter Two.

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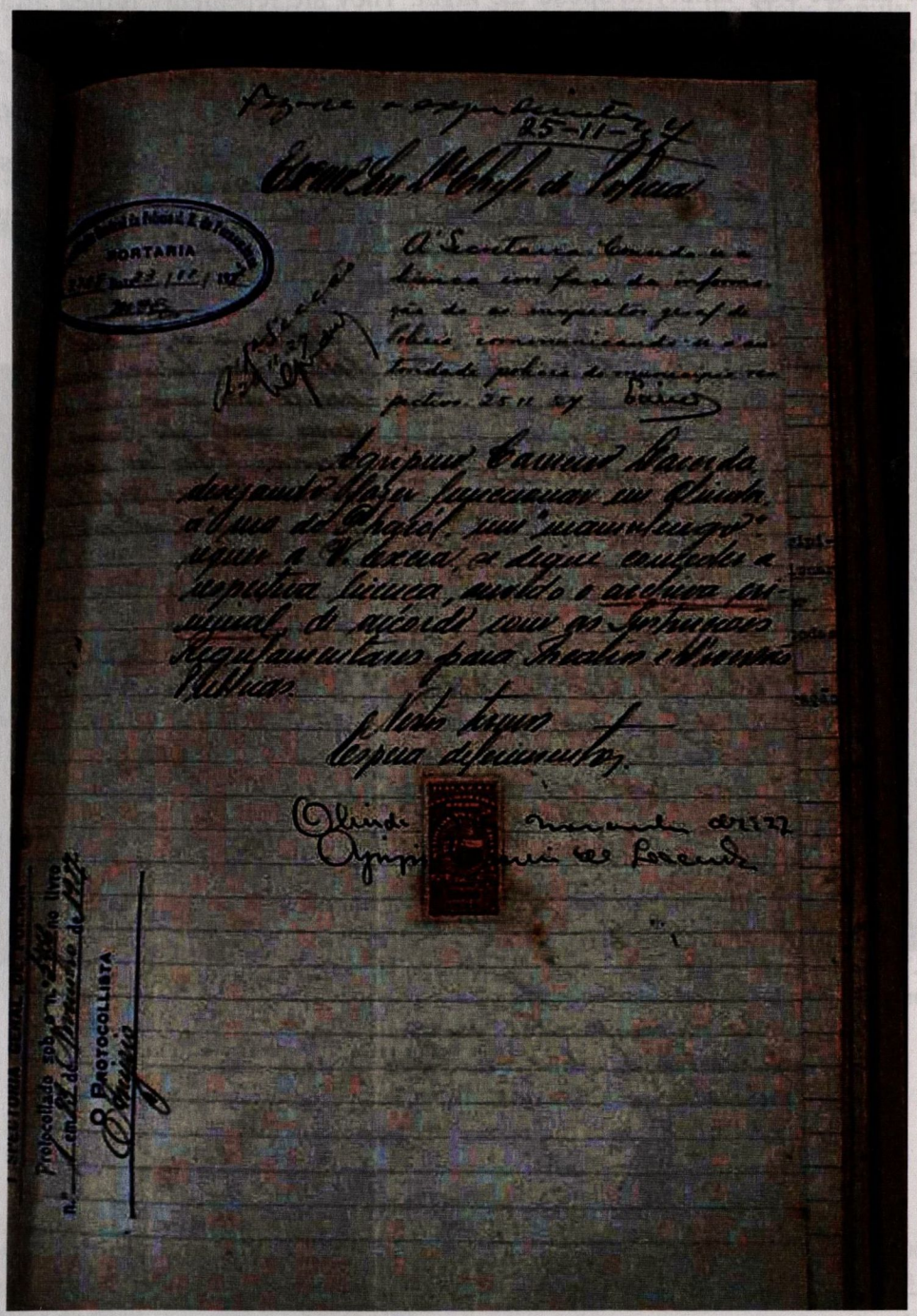
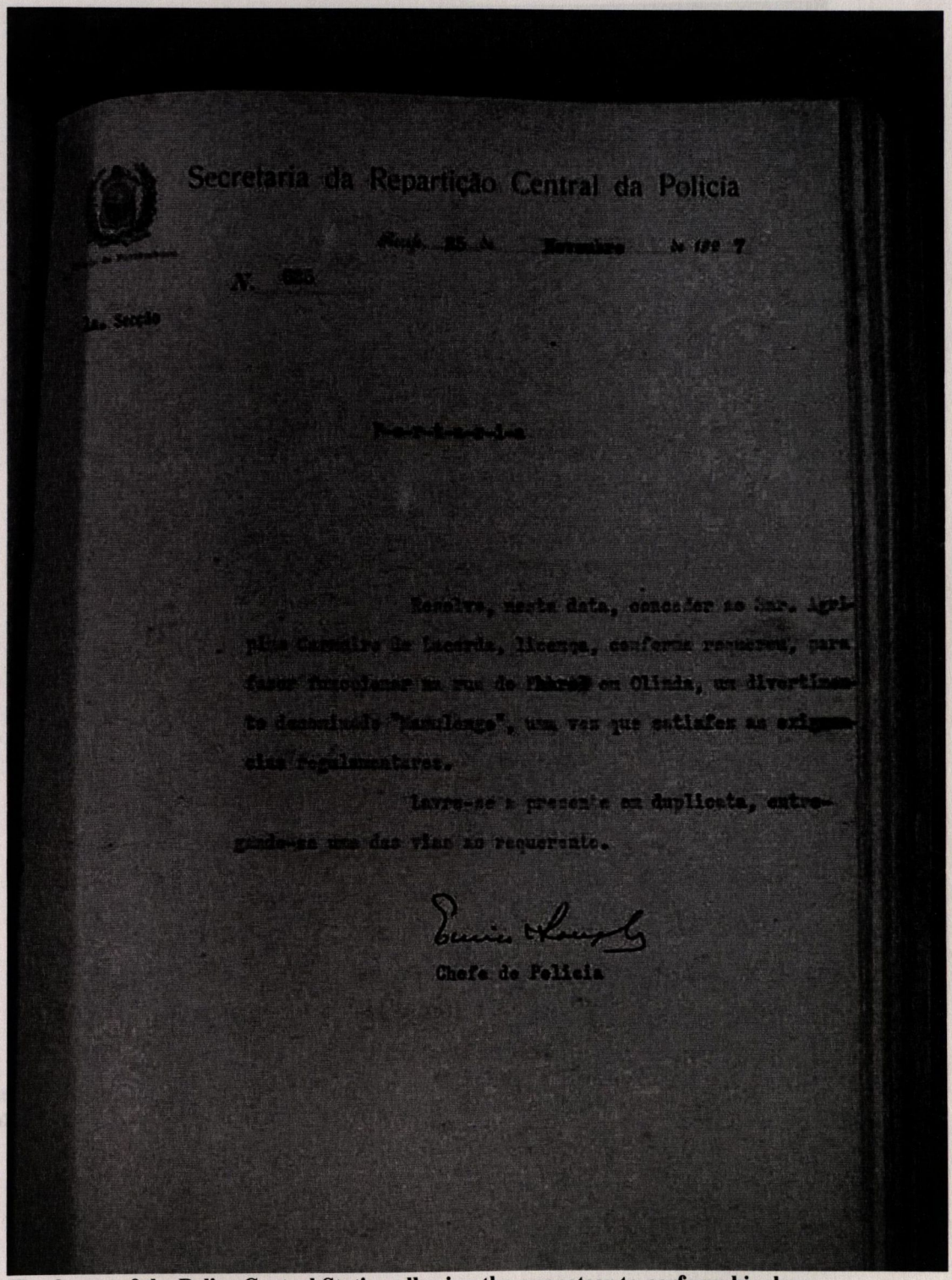
APPENDIX II

Documents from the Public Archive of Pernambuco State: Petitions and Decrees



The petition of the puppeteer, Agripino Carneiro Lacerda, to present his Mamulengo show in Olinda, Pernambuco, November, 1927.



Secretaria da Repartição Central da Policia

Recife, 25 de Novembro de 1927

N. 625

1a. Secção

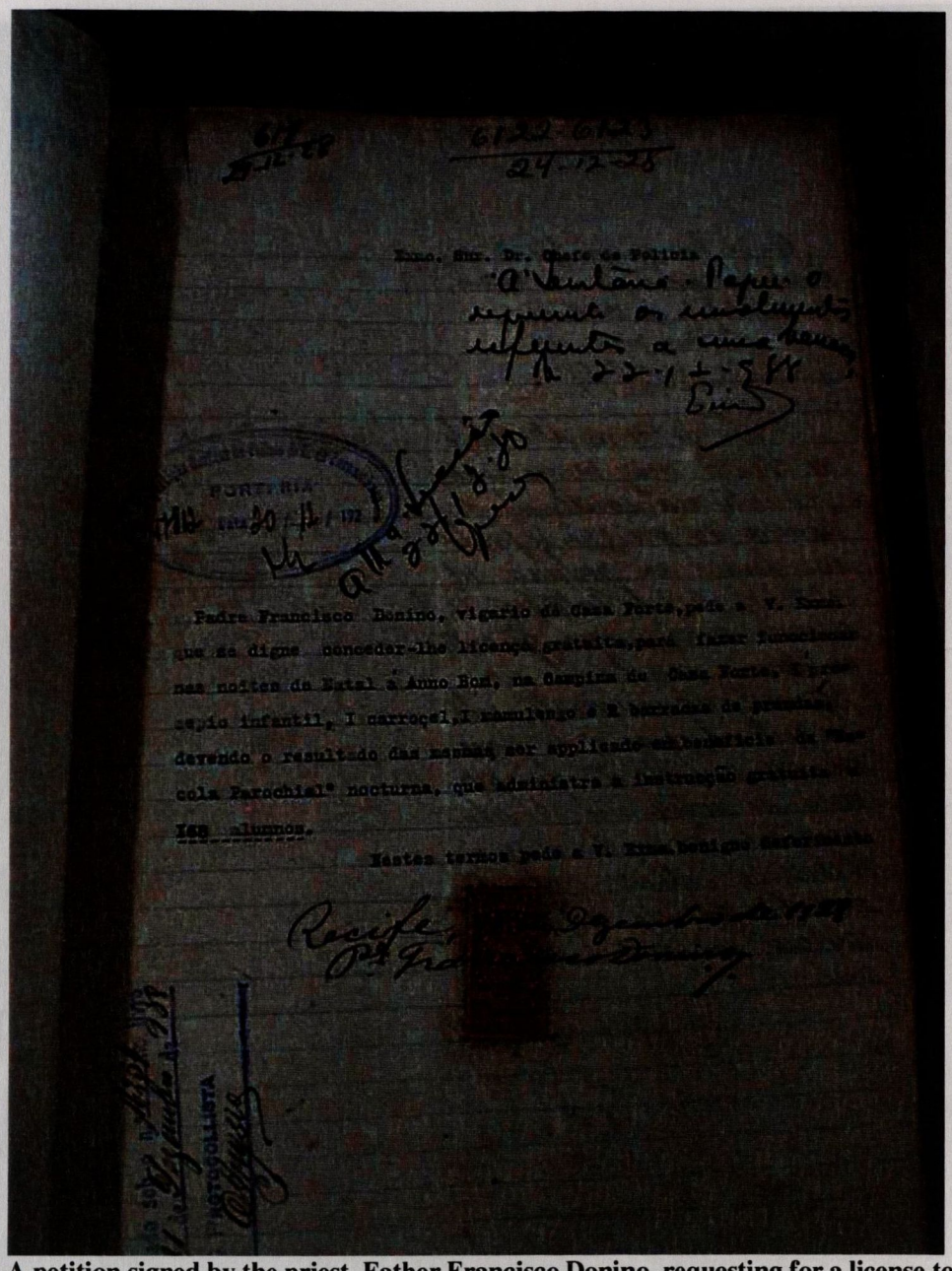
P-e-r-t-a-r-i-a

Resolvo, nesta data, conceder ao Snr. Agripino Carneiro de Lacerda, licença, conforme requereu, para fazer funccionar na rua do Pharol em Olinda, um divertimento denominado "Manulengo", uma vez que satisfez as exigencias regulamentares.

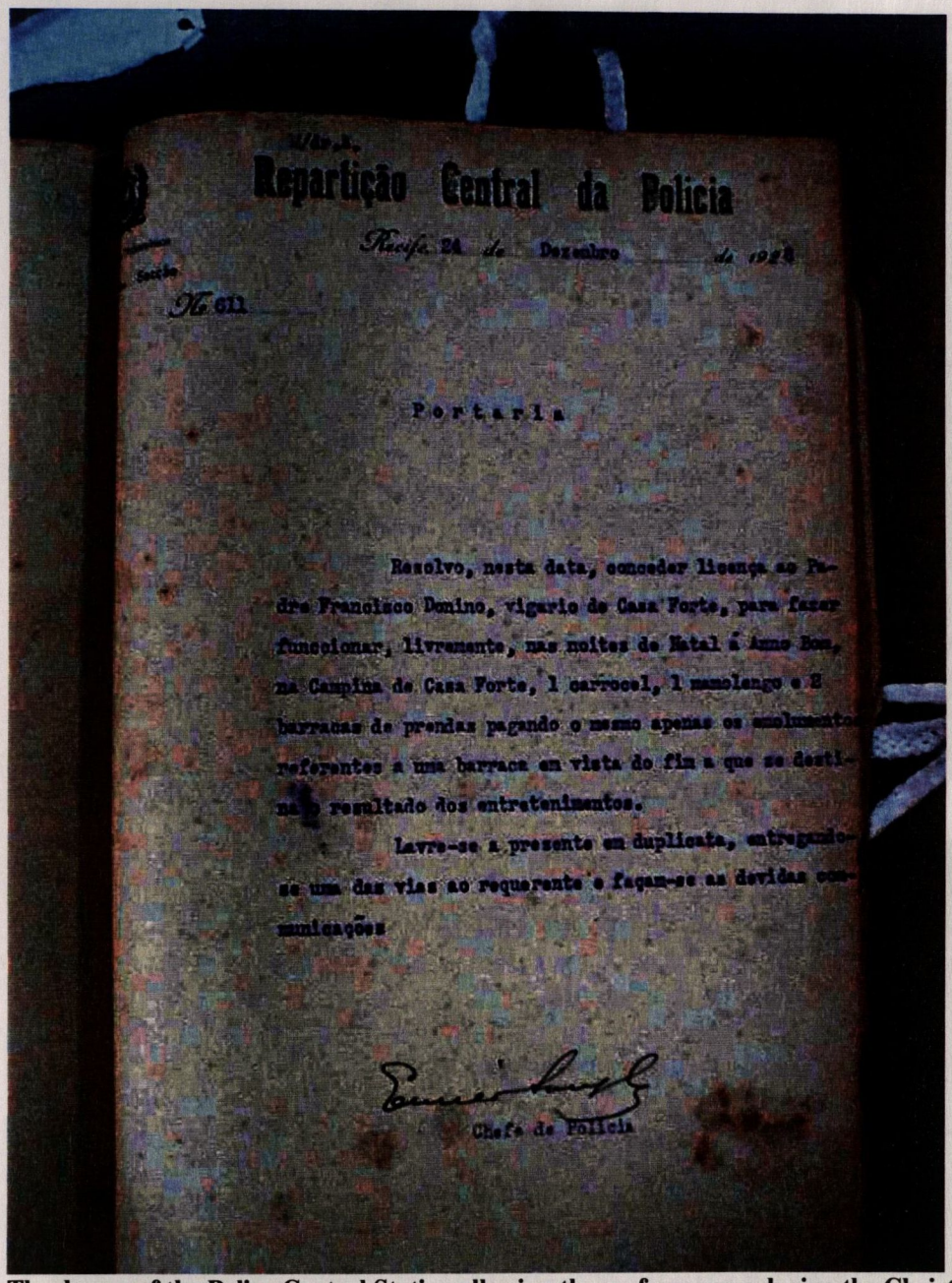
Lavre-se a presente em duplicata, entregando-se uma das vias ao requerente.

Chefe de Policia

The decree of the Police Central Station allowing the puppeteer to perform his show.



A petition signed by the priest, Father Francisco Donino, requesting for a license to present various entertainments, including a Mamulengo show, during the Christmas festival in Recife, December, 1928.



Repartição Central da Policia

Recife 24 de Dezembro de 1923

No 611

Portaria

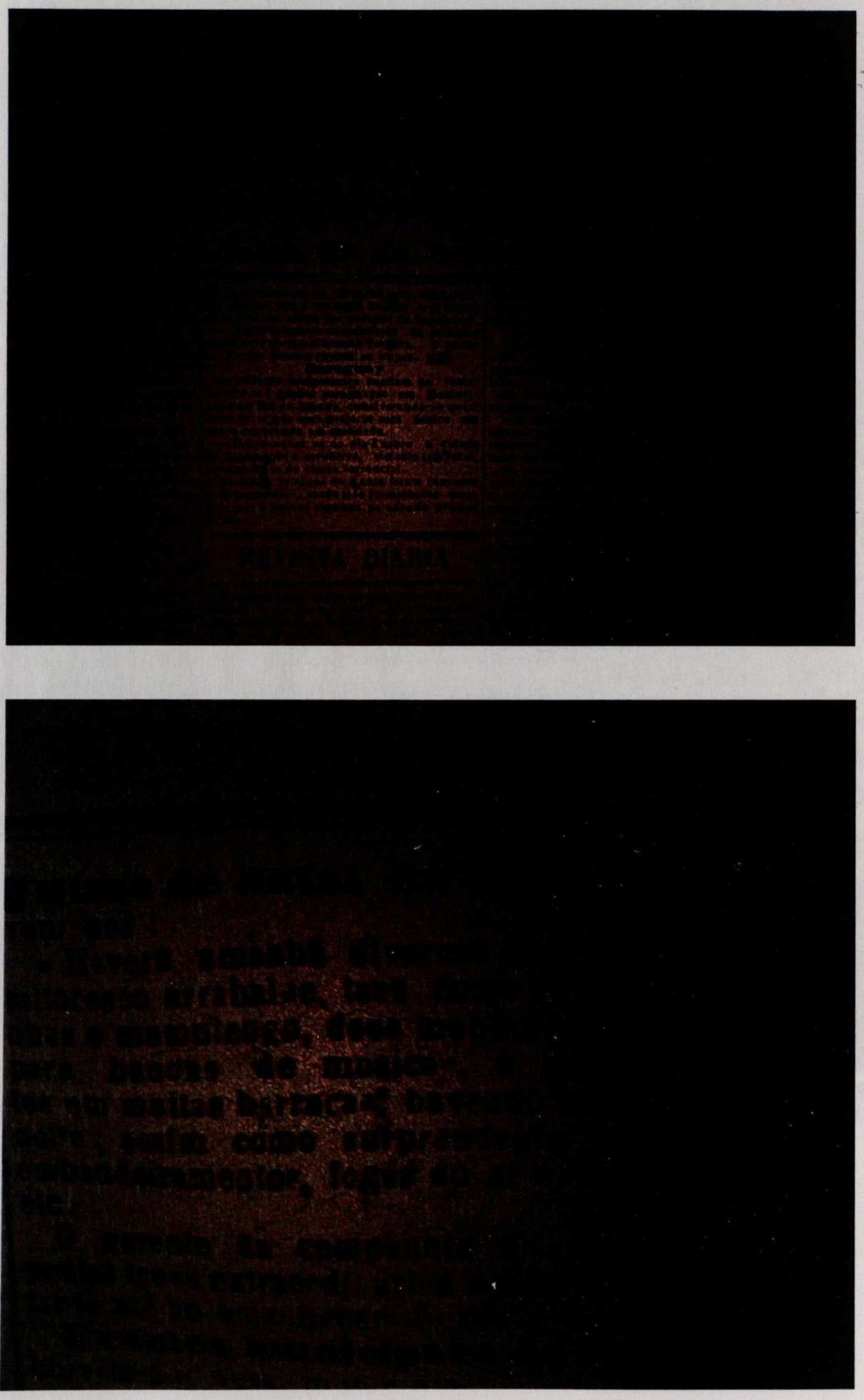
Resolvo, nesta data, conceder licença ao Padre Francisco Domino, vigario de Casa Forte, para fazer funcionar, livremente, nas noites de Natal e Anno Bom, na Campina de Casa Forte, 1 carrocel, 1 mamolengo e 2 barracas de prendas pagando o mesmo apenas os emolumentos referentes a uma barraca em vista do fim a que se destina o resultado dos entretenimentos.

Lavre-se a presente em duplicata, entregando-se uma das vias ao requerente e façam-se as devidas comunicações

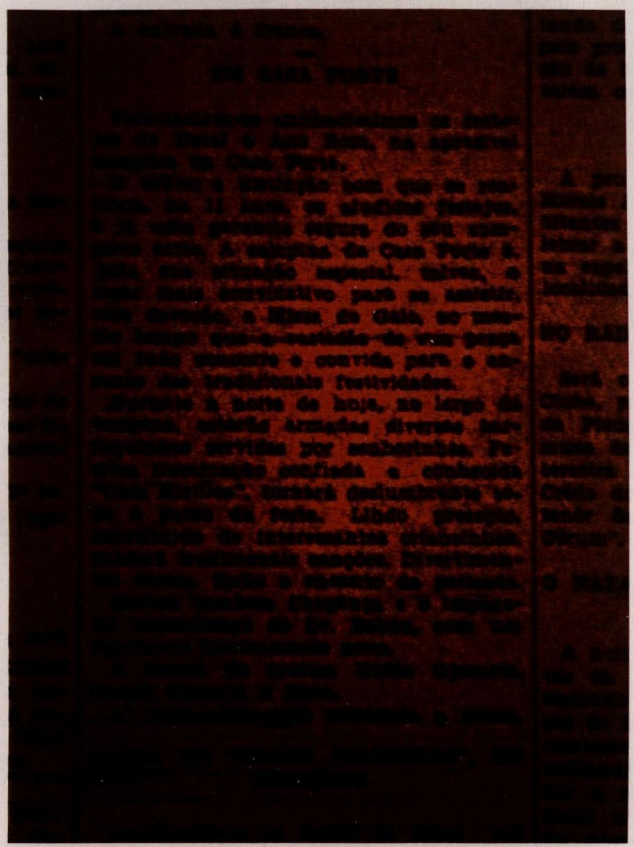
Chefe de Policia

The decree of the Police Central Station allowing the performances during the Christmas festival.

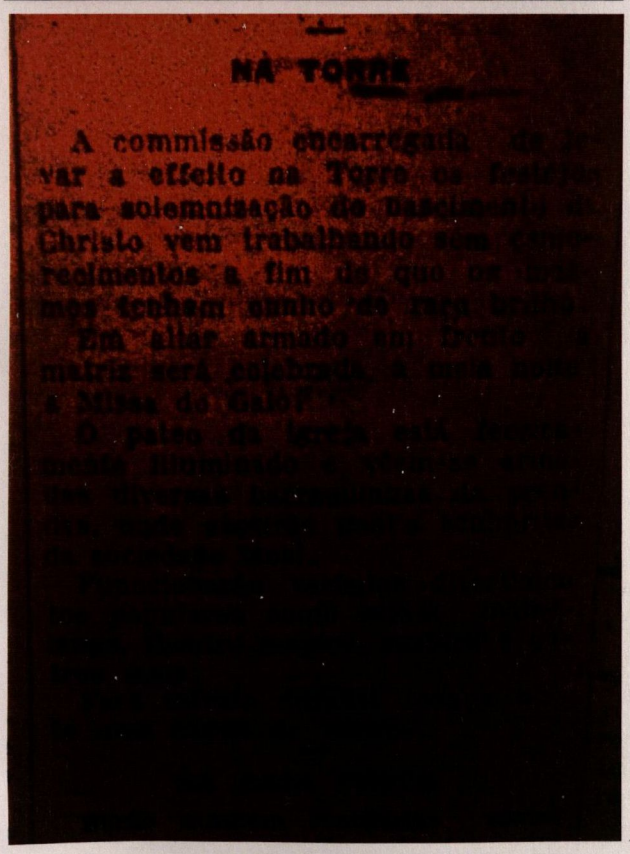
Diário de Pernambuco: **advertisements**



The very first extract notice referring to Mamulengo performances dated from 23 December 1896.



Advertisement dated from 1931 referring nominally to the puppeteer, Babau.



Advertisement dated from 1930.