

## PORTRAYING “MUSICKING” AND “PARTICIPATORY CHARACTERISTICS” OF BUMBA MEU BOI IN FILM

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### ABSTRACT

This article presents reflections on how the practice of musicking (Small 1999) and the participatory characteristics (Turino 2008) of bumba meu boi are translated into audiovisual field (Romero and Vilella 2018) in the productions “Guriatã”, directed by Renata Amaral (2018) “Taquaras, Tambores e Violas”, directed by Hidalgo Romero (2018), and “Brilho da Noite”, directed by Priscila Ermell (2004). The article explains what kind of musicking each production emphasizes and which techniques translate this into the audiovisual field, making relations between them. These films were chosen because their directors came from different fields of work and research, having different aesthetics and purposes.

### KEYWORDS

Bumba meu boi; Audiovisual; Translation; Musicking; Experience.

## PORTRAYING “MUSICKING” AND “PARTICIPATORY CHARACTERISTICS” OF BUMBA MEU BOI IN FILM

Audiovisual resources can be interesting for ethnographic research for several reasons, such as being a communication tool with the people being documented and also with a broader audience. “For whom, and why, have you made this film?” is what director Jean Rouch asks in *The Camera and the Man* (2003, 11). The answer offered by the filmmaker and anthropologist is broad: for the group he portrayed, for himself and for the widest possible audience. We believe this tool might make academic thinking and production accessible to other audiences:

That is why my third response to the question “For whom, and why?” is “For everyone, for the largest viewing public possible.” I believe that if the distribution of ethnographic film is, with rare exceptions, limited to university networks, cultural organizations, and scholarly societies, the fault is more our own than that of commercial cinema (Rouch 2003, 11).

When transposing an ethnographic musicking experience into audiovisual language for different audiences and purposes, thinking which devices are of interest in each system of symbols becomes relevant. In *Quando a roda acontece: o audiovisual como tradução da experiência na performance musical participativa*, Homero and Vilella (2018) discuss the process of translating a participatory performance experience<sup>1</sup> into audiovisual language. To this end, they rely on the notion of “translation” presented by Julio Plaza (2003), which expands the notion of “intersemiotic translation” or “transmutation” as proposed by linguist Roman Jakobson, which consists in transposing a system of verbal signs to a system of non-verbal signs, or vice versa – from verbal art to music, dance, or cinema, for example. Plaza claims that translations can go beyond “merely linguistic characteristics” (2003, 12), also happening between nonverbal systems – for instance, between music and dance or between music and image.

In its turn, the term “*musicar*” (Reily, Hikiji and Toni, 2016), derived from “musicking” as proposed by Christopher Small (1999), is used to refer to a broad way of engaging with music experience, beyond the performance moment. The term evokes actions such as watching a concert, rehearsing, listening to music, thinking about it, among others. This way of thinking is interesting when applied to the *bumba meu boi* universe<sup>2</sup>, since different

1 Thomas Turino (2008, 26) proposes a division for musical practice fields as follows: “music in real time”, in which music making can be presentational or participatory, and “recorded music”, described as either *high fidelity* or *studio audio art*.

2 The *boi*, or ox, is a scenic and dramatic element of numerous cultural manifestations in the world. In Brazil, its presence can be observed in various dramatic dances such as, for instance: Boi de Parintins, in the Amazon state; Cavalo Marinho, in Pernambuco; Boi Bumbá, in Pará; Boi de Mamão, in Santa Catarina; among many others. This work discusses specifically the *bumba meu boi* in Maranhão. *Bumba meu boi* can be thought of as a dramatic dance, since its performance brings together elements of great relevance, besides music,

manners of engagement are needed for the Boi<sup>3</sup> to perform or “play”, which go beyond the acts of playing instruments, singing, and dancing. Activities such as, for instance, conducting rehearsals, making instruments, embroideries, and clothing, creating *toadas* (the songs), etc, are also fundamental.

In the participatory field proposed by Thomas Turino, the terms “audience” and “performer” do not apply: there are participants and potential participants; and the main objective is to integrate people into practice (2008, 28). Turino brings the idea of participation in the sense of actively contributing to the sound and movement of a musical event through dancing, singing, clapping, or playing musical instruments, when these activities are considered vital to the performance. In this type of music making, participatory performance is a field of activity in which sound and movement are conceived as a form of social interaction, and the focus of that practice lays on the act of doing, rather than on the final product of the activity. Although the quality of sound and performance is of great importance for a performance to be considered successful, the latter is also considered good when it involves a considerable number of people.

Therefore, some characteristics are often present in this type of performance. For example, people should know the dance and music of the occasion; challenges in executing that theme should be balanced in a way that it is not too easy (which could bore the participants) nor very difficult (which could demotivate those involved, preventing total engagement) to perform. When balance is reached, participants are fully present at the moment of the performance, increasing their concentration and the feeling of being completely involved in it. At the same time, the possibility of including people with different skills and different levels of execution is important to inspire engagement. In this way, beginners and virtuosos can participate of the same performance. These characteristics of what Turino describes as participatory music apply to *bumba meu boi*.

The “musickings” and the participatory character of *bumba meu boi* can be expressed in different ways by using audiovisual techniques such as

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dramatic elements (the *auto*), and dance (Andrade 1982). There is a dramatized narrative that revolves around a special ox, stolen from the farm by Pai (father) Francisco because his wife Catirina is pregnant and has a craving for its tongue. This celebration has a variety of performative styles, a multiplicity which is a particularity of *bumba meu boi* in Maranhão. *Bumba meu boi* groups and their entire atmosphere form a socio-tourist-cultural complex recognized as part of Brazil’s Cultural Heritage by the country’s National Institute of the Artistic and Historic Patrimony (Iphan, 2011) and as part of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity by Unesco (2019). These groups, which are active all year round, constitute a set of characteristics in their artistic, aesthetic, and symbolic expressions and “arise for different reasons and in different places and, consequently, have attributes that are peculiar to each region of occurrence, but with qualities that individualize them and bring vivacity to the universe of the festivity” (Iphan 2011, 100, our translation).

<sup>3</sup> When isolated and capitalized, the term “*Boi*” is used as an abbreviation to refer to the genre (*bumba meu boi*) or to a specific group; when isolated and in lowercase (“*boi*”), it refers to the ox itself, the character of this cultural manifestation.

researching, filming, and editing the material. The aim of this article is to reflect on this subject based on the productions *Guriatã* – directed by Renata Amaral (2018) –, *Taquaras, Tambores e Violas* – directed by Hidalgo Romero (2018) –, and *Brilho da Noite*, directed by Priscila Ermell (2004).

### **TAQUARAS, TAMBORES E VIOLAS. THE PANDEIRÃO EPISODE – CINEMATIC CARE**

*Pandeirão* is one of the episodes of *Taquaras, Tambores e Violas*, a TV series directed by documentary filmmaker Hidalgo Romero which revolves around the process of making instruments used in popular traditions of Brazil. The episodes last around thirty minutes and each one is dedicated to following the construction of a specific instrument. Through this framing, the audience can learn about the various popular manifestations in which such instruments have been commonly used.

To understand the percussive instrument *pandeirão* and its use in *bumba meu boi*, the film take us to the cities of São Luís, in the headquarters of Boi De Maracanã, and São José de Ribamar, in Pedro Piauí's workshop. Two characters lead the narrative: Ribinha de Maracanã and Truvão, son of the late artisan. With Ribinha, the audience observes the preparation for the day of baptism, one of the greatest annual events of Boi de Maracanã; Truvão shows us the process of building the *pandeirão*.

The video begins with a *tocada*, the performance moment of Boi de Maracanã; we hear Ribinha's voice (off-screen) explaining a little about the *pandeirão*; then a map locates the audience on where this is happening in Brazil. The camera shows Truvão sharpening an axe blade and leaving the workshop. Background noises are enhanced; it is possible to hear the actions that take place in the studio (blades being sharpened, an axe hitting wood, a door closing). Then, he leaves. The audience follows Truvão's path, in wider and wider shots, including drone filming, in the place that is textually located as the city of São José de Ribamar. Then, the sounds of the town (birds and other animals) can be heard, followed by one of the most well-known *toadas* of *bumba meu boi* in Maranhão, "Maranhão Meu Tesouro Meu Torrão"<sup>4</sup>, in the voice that the viewer will later recognize as belonging to Ribinha de Maracanã, current *amo*<sup>5</sup> of Boi de Maracanã.

Maranhão, my treasure, my piece of land  
I made this *toada* for you, Maranhão  
Land of *babaçu* (coconut) cultivated by nature  
This native palm tree that gives me inspiration

4 Songwriter: Humberto de Maracanã

5 Amo do Boi, or master of the ox, is one of the characters of *bumba meu boi*. He is usually the main singer of the group, who composes *toadas* (songs) and who leads the play.

There is an enchanted ox at Lençóis beach  
And the reign of King Sebastian  
The mermaid sings in the prow  
Guriatã sings in the woods  
Land of the sweet *pirunga*  
And of the tasty *pitombotã*

The next close shot is the action of cutting down a tree; the viewer watches the character bringing the wood back in a cart that is pulled by a donkey (the sounds of these activities can still be heard, as well as the *toada* being sung):

And every year, the great festival of Juçara  
Happens in the month of October at Maracanã  
In the month of June there's bumba meu boi  
Which is celebrated in praise of St. John  
The *amo* sings and swings the *maracá*  
The *matraca* and the *pandeiro* make the floor tremble

On this path, the camera films close shots of Truvão's face, as well as of the streets through which he passes (in slightly wider shots) until he arrives at the house (in a shot made with a drone camera, at an even wider angle). In addition to ambient sound, it is possible to hear the instrumentation of a Boi with *sotaque*<sup>6</sup> *de matraca*, such as in the Maracanã's case.

This inheritance has been left by our grandparents  
And it is now cultivated by us  
To be a part of your history, Maranhão  
Songwriter: Humberto de Maracanã



Figure 1: São Luís city and Boi de Maracanã's buses.

<sup>6</sup> *Sotaque* ("accent") is the term used to mark differences in sound and performance between groups.

I consider this set of scenes to be the opening moment of the video, because it presents elements that will be unfolded over the about thirty minutes of film, both in the narrative and in the audiovisual aesthetics used. The elements being presented are: the specific instrument, where and how it is used, the main characters (Truvão and Ribinha), and the places where they live. It is worth noting that the *toada* chosen for this moment (“Maranhão Meu Tesouro Meu Torrão”) is a *hit* of the *bumba meu boi* genre, bringing even more impact to these moments as the establishing shot of the production.

If the filmmaker knew about that dynamic, perceiving the movement that was being announced, and were to try to translate this moment into film, how would he build his narrative? What would he film? With which framing? Would he be able to use more than one camera? Would he try to build a parallel editing between the experience of the *amo* singing, the players, and the rest of the group? Would he film glances, feet, and hands intertwining? Would he use sound design to build dramatic tension? Would he dilate chronological time? Would he use a voice-over to try to explain the situation? Would he make a long-shot, showing that situation by wandering through the elements of the cultural manifestation? (Villela & Romero 2018, 7, our translation)

It is possible to observe that this series takes into account the reflections on filming quoted above. In the sequences of chosen images, the viewer sees a pattern of gradually revealing the general context. First, an action is shown in detail; then, scene after scene, it is possible to understand what is being portrayed (first, it shows the action of Truvão sharpening the blade, in order to understand that he is going to another place within São José de Ribamar to cut wood to make the *pandeirão*).

The use of camera lenses seems to follow this intention: using those with a selective focus on closer shots and those with a general focus on wider shots. There is a concern in establishing a well-defined narrative arc and the main elements that will compose the story, as well as how to convey the feeling of living that experience.



Figures 2 and 3: Close shots with selective focus on the act of performance

The narrative is based on interviews. The main ones are with Ribinha de Maracanã, in which he is sitting down while talking to and looking at at the interviewer, and with Truvão, filmed while builds the *pandeirão*.



Figures 4 and 5: Close shots with selective focus. Truvão making a *pandeirão*.

Ribinha chants about four or five *toadas* during the video while talking about some *bumba meu boi* elements, such as the killing<sup>7</sup>, the day of baptism, and some characters present in this cultural manifestation. With Truvão, the viewer watches the steps that are necessary for making the *pandeirão*. It is also possible to see some elements of the preparation such as, for instance, members sewing costumes (close shots), the beginning of the baptism day (people arriving in several buses, the place getting

<sup>7</sup> Also called comedy or *auto*, it revolves around the enchanted ox, stolen from the farm by Father Francisco because his wife Catirina is pregnant and has a craving for its tongue. This *auto* makes the connection between the plot and the characters of *bumba meu boi* celebration, being them the ox, the ox master (*amo do boi*), the *vaqueiro* (cowboy), Father Francisco and Catirina, *índios*, and *rajados*. Such characters are present in all *sotaques*, but there are also characters that are predominant in, and even unique to, certain *sotaques*, such as the Cazumba, especially present in *sotaques da Baixada* (from the Baixada region), and the Caboclo Real (or Caboclo de Pena), present in *sotaque de Matraca* (from the capital).

full), going through the religious litany until the moment when the ox *guarnece* (garrisons)<sup>8</sup> and the presentation begins.



Figure 6: Boi de Maracanã's *batalhão* in the act of performance. Wider shots after a series of detail shots.

### **BRILHO DA NOITE – A SOUND PORTRAIT OF THE BOI IN SÃO PAULO**

*Brilho da Noite* is an audiovisual production by anthropologist Priscilla Ermell that portrays the involvement of Mestra Ana Maria Carvalho and of Ariel Coelho, a young *brincante* (member) of the group, in the cycle of parties of *bumba meu boi* from Maranhão that takes place in the city of São Paulo, in the region of Morro do Querosene. There are three festivities throughout the year: *birth*<sup>9</sup>, which usually takes place on Holy Saturday; *baptism*, in June; and *death*, which happens in the second semester. The film begins with the last of them, death, in a moment of great commotion.

My ox is already dead  
My *terreiro* became sad  
But next year  
I will sing Boi all year round  
Songwriter: Henrique Menezes

This *toada* is sung while the viewer sees some elements that allude to this ritual (the altar to St. John, the ox near a basin with wine/blood) and the faces of some members of the group, most notably of Ana Maria Carvalho. She is in a position that shows a certain authority in the ritual. Then, the title sequence of the film appears. In the opening scene, the spectator is introduced to the two main characters of the plot.

8 Starting moment.

9 In Maranhão, there is no “birth” party or event. What happens on the same date is the first rehearsal for the season of June parties. In São Paulo, this rehearsal was modified, becoming a street party in which the Boi presents itself to the public.

In about thirty minutes of film, it is possible to understand the involvement of Ana Maria Carvalho, artist and renowned *brincante*, in the various processes of preparing for the party, and the increasingly stronger participation of young Ariel in the group. Ana Maria overlooks and guides the way of sewing the leather of the ox that will be used that year; Ariel follows the process and also receives his first *boieiro* outfit. It is possible to hear some dialogues that happened at that moment and to see the relationship between children and adults in the group. Then, the spectator watches some actions of the preparation for the day of one of the parties – such as setting up booths on the square, placement of flags, the moment of baptism, and then the presentation of the Boi. During these actions, other people of great relevance appear, telling more about the Boi and its universe. Ana Maria is portrayed as an authority, as some sort of guardian of knowledge, and Ariel appears as an apprentice of vital importance for the continuity of tradition.



Figure 7: Ariel, one of the youngest members of the group, and Tião Carvalho, master and founder of Grupo Cupuaçu, performing together.

Throughout the film, there is a sense of intimacy between the viewer and the members of the group; it is possible to hear dialogues and to see everyday moments in which the members seem to be familiar with the camera and the person behind it, Priscilla. The video is a part of her postdoctoral project, entitled “A Tradição Oral na Música Brasileira” (The Oral Tradition in Brazilian Music, our translation), and of the Thematic Project “Imagem em Foco nas Ciências Sociais” (Image in Focus in Social Sciences, our translation). Even in situations where the characters speak more directly to the camera, a certain closeness can be felt. It is also

interesting how, despite having these main characters, the filmmaker brings scenes showing numerous *brincantes*, which reveals a familiarity with who they are and their involvement with the festivity. This shows a possible involvement of the director with the group before the actual start of filming, and a research conducted on the long term. The feeling is that the camera is the “fly on the wall” of observational cinema, leading us to be one of the participants of that party. By that term, we understand that:

At the core of the approach lies the idea that through the rigorous observation of the minutiae of social events and interactions, it is possible to gain significant insights, not just into idiosyncratic personal motivations of the immediate subjects, but also into broader social and cultural realities of their social world (Henley, 2004, 101).



Figure 8: Ariel, her mother, and Ana Maria Carvalho singing together and drumming with their hands.

In a way, the everyday feeling of the video evokes some moments of the movie *Don't Look Back* (direction: D. A. Pennebaker, 96 minutes. 1967), which follows singer Bob Dylan through his tours, capturing usual scenes between the musician and his team, in which we can access different moments and conversations between them in “backstage” moments in a very natural way.



Figure 9: Ana Maria Carvalho in the moment of baptism. Wide shot with all elements in focus.

Regarding the type of shot, wide shots show everything is in deep focus. There are close shots in some moments, especially focusing on the faces of Ana Maria and Ariel, during interviews. It is possible to hear the *toadas* in three different ways: during the party, when the singer's voice is accompanied by all bumba meu boi instruments and other participants of the cultural manifestation, who sing in chorus; during the interview, when we only listen to Ana Maria's voice singing; and Ariel and Ana Maria jam together in a performance, when he plays the *pandeirão* and she sings. Imagetically, it is possible to observe overlapping images and slowed down speed as constant features of the audiovisual layer of the *toadas*. Situations of the party and the moment of the interview alternate through editing.

## GURIATÃ – A LIFE'S WORK

In the island of São Luís do Maranhão  
There will never be a Boi singer again  
Like Humberto Barbosa Mendes.  
Never again!  
Murilo Pereira (Guriatã, Direction: Renata Amaral, 2018)



Figure 10: Establishing shot of the baptism of Boi de Maracanã.

It is with this statement by Murilo Pereira that *Guriatã*, the longest of the three films analyzed here, begins. In about an hour and a half, the musical documentary portrays the life story of Humberto de Maracanã and shows the reasons behind Murilo's emphatic statement. Through this singer, we learn about the history of one of the oldest active Bois in Maranhão.



Figure 11: Humberto de Maracanã performing

Considering the characteristics of the film, it is possible to observe that *Guriatã* is a consequence (and not a starting point) of decades of working with and making records of Boi de Maracanã. There is a great diversity of filmings, notably made with different types of equipment with varied technologies and in different times – which appears to be an aesthetic concept in the final result. It is a vast material that, through editing, is organized around main themes throughout the narrative: Humberto's first experiences with

bumba meu boi; his relationship with nature; the connection between Boi de Maracanã and religion; the artistic side of the singer; his production in other musical genres; his relationships with women; family; continuity of his legacy. Recorded images showing Humberto in various situations interconnect those themes, most notably two interviews that appear frequently during the narrative: in one, he is on a beach; the other shows him in what is possibly a part of the region Maracanã, where the group is located.



Figures 12 and 13: Main interviews of the film.

What makes this documentary so noteworthy is the involvement of Renata Amaral, its director, with bumba meu boi, and specifically with Boi de Maracanã. Renata is a musician whose other experiences within this and other groups from Maranhão, as well as from other Brazilian popular traditions, span over more than twenty years; her relationship with Boi

de Maracanã and Humberto makes this movie one of a kind. An example of this is that in addition to *toadas* from Boi de Maracanã's records, we can also listen to songs from works by Humberto in the groups "A Barca" and "Ponto BR", both of which Renata is also a part. There are also brief references to other musical traditions, such as *carimbó*; some images used, which are not necessarily about the Boi, come from Acervo Maracá – a collection recorded and organized by Renata. In this way, we can perceive that *Guriatã* is a work of synergy and intersection of contexts, enabled by the director's work and conviviality networks, and by the way in which musicking is a part of her work at large:

The musical exchange established with these masters [especially from Ponto BR], that has lasted over 15 years now, after several tours [...] has taught me much more than just playing the bass. It has taught me ways of rehearsing, creating resistance, varying accents, ornaments, forms and meters; it has taught me to translate strengths and subtleties, to read the audience, to create arrangements with the mosaics of their elements and memories, their mobile fences, and to understand the function of art in my life and of those around me, beyond the profession (Amaral 2018, 9, our translation).

The large amount of images taken over more than a decade has brought together a rich collection of details and situations from various presentations of the group. There are many images of the movements of *índias*, *caboclos de pena*, *rajados*, *boi*, and *vaqueiro*; of the musicians and their instruments (*tambor-onça*, *pandeirão*, *matracas*); and of the singers, who play the *maracá*. This has allowed the filmmaker to create several "music videos" of Boi de Maracanã's *toadas*, allowing the viewer to better understand the atmosphere of celebrating Boi in Maranhão, feeling as if they were there. The effort made in fine-tuning the synchrony between images of dance steps, beats of the instruments, and audio of the film strengthens the feeling of immersion in the event. The director's editing often uses songs that had already been recorded or that were recorded separately for the film, making the attention to "sync" even more necessary.

It is also interesting to notice how the film is narrated through a chain of *toadas* by Humberto, which seem to have been carefully selected and mined for each moment of the narrative; it is possible to hear a fragment of some, while others can be listened to in full. There is also a good number of interviews with other members of the Boi, such as Murilo (the only member still alive among those who were contemporary with Humberto), Maria Soares, Tarquínio Costa, Ribinha de Maracanã, Humberto Filho, Malvino Maia, among many others. This way, in addition to being a cinebiography of Humberto, the film is also about Boi de Maracanã.

The intimacy created over the director's long association with Boi de Maracanã is also revealed by relaxed and easy-going interviews. The extended time, and perhaps a greater commitment to the recording itself than to the realization of a specific film production, have also made it possible to capture relatively rare moments, some of them maybe unprecedented, such as conversations and dances with *encantados*<sup>10</sup>. In an interview for this article, Renata tells us that the aesthetics of the film emerged during editing, while analyzing the material:

The first idea was to create a script in blocks, following the various sides of his [Humberto's] personality: the connection with nature, his connection with the *encantados*, women, history, the other songs he made (samba, *carimbó*), him as a man, artist, community leader. One time, I put together all the CDs I had, all the recordings by [Boi de] Maracanã. I listened to all that and I had this idea in which the *toadas* could lead the story. The idea of having that black and white thing [images] was a desire I had to have some different visual element, as in Pedra [da Memória, documentary]; [where] we had those illustrations by Carybé that led us. I always think it makes a big difference in a documentary when you have a visual aesthetic concept that goes beyond the script. As it turns out, I found it in the *toadas*. This wasn't planned beforehand, it just kept on appearing, as well as the whole construction of the script from analyzing the material. [Renata Amaral. Oral Information. Our translation]



Figure 14: Black and white images as transition elements during the film.

It is interesting to note the parallels drawn between Humberto/Boi de Maracanã and other contexts such as, for instance, Humberto's encounters

<sup>10</sup> Name given to the entities of Afro-Brazilian religions from Maranhão.

with Euclides Talabyan<sup>11</sup>, Mestre Apolônio Melônio<sup>12</sup>, and Mundico de Rita, which brings together conversations that access different realities. The inclusion of Chagas<sup>13</sup>, one of the most well-known Boi singers today and who is still alive, is also meaningful. Through the participation of Mestre Walter França<sup>14</sup>, the film draws a parallel between bumba meu boi and maracatu, a cultural manifestation originating in the Recife region and also present in other states. His work with the “A Barca” group<sup>15</sup> also broadens the horizons in which Humberto’s music circulates.

In the book *Why Suyá Sing*, Anthony Seeger (2004) draws a comparison between the Suyá, the people he works with, and other societies, such as the Kaluli, Ancient Greeks, and North Americans. This intellectual tool facilitates the understanding of the Suyá and shows how this society relates to other contexts. In addition to that, comparing is also a way of expanding the universe being addressed through a dialogue with other research works, since “comparisons are as essential to anthropology and ethnomusicology as in-depth understanding of single cases” (2004, 62). Similarly, the parallels drawn in *Guriatã* bring new layers to the story being told, emphasizing the relevance of Humberto as an artist – which becomes even more manifest when the audience learns that famous Brazilian singers such as Alcione and Maria Bethânia have also recorded his songs.



Figure 15: Humberto performing with musical group “Ponto BR”.

11 Babalorixá (male priest) of Casa Fanti Ashanti, one of the most important Afro-Brazilian religion houses.

12 Founder of Boi de Viana, Boi de Pindaré, and Boi da Floresta, and personality of great relevance to bumba meu boi in Maranhão.

13 Former member of Boi da Maioba and currently a member of Boi de São José de Ribamar.

14 Walter França is the conductor of Nação de Maracatu de Baque Virado Estrela Brilhante do Recife.

15 A BARCA is a São Paulo-based group that has been researching traditional Brazilian genres for about twenty years.

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NARRATIVES

The productions analyzed here are similar by dealing with the same major theme, *bumba meu boi*, and different by offering different approaches and purposes, and by the ways in which they were made. I will make a brief comparison between the three productions, aiming at making evident filmic resources that were used on each of them, considering the following aspects: characters; time spent on research and recording; narrative arc; image aesthetics; editing resources; use of interviews; how the participatory character (Turino 2008) was addressed; which aspects highlight musicking (Small 1999).

Of the three productions, the episode of *Taquaras, Tambores e Violas* seems to be the one whose focus is more precisely defined, since it follows the construction of a specific musical instrument, the *pandeirão*. If we compare it to *Guriatã*, the time spent together and in recording is shorter – which is noticeable by the very purpose of the video, one episode of a 13-chapter television series, and by the number of interviews and their contexts (Ribinha always appears in the same place, where probably only one interview was conducted, while in *Guriatã* Humberto appears in various situations, which means that he was interviewed several times).

*Pandeirão* makes an intense use of ambient sound, and what we can hear from the *batalhão* (Boi) seems to have been recorded in the moment of filming; the sound of the *pandeirão* and of the *matracas* can be more easily heard than the *tambor-onça*'s. The singer's voice also seems to have been recorded during the presentation, probably having been captured by a microphone pointing to the car with the loudspeakers, a source that amplifies the singer's voice.

In *Guriatã*, audios of the *toadas* were recorded separately by using a soundboard with musical post-production work, since some of the recordings later appeared in music albums (others were already available in CDs and could be used in the film).

In *Brilho da Noite*, the audio also seems to have been captured during play. It is interesting to notice the overlap between images of the group playing at the moment of presentation and audios of the *toadas* with a different nature, in which only the voice of the *madrinha* (godmother) of the Boi can be heard. The director used the audio of *toadas* sung by Ana Maria over images of the presentation, presented in a slower speed. The result is interesting. On its turn, the time spent together with the characters and conducting research seems to fall between the two other videos analyzed here. Finally, something that shows some time of familiarity with the researcher is the ease demonstrated by the members of the Boi when everyday situations were being recorded.

Aesthetically, we can see a great refinement in the way of filming the chosen theme in *Taquaras, Tambores e Violas*. There is a concern with the type of image, lighting, framing being used for each scene and how they create a perspective of continuity and tell a story. For these reasons, the production seems to bring aesthetic references from the universe of fiction. As for *Guriatã*, the diversity of media is organically taken as an aesthetic concept, bringing along a production that makes reference to the universe of collections, without losing its vivacity. *Brilho da Noite*, on its turn, stands out for the way in which its director brings audio and image together through editing, creating interesting intersections. Priscila seems to perform the main functions necessary for realizing the video. That, on the one hand, builds an atmosphere of proximity to the narrative, but, on the other, ends up making it less precise in technical aspects.

In *Brilho da Noite*, the participatory character is most evident in the performative and musical interaction between adults and children of Grupo Cupuaçu. Examples of this are the moments when the boy Ariel plays the *pandeirão* while Ana Maria sings a *toada*. In *Pandeirão* and *Guriatã*, this is similarly made evident by the number of people playing the instruments, who are not necessarily dressed in any specific garment showing they are all part of the same group, for instance.

Considered broadly, one of the ways in which musicking is presented in the audiovisual context of the three productions is the portrayal of moments of preparation and extra-presentation of the cultural manifestation. In the *Taquaras, Tambores e Violas* episode, the construction of the *pandeirão* is an example of this; in *Brilho da Noite*, it is the setting up of the structure on the square where Boi parties take place, as well as sewing the leather for the new boi; in *Guriatã*, it appears in Humberto's relationship with the community, his concerns with food for the *batalhão* and visitors, among many others. The table below shows a little more of the comparisons we have been able to draw:

	<b>Brilho da Noite</b>	<b>TTV - Pandeirão</b>	<b>Guriatã</b>
Purpose	Sound portrait // Part of academic research	TV series	Musical Documentary
Main characters	Ana Maria and Ariel	Ribinha and Truvão	Humberto

	<b>Brilho da Noite</b>	<b>TTV - Pandeirão</b>	<b>Guriatã</b>
Recording time	About four years	About five days	Decades
Narrative Arc	Cycle of the festivity, from death to birth	Construction of the <i>pandeirão</i> and baptism of the Boi	Humberto's life and his relationship to specific themes
Image aesthetics	Camera lens focuses on everything; editing brings together <i>toadas</i> being sung a cappella and the Boi in action	Blurred camera lens; first details to later reveal; widen shots and close shots	Different types of images; different media; editing by themes
Editing	Everyday scenes, with interspersed appearances of the Boi	Chain of actions	Organization of themes and a lot of attention to audio and image sync
Audio aesthetics	A cappella <i>toadas</i> ; direct sound of dialogues; direct sound of the Boi	A cappella <i>toadas</i> ; direct sound of the group; direct sound from actions and environments	A cappella <i>toadas</i> ; <i>toadas</i> from the Maracanã CD album; songs by Ponto BR; songs by A Barca; recordings from TV shows
Interview	Ana Maria, Ariel Coelho, Rita Coelho	Sitting (Ribinha) and moving (Truvão)	Different moments and situations // Humberto leads
Elements showing the participatory character	Musical and performative relationship between adults and children // Ariel playing the <i>pandeirão</i>	Images of the <i>batalhão</i>	Images of many people playing, often people who are not wearing the group's attire // People singing <i>toadas</i> along with Humberto

	Brilho da Noite	TTV - Pandeirão	Guriatã
Elements reinforcing musicking	Embroidering the <i>boi's</i> leather // Ariel dressed in <i>boieiro</i> clothing // Ariel playing // setting up the booths // acappella <i>toadas</i>	Embroidering costumes // construction of the <i>pandeirão</i> // Truvão playing <i>pandeirão</i> // beginning of the baptism, people arriving // a cappella <i>toadas</i> // Ribinha talking about the story	A cappella <i>toadas</i> // Humberto having conversations // attention to the group's affairs and a certain management // his relationship with the community // importance in dealing with the kitchen // moments in the buses, members going from one place to another

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Filmic productions constitute an interesting manner to portray several layers of *bumba meu boi*. In *Guriatã*, it is possible to learn about the story of Mestre Humberto and the group he has led for more than forty years, Boi de Maracanã. In *Taquaras, Tambores e Violas*, the viewer watches the construction of one of the most emblematic instruments of *bumba meu boi*, the *pandeirão*. Finally, in *Brilho da Noite*, the spectator understands how the exchange and transmission between masters and beginners take place in a *bumba meu boi* group, those two characters being of great relevance for the manifestation. These productions show some of the musicking in *bumba meu boi* and its participatory character. Through portraying them, video can contribute to the preservation of memory, documentation, construction, transmission, dissemination, and appreciation of the knowledges that are involved in this cultural manifestation and the knowledges of the people who participate in it. In a time like this, a global pandemic, with a drastic reduction of face-to-face and collective meetings, audiovisual productions become a tool of great relevance, even for the continuity of these manifestations.

Reflecting on how a video was used to portray the musicking of *bumba meu boi* and its participatory character is also a way of understanding

how to translate (Romero & Vilella 2018) an experience into a system of symbols that involves images and sounds. In addition, these analyses can be expanded and similarly thought for other cultural manifestations, beyond bumba meu boi.

The question asked by Jean Rouch (“for whom have you made this film?”) can be answered in several ways; and understanding how audiovisual devices are thought of and how they are received by the audience helps in reflecting about an answer, since through it, it is possible to understand how and to whom to transmit an experience, story, or work to various audiences.

**TRANSLATION**  
Caio C. Maia

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