From Rural Street Theater to Big City Extravaganza: The Meaning of the Manaus Boi-bumbá in an Urbanizing Brazil.

Margaret Kathleen Watson

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FROM RURAL STREET THEATER
TO BIG CITY EXTRAVAGANZA:
THE MEANING OF THE MANAUS BOI-BUMBÁ
IN AN URBANIZING BRAZIL

by

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B.A. German Literature, Kent State University, 2001
B.F.A. Crafts (Textile Arts), Kent State University, 2001
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Ph.D. Anthropology, University of New Mexico, 2015

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DEDICATION

For Athena Sophia, who was born in the middle of the fifth chapter, and who made the process of writing, while somewhat more complicated, infinitely more full of grace.
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ABSTRACT

This is an ethnographic study of the boi-bumbá festival of Manaus, capital of the
Brazilian state of Amazonas. I examine this traditional Brazilian folkloric performance as
it is being reworked to express a modern, global identity for urban Amazonians. Long
seen as a key site to understand racial relations in Brazil, the boi-bumbá festival tells the
story of the death and resurrection of a rancher’s beloved bull. The earliest recorded
versions of the Brazilian bull festival portray the economic and social relations on an 18th
century colonial cattle ranch in the country’s northeast. When the festival came to be
performed in the Amazon region its focus shifted to reflect local understandings of racial
relations. I explore how the version performed in the state of Amazonas has come to
valorize the poor, rural, mixed-race Amazonians known as Caboclos.

Although the majority of inhabitants of the region live in urban areas and engage
in wage labor, the region is still popularly imagined as a “place that time forgot”: a
natural area largely free of modern human intervention. In recent years Manaus has
become known as “the gateway to the Amazon,” a jumping-off point for the substantial number of tourists who come each year in search of “authentic” experiences. Such a thirst for the authentic is frequently a byproduct of capitalism itself, often manifesting as a nostalgia for past times and places that are imagined to have been simpler and more satisfying. What such tourism rarely considers is that inhabitants of Manaus itself are also searching for authenticity, as over the past fifty years their city has transformed from an isolated and stagnant jungle outpost to a center of manufacture, commerce, and tourism, recently called, “Brazil’s China.” This dissertation discusses how the boi-bumbá of Amazonas rose to stratospheric popularity as a reaction to the urbanization and industrialization of the area, and serves as a vehicle for collective memory and nostalgia. In part, this manifests as individuals self-identify as “Caboclo,” renovating what had previously been a pejorative label.

Using Bakhtin’s conception of the “chronotope,” (a referenced location in space and time, populated by people of a particular social configuration) I demonstrate how boi-bumbá performances, both those held in the city’s amphitheater as well as in tourist venues, create a kind of historical consciousness in the present. Through nested chronotopic representations linking the viewer to the historical and mythic time-spaces and times in the nation’s history, the boi-bumbá reaffirms its place as the “most Brazilian” of folkloric dramas, while situating the Amazonian Caboclo both geographically and historically. Collapsing all of Brazil into the boi-bumbá and all of the boi-bumbá into the Amazonian Caboclo, this folkloric performance resists national discourses that regard the Amazon region as peripheral. This dissertation sheds light on
the ways today’s urban Amazonians are using this traditional festival to challenge the cultural and economic hegemony of the Brazilian southeast.
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PREFACE

It is a warm Friday night in July, and the egg-shaped *Bola da Suframa* amphitheatre, located in the center of an enormous traffic circle on the edge of the city’s vast tax-free industrial manufacturing district, is decorated with brightly colored flags that stretch from one side to the other of the arched walkway that encircles the arena. Grandparents, teenagers, families with small children, and groups of transvestite gay men fill the giant concrete steps that make up the bleachers. They wave green-and-white flags, pompons, and colored balloons, hug friends and acquaintances, and buy icy beers and sodas, paper cones of roasted peanuts, grease-stained bags of popcorn, crispy fried bananas, and homemade potato chips from the hawkers that hoist their Styrofoam coolers up and down the giant stairs. Girls and boys clamor for helium-filled Mylar cartoon character balloons and cotton candy, churros, and chocolate-covered strawberries. Babies cry, teenagers giggle and jostle each other playfully. Some hold up tablet computers or cellphones to record the scene unfolding below.

The crowd is feeling loose and light, giddy as the years peel away and they are brought back to their childhood memories. In Manaus, the *Festa Junina* [June Festival] extends well into July, and the summer holidays are packed with fairs, sunny weather, corn-on-the-cob, bonfires, and family get-togethers. The summer festival brings people back even further into the past, and nostalgia is thick in the air as children dressed up as country bumpkins practice raucous square dances with their schoolmates. For rural Amazonia, the summer months bring an end to the endless rains of the winter, which left cattle stranded on floating platforms and families cooped up in leaky tin-roofed houses...
(Harris 1998, 2000). Today’s Manauaras\textsuperscript{1} may never have suffered through a rainy winter in a one-room house in the interior, but the June Festival is a time to remember the good old days of the rural life, of peaceful fishermen and bucolic farmers, rosy-cheeked maids with pigtails and gingham dresses and freckle-faced boys in overalls.

\textbf{Figure 1.} Manaus Boi-bumbá Corre Campo supporters waving colored balloons.

Down below the restless crowd, ten jurors are perched in a row on the edge of the arena in elevated metal seats reminiscent of lifeguard chairs, awaiting the beginning of the performance. At the edge of the arena, the VIP box houses friends of Boi-bumbá Garanhão and important local personages, including boi-bumbá singer and current head of the city tourism board, Arlindo Junior. The media is present in full force, and TV cameramen pace the edge of the arena, weighed down by their heavy equipment, while microphone-wielding reporters interview folklore group leaders. The members of the

\textsuperscript{1} Inhabitants of Manaus. Also known as \textit{Manauenses}. 
harmonia, Garanhão’s band, are adjusting their state of the art sound equipment, in preparation for the start of the show.

Figure 2. A vendor selling comidas típicas, “typical foods” of the Festa Junina.

Providing a sharp contrast to all this high-tech media equipment, in the arena itself hunkers a float made up of a combination of items: a roughly constructed wooden Caboclo\(^2\)-style stilt house; a number of diamond-shaped, primary-colored St. John’s lanterns; an oversized black boi-bumbá bull, standing about two stories high; and an enormous Amazonian victoria regia [Queen Victoria] waterlily. The pale pink petals of the flower of the latter are closed in the way that suggests to the eye of the knowing

\(^2\)“Caboclos,” mixed-race rural cultivators of the Amazon region, are addressed further below.
audience member that a performer is crouched inside, awaiting the moment when the flower will open and reveal her to the appreciative crowds.

Figure 3. Alegorias from Manaus Boi-bumbá Garanhão’s 2010 performance. (Courtesy of Nonato Torres)

Half in darkness, on the ramp that leads into the arena, the batucada [drum corps] of Boi-bumbá Garanhão restlessly waits, clad in white pants, orange, red, and white long-sleeved t-shirts, and red, white, and green feathered headdresses of the sort one would expect from a psychedelic Hollywood version of North American Plains Indians. They pose for pictures with their drums, metal rattles, wooden clappers, and gourd shakers, grinning and showing off the red-and-green warpaint that decorates their cheekbones. Photographs are discarded, retaken, approved, and hastily uploaded to social media sites. Announcers on the floor of the arena carry on a steady banter to keep the crowd engaged;
the crowd ignores them entirely, as they have been proclaiming for nearly an hour that the show is about to start. “Tá chegando a hora,” [The hour is arriving!] they announce again and again.

And finally, the hour has indeed arrived. The lights go out, and a spotlight focuses in on one man who, carrying a cordless microphone and wearing a spangled suit and a feathered hat, strides into the arena, the bright light pinpointing his progress across the concrete expanse. He welcomes the crowd to the performance of Boi-bumbá Garanhão. The crowd comes to life, shaking their balloons and pompons, waving their flags, and clapping their hands. Led by Maestro [conductor] Jackson Moraes and accompanied by the scantily clad Rainha da Bateria [drums corps queen], the drum corps strides into the arena, their feathered headdresses undulating in the slight breeze. Clad in a multi-colored leafy costume and wearing a feathered chapeau on his head, Jackson climbs atop a platform that has been made in the shape of an enormous tree trunk, and the drum corps begins the insistent, thrumming rhythm that will continue for the next two and a half hours. It is two beats, first a heavy BUM, followed by an unaccented beat. BUM, bum. BUM, bum. BUM, bum. Renato Freitas, the official MC of the group, and long-time boi-bumbá singer Buiu, the Amo do boi [Owner of the bull], join their voices, one tenor, onebass, in the opening bars of Boi Garanhão’s anthem, and the crowd goes wild.

Over the course of the night – the boi-bumbá is generally enacted after dark – this group of more than a thousand performers will present a 21st century telling of an 18th century story. Although Parintins historian Simão Assayag has called the boi-bumbá a “Caboclo opera,” (Cavalcanti 2001) and others have designated it an “Amazonian opera”
(Silva 2009:119), it is one of the most avant-garde operas you will ever see. Manaus’s version roams through real and mythical locations in the space-time continuum, touching here on the city in the 21st century, there on an encounter in the spirit world, stopping next in an 18th-century missionized Indian village, and finally landing in the middle of a popular folktale. It is through the linking of these space-time locations, or “chronotopes” (Bahktin 1981; see Agha 2007) that the creators of the Manaus boi-bumbá write a new social and race history and claim a new kind of modernity for today’s citizens of the Brazilian Amazon.

**Into the field**

I first visited Manaus in 2006, as part of a whirlwind trip to get to know Brazil as a country and scout for a research site. I flew into Rio de Janeiro, where friends-of-friends generously acted as guides for a few days, before I flew on to Manaus. Manaus is located 924 miles from the Atlantic Ocean, slightly over 8 miles from the junction of the Rios Negro and Amazonas; latitude is 3.08 degrees south of the equator, and 60 degrees west of Greenwich; the altitude is 98 feet above sea level; the climate hot and damp; temperatures generally range from the mid-60s to the mid-90s; humidity is around 80 percent, with rainfall at approximately 80 inches per year (Benchimol 1947:1). Manaus is the capital of the Brazilian state of Amazonas, and is located centrally in the Amazon region. With a population of nearly 2 million, it is the sole big city in Amazonas, and in the region is second in size only to Belém, the capital of the neighboring state of Pará, with a population of around 3 million. While Belém is located on a massive delta where the Amazon River meets the Atlantic Ocean, and is easily reached by highways, Manaus

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3 Silva also is referring to the Parintins boi-bumbá. Parintins is a small town in Amazonas which hosts the best-known boi-bumbá festival in the Amazon.
is isolated, an urban jungle surrounded by rainforest. Manaus is located strategically at the confluence of the Solimões and Negro Rivers, the joining of which is considered in Brazilian geography to be the beginning of the Amazon River itself.

After several days in Manaus, I took a five-day boat trip down the Amazon River to the city of Belém do Pará, where I spent a few days getting lost and rescued by surprisingly helpful strangers. From there I flew on to Fortaleza for a short beach holiday, then back to Rio, where I took a bus to Novo Friburgo to spend Christmas Eve with one of my lovely friend-of-friend guides and her family, before heading back to the US on Christmas day.

Figure 4. Manaus harbor as seen from the Rio Negro.
Needless to say, I did not come away from this trip with a comprehensive vision of Brazil, but I was left with some sense of the scope of the country, both in terms of its size and in terms of its contrasts. But more surprising still was the lack of contrast between Rio de Janeiro, the symbolic cultural center of the country, and Manaus, generally considered a forgotten jungle outpost. The language was the same, the food largely variations on a theme, the people busy shopping for the same Christmas toys for their children. The clothing was the same: split between those donning the universal warm-weather uniform of shorts, shirts, and sandals, and those dressed to the nines to buy fish at 6 a.m. The famous range of shades of skin, textures of hair, and colors of eyes were to be seen in both places, though in Manaus the influence of indigenous heritage was more in evidence, while in Rio an African background was more prominent.

What was different, however, was the stream of tourists arriving in Manaus dressed in full head-to-toe safari gear. In the summers of 2007 and 2008, which I spent in Manaus on a related project investigating the city markets, I saw an endless flow of such visitors—predominantly white, American or European, middle- to upper-class, and middle-aged—passing through the Manaus Moderna market gawking at the fish vendors and eagerly searching for something exotic enough to deserve photographic documentation. These visitors were arrayed down to the last man in khaki quick-dry cargo pants with zip-off legs that convert into shorts; khaki quick-dry button-down shirts with epaulettes, vented underarms, and an assortment of pockets; khaki quick-dry collapsible legionnaire hats with grommets for ventilation and a flap covering the back of the neck; brown light-weight high-tech hiking boots or shoes; all of this was accessorized with money belts, cameras, and fanny packs. Coming to Manaus, it was clear, was not a
trip, but an expedition into a dangerous and rigorous location, to which one must come armed. This apprehension was not lost on the market workers.

After my summer trips of 2007 and 2008, I returned in 2010 to begin my dissertation fieldwork with Manaus Boi-bumbá Garanhão, based in the neighborhood of Educandos. I chose Garanhão from the three main bois-bumbás of the city (Garanhão, Brilhante, and Corre Campo) because Educandos is the oldest neighborhood in Manaus (after the city center), and is widely recognized as a center of folkloric activity.

Educandos is a predominantly working-class neighborhood. Although I was clearly out of place, being a white, middle-class North American woman whose Portuguese was initially somewhat hit or miss, I was lucky in my choice of research subject. The members and directors of the folkloric group Boi-bumbá Garanhão pride themselves on accepting all kinds of people, no questions asked. Additionally, anthropologists play a privileged part in the boi-bumbá landscape, both as legitimators of the art form and judges of the performance. I decided the best way to begin my research was to join as a member of one of the Indian tribes that make up a large portion of the performance. Here I was fortunate again, as when I joined the tribo feminina [women’s tribe] I was promptly adopted by a group of women who have ever since been some of my dearest friends, and to whom I am profoundly grateful. In 2011 I danced again in the tribo feminina. In 2012 I decided to make a change and participated instead as a bass-drum player in the batucada in order to gain a new perspective on the participants and performance.

In November of 2011 I was married to a native of Educandos, and in May of 2013 our baby girl was born. These events allowed me to move even more easily in the

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4 *Bois-bumbás* is the plural of boi-bumbá.
neighborhood and in the group. My husband, Yan Brener dos Santos Pinto, has been incredibly helpful, in terms of sharing his memories of participating in boi-bumbá events as a teenager, his knowledge of local geography and history, his ability to recall boi-bumbá songs from decades in the past, and his astonishingly wide social network.

I was able to conduct archival research at various public and private archives and libraries in Manaus, including both the main library and the library of the Museu Amazônico [Amazonian Museum] of the Universidade Federal de Amazonas [Federal

Figure 5. The author playing a surdo, or bass drum, in Boi-bumbá Garanhão’s batucada, 2012. Yan is located at the left.
University of Amazonas], the *Museu do Homem do Norte* [Museum of the Man of the North], and of the *Escola Técnica de Manaus* [Manaus Technical School]. Additionally, Boi-bumbá Garanhão and other groups were so kind as to share documents, especially those relating to their group history.

I was also able to develop a close working relationship with members of ACRA, the Association of Caboclos and Riverine Peoples of Amazonia. Together with *Nação Mestiça* (Mestizo Nation), the *Movimento Pardo-Mestiço Brasileiro* (the Brazilian Mixed/Mestizo Movement), and several other affiliated organizations, ACRA works for the valorization and rights of mixed-race peoples. These groups also promote academic research on Caboclos and mestizos, especially at the “Seminar on Mestizo Identity,” held for the last two years at the end of June, to which both national and international scholars are invited. Additionally, these groups sponsor an annual Caboclo Cultural Fair, at which customary foods, handicrafts, music, and dance are presented. These events take place during the “Week of the Mestizo and the Caboclo,” and include as well the newly established official state holidays “the Day of the Caboclo,” June 24th, and “the Day of the Mestizo,” June 27th. Over the course of our acquaintance I was able to extensively discuss the history, aims, and accomplishments of these groups with founders Helda Castro de Sá and Leão Alves.

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CHAPTER 1
Introduction

Brazil Rising

Brazil, in the minds of most Americans still a place of samba, soccer, and sandy beaches (Rohter 2010), sprang onto the world’s television newscasts in June 2013 with weeks of demonstrations that at times turned to violence. The protestors were not the poorest of the poor, rising up to demand their rights, but the much touted “new middle class” (Carneiro 2013, Soares 2013), which has emerged as the largest segment of Brazilian society over the past ten years (Neri 2010, 2011). Now with their basic needs for food and housing met and their dwellings stocked with smartphones, flat-screen televisions, and appliances, this group – over 50% of the population – is demanding government investment in the country’s failing education, healthcare, and public transportation systems. Brazil itself forms part of the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) nations identified in 2001 by global investment powerhouse Goldman Sachs (2001) as powerfully emerging onto the world economic scene. In 2009 the Economist announced to doubters that Brazil, the “country with a growth rate as skimpy as its swimsuits,” was indeed “taking off,” and fulfilling Goldman Sachs’s prediction; additionally, Brazil was to become the fifth-largest economy in the world, with São Paulo the fifth-wealthiest city by 2025 (“Brazil takes off,” 2009). In 2010 Slate magazine’s Moneybox column advised Wall Street bankers to learn Portuguese in anticipation of Brazilian investors buying out American companies (Gross 2010).

Although the city of Manaus, capital of the state of Amazonas, is often imagined by Brazilians (and foreigners) to be little more than a sleepy jungle outpost, it has played a key part in this plunge into consumerism. Manaus, after all, for nearly fifty years has
been home to the 10,000 square kilometer Zona Franca de Manaus (ZFM), a free trade zone housing hundreds of businesses and employing over 100,000 workers, which has led to its being dubbed “Brazil’s China” (Cooke 2006). Rather than being behind the times, if anything, the city of two million has led the country in access to consumer goods. From the ZFM’s founding until Brazil opened its doors to international trade after the fall of the military dictatorship in the mid-1980s, this unprepossessing municipality was the shopping destination for Brazil’s elite, who hungered after consumer goods made scarce due to the imposition of heavy import tariffs (Russo n/d, Chernela 2000).

At the same time that Manaus was developing into the concrete jungle it is today, another phenomenon was on the rise as well: the boi-bumbá, a centuries-old folkloric performance telling the story of the death and the rebirth of a colonial rancher’s favorite bull. No longer a humble rural folk drama, in the North region this dramatic dance became a grand spectacle celebrating the way of life of the mixed-race rural cultivators known as Caboclos. In this dissertation, I show how these two events are connected, and illuminate how these sudden and overwhelming economic changes not only transformed the relationship of Amazonenses to the cultural performance of the boi-bumbá but also how the performance of the boi-bumbá became a way for people from Amazonas to reframe, contextualize, and comment upon the changing socioeconomic, racial, political, and environmental realities of their lives.

While the boi-bumbá is usually viewed, following Mario de Andrade (1982[1928]), as a “dramatic dance,” and research focused on the staged performances of

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5 Brazil is divided into five regions, and Amazonas belongs to the North region, along with the states of Acre, Amapá, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima, and Tocantins. The North is the largest region, and Amazonas is the largest state of the country.

6 Individuals from the state of Amazonas are known as Amazonense.
musicians, singers, and dancers as a whole, in Amazonas, boi-bumbá music has a life of its own outside the context of festival performance. Boi-bumbá songs, or toadas, dominated the airwaves of Manaus from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s. Although today boi-bumbá music has been supplanted on the radio by a kind of popular dance music called forró, enthusiasts of boi-bumbá toadas still meet at the Clube de Toada, held weekly at the Olímpico Clube, and also eagerly watch the local television program Taberna da Toada. Nostalgia and loss are common themes in other Brazilian genres of music, including música sertaneja, música caipira, and forró. In this dissertation I will situate the boi-bumbá in the national landscape as another kind of musical performance that works through themes of nostalgia and loss. I demonstrate how in the Manaus boi-bumbá the past is mined to present an idealized view of Amazonian society, and that this impulse is not the reflection of a “traditional” society but rather of one redefining modernity over and against (and sometimes with) the euro-centric “modern.”

In this dissertation, I consider the national preoccupation with modernity in light of the Brazilian Amazon, which has historically been used as a foil by which non-Amazonians can measure their own modernity. A classic example of internal colonialism, the region has long been exploited to fill the coffers of the country’s centers of power (Frank 1970). Amazonia has served for outsiders (both national and international) as a repository for the primitive, the “traditional,” the un-modern, the backwards, the raw, the natural, and the past. Where, then, does this leave Amazonians, the majority of whom today live in urban areas, are employed in wage-earning jobs, own (often multiple) cellular telephones, surf the internet, follow international soccer on their flat-screen, high-definition televisions, and in general consider themselves citizens of the global age? In
this study I de-center these contemplations of national modernity from their site of origin, Brazil’s southeastern economic hub, and consider instead what these questions look like when viewed from Manaus. Following Chakrabarty (2000), I seek to provincialize São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and illuminate one way in which those living in “Brazil’s China” localize their modernity through the reworking of the past in folkloric performance.

The Boi-bumbá: “Modernity” and “Tradition”

The bull festival as a genre is known in Brazilian Portuguese as the *brincadeira do boi*, meaning roughly the “merrymaking of the bull.” In the Northeast\(^7\) region of the country, the *brincadeira do boi* most frequently manifests itself as the *bumba-meu-boi*\(^8\) festival, while in the Amazon it is called the boi-bumbá\(^9\). If *boi* is the “bull” part of the equation, whence the “*bumbá*” or “*bumba*”? The theories on this are varied. In his Dictionary of Brasilian Folklore, Luís da Câmbia Cascudo (1972:192) opined that “*bumbá*” was “an interjection like ‘bang!’ like the sound of an impact, a beating, a hit. Bumba-meu-boi means ‘Strike! Gore it with your horns, my bull!’” Assayag (1997) adds that the drums

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\(^7\) The Northeast region is comprised of the states of Maranhão, Piauí, Ceará, Rio Grande do Norte, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Alagoas, Sergipe and Bahia.

\(^8\) Capitalization of “*boi-bumbá*,” “*bumba-meu-boi*,” and other *brincadeira-do-boi* variants varies wildly. I have opted for lower-case initial letters, except when referring to a specific boi-bumbá group, such as “Boi-bumbá Garanhão” or “Boi Garantido.” In quotations, the idiosyncratic capitalization of the authors has been left as in the original.

\(^9\) As will be discussed further in Chapter 3, the first time the boi-bumbá was encountered in Manaus, it apparently was referred to as “*bumba*” (Avé-Lallemant 1980[1859]). While today it is sometimes called “*bumbá*” (accent on the final syllable) in Manaus, more common is to refer to the boi-bumbá as “*o boi*” [the bull]. One also refers to one’s preferred boi-bumbá group as “*meu boi*” [my bull]. And the figure of the bull itself is also referred to as “*o boi*.”
make a sound like “bum-ba;”\textsuperscript{10} and although he does not mention it, one name for a large Brazilian drum is the \textit{zabumba}.\textsuperscript{11} “Boi-bumbá,” then, evokes both the rhythm of the drums to which the players present the drama, but also the rough-and-tumble clowning that even today is present in the antics of the characters of the \textit{auto do boi}, the central drama.

The essence of the boi-bumbá of the state of Amazonas, which is the focus of this dissertation, is a conversation between elements which are considered “traditional” and those that are seen to represent the “modern.” At times, elements that are chronologically more recent (and which frequently represent “modernity”) have been simply added to the older ones (those considered “traditional”) with little concern for integration. If the boi-bumbá had begun its life as a humble apple tree, today we would see it bearing not only a variety of colors and shapes of apples, but also avocados, bananas, passion fruit, and watermelons. The canonical Catarina and Francisco story exists in Brazil in its present form at least since its being recorded by researchers of folklore in the mid-twentieth century (and in all probability very much earlier). In the Amazon this tale has been

\textsuperscript{10} Assayag (1997:70) mentions as well a folkloric figure named “Citizen Bumbalá,” who marched in pajamas in front of the platoons of the Military Police during the military regime in the 1960s. Apparently as he marched, he chanted “\textit{Bumba-bumba-lá, Bumba-bumba-lá}.”

\textsuperscript{11} Hermilo Borba Filho (1966:9-10) connects the dots: It appears that the expression bumba-meu-boi may originate with the refrain that is sung when the bull, the main figure of the auto, dances: ‘Hey! \textit{Bumba}!’ with beats on the \textit{zabumba}, which is the equivalent of saying: ‘\textit{Zabumba, my bull},’ that is, ‘the \textit{zabumba} is accompanying you, bull.’ This clever opinion…was put forth by Gusta Barroso, but if we refer to Pereira da Costa’s \textit{Vocabulary of Pernambuco}, we verify that the word ‘\textit{bumba}’ really does mean ‘bass drum,’ or ‘big bass drum,’ but more exactly means ‘thrashing—a blow with a stick, archaic expression for brawl or shower of blows’ and there we reach the most essential meaning, that of a brawl, because the greater part of popular spectacles resolve the scenes with blows, reminiscent of the old popular farces from the commedia dell’arte pantomimes to the circus, passing by the slapstick comedies of the silent films.”
juxtaposed with newer stories emphasizing the life and legends of the region. In the boi-bumbá of Amazonas, then, the portion of the festival that is today considered “traditional” is that of Francisco and Catarina, while the “modern” is represented by these more recent additions. There are the Amazonian legends of shape-shifting dolphins, *curupiras* with their backwards feet, and the giant snake which terrifies fishermen at night. There are also the depictions of the Caboclo’s daily life of fishing and cultivating manioc. The central drama, which tells of the death and resurrection of a bull, generally ends with a shaman bringing the bull back to life. In the boi-bumbá of Amazonas today, this final scene has been lifted out of the drama. Now it exists on its own as an extravagant scene of ritualistic dance, accompanied by fireworks and throbbing music, with the *pajé* [shaman] now flying as he descends on cables from a crane, now perched on the head of a six-story tall bull. The pajé himself has been given a makeover: while he still wears grass skirts, today he may also use colored contact lenses for sinister effect and his costume conceals contraptions that shoot fountains of sparks into the dark of the night arena.

There are also new, “modern” figures that have been added to the old, “traditional” characters. While Francisco and Catirina and friends still perform their slapstick antics, cavorting obscenely with the doctors and priest, outside of their drama exists a series of female characters designed to showcase a certain type of feminine physical beauty. The *Rainha de Folclore* [Queen of Folklore], the *Cunhã-Poranga* [Beautiful Warrior Woman], and the *Porta-Estandarte* [Standard-bearer] all represent the beauty, strength, and sexual potency of the Indian woman. Clad in extravagant feathered outfits reminiscent of Las Vegas showgirls, these female figures perform athletic dances
and sometimes dangerous stunts. While the female figures in the Francisco-and-Catirina slapstick drama are customarily played by transvestite males, these new roles are not, and have provided a prominent place for women to participate in the boi-bumbá.

While the enactment of the drama still takes place at night, today it is rarely performed in the streets. In the small town of Parintins, where the biggest enactment of the boi-bumbá takes place, it is held in a modern arena built especially for that purpose. The *Bumbódromo*, built in 1988 and completely renovated in 2013, features such luxuries as elevators, private air-conditioned boxes with bar service, and spaces for performances and workshops. In Manaus, the boi-bumbá does not have its own space, but generally uses the multi-purpose arena at the Cultural Center of Amazonian Peoples for its presentations. These performances (both in Parintins and in Manaus) are heavily mediated; they are photographed and broadcast on television, and camera and radio teams patrol the arena, conducting live interviews with performers and organizers. It is not at all unusual to see a performer in a full colonial hoopskirt and bonnet, sweat-slicked and breathing hard from the exertion of performing her dance in the oppressive heat and humidity, discussing with TV personalities the chances of her team’s win.

This mixture of elements viewed as “traditional” and those seen as “modern” permeates all aspects of the boi-bumbá today in Amazonas state. In the 1990s the electric guitar first made its appearance in the festival music, to the dismay of many who we may designate as “traditionalists.” Today, full bands with electric guitar and bass, keyboards, and backup singers are the norm. In counterpoint stands the batucada, or percussion corps, in which a variety of technologically less sophisticated instruments are used,

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12 “Bumbódromo” is a play on the famous *sambódromo*, or “sambodrome,” the stadium in which samba schools parade during *Carnaval*. 
including the *palminhas*, two pieces of wood that are beaten together. A curious point of pride of the boi-bumbá, both in Parintins and Manaus, is that the set builders have no formal background in engineering. Cenographers use computer-modeling programs to design scene sets, which then are constructed intuitively. All of the fantastical curupiras, Mother Earths, Caboclos, and giant eagles which loom, strut, float, and fly through the arena are built by artists and craftspeople who learn on the job. More than one successful artist has told me how he began by sweeping the floor of a boi-bumbá workshop and slowly worked up to be a master craftsman after years of apprenticeship. Even songwriters and other musicians insist that they were self-taught. A great value is placed on skills springing from innate, natural talent rather than artifice.

**The Caboclo in the Boi-bumbá of Amazonas**

The core plot, or *auto do boi*, of the boi-bumbá occurs today across the country with regional variations, but all contain clearly delineated European, African, and Indian characters. In the version found in the state of Amazonas, another figure is strongly present in song, visual elements, and participant discourse: the Caboclo. Caboclos are mixed-race rural individuals of primarily indigenous and European background, though in the state of Amazonas some degree of African heritage is frequently present. While figures called Caboclos exist in the Northeast bumba-meu-boi, they play very different roles. In the northeastern bull festival, figures called Caboclos are analogous to the Indians (especially the *tribo tradicional* of Manaus and the *tuxauas* of Parintins) in the boi-bumbá of Amazonas. That is to say, they are idealized representations of imagined populations that exist in a timeless past space. In the Amazonas boi-bumbá of Manaus and Parintins, however, the Caboclo is not merely a figure in the auto do boi, but has
grown to be an overarching theme of the performance. The boi-bumbá of Amazonas focuses not on the Caboclo as an imagined wise indigenous forefather, but rather as the ideal of the rural Amazonian doing the hard but necessary work of cultivating the region’s land.

Historically, the Caboclo served as an idealized symbol of the nation, uniting Africa, Europe, and the New World in tri-racial harmony (Freyre 1986[1933], 1986[1936], 1985[1959]; Ribeiro 2000). In the boi-bumbá of Amazonas, the Caboclo himself (for as a symbol he is nearly always male), then, represents exactly this symbolic combination of the “modern” and the “traditional.” He is the civilized Indian, the proof that the forces of Europe conquered those of the New World. He combines the raw vigor and sensuality of the Indian with the forward motion of progress inherent in the European.

However, real life Caboclos were (and still are) generally seen as second-class citizens, not fully civilized and invisible next to their more authentic counterparts, the tribal indigenous peoples of the country (Nugent 1993), and unable to claim the land rights of the latter (Chernela and Pinho 2004). Throughout the Brazilian Amazon, Caboclo became at best a mildly pejorative label, at worst a racial slur (Harris 2000; Nugent 1993; Parker 1985; Slater 1994, 2002; Wagley 1976). In short, it was an epithet that none would apply to himself or herself (Pace 1997, Parker 1985, Wagley 1976).

This is no longer as true in Manaus, where Caboclo is used more and more frequently as a positive symbol of regional identity (Chibnik 1991) and pride in rural heritage. The boi-bumbá is a contributor to this valorization of a Caboclo identity (Cavalcanti 2001), both through the largest manifestation of this folkloric performance, in
the town of Parintins, as well as in the state capital, Manaus. In this dissertation I
demonstrate how the boi-bumbá, through its positive depictions of Caboclos in its music
and visual imagery, has become a vehicle through which Manauaras have renovated and
taken ownership of what was once a reviled social category. I will show as well,
however, that the use of *Caboclo* in its original derogatory sense still continues to be used
alongside this newer, “Urban Caboclo” identity.

Here I must pause to clarify the problems inherent in considering “Caboclos” to
be a group. For a variety of reasons, including their marginalized position in society, the
lack of agreement over what exactly is a “Caboclo,” the historically perjorative nature of
the term *Caboclo*, and the lack of any real benefit accruing to claiming “Caboclo” as an
identity label, it is difficult to insist that they are a group. I doubt that most people who
Manauaras would consider to be “Caboclos” (i.e. mixed-race rural populations of fishers
and small-scale farmers) would claim that same label for themselves or see the label as a
positive one. One could imagine perhaps identifying Caboclos as an “ethnie,” Anthony
D. Smith’s (1986:32) term for “named human populations with shared ancestry myths,
histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory, and a sense of
solidarity,” but this too has its problems. I cannot categorically state that Caboclos feel a
sense of group solidarity, or consider themselves to share a history; certainly I cannot
identify what Smith would call a “primordial” Caboclo identity.

Stephen Nugent (1993:xviii), a British anthropologist who has spent considerable
time trying to describe the complexity of Amazonian Caboclo society, points to the many
difficulties in analyzing “the ethnohistory of a people without an official ‘ethno.’” Even
defining what a Caboclo might be is difficult, as “there are many ‘Amazonias’ and many
versions of ‘caboclo,’ and the focal meanings of these terms are matters of dispute”
(Nugent 1993:xviii). However, while there are many “definitional problems” in the term
Caboclo,

It is no less useful for that. The concept “Caboclo” provides a platform for
discussing what seems to me a vital if neglected theme in Amazonian studies, the
relationship between Amazonian colonial history and the structure of the widely
disparaged contemporary caboclo societies and cultures. […] I would propose that
there is a largely overlooked social dimension, that of caboclo society, examples
of which have assumed different forms in different parts of the region, but which
share a crucial defining feature, namely that they bear the marks of external
structures—that of merchant capital for example—for which Amazonia has from
the sixteenth century until the present represented a vast resource potential. […]
Throughout its colonial and modern history the peasant societies which have
endured regardless of Amazonia's relative position within the world economy
have generally been regarded as transitory and, commonly, definitively
pathological. Generally speaking, such societies as have emerged in the interstices
of colonial apparatus have never been granted full status as integral social forms.
They are treated as contingent, incomplete, haphazard meldings of the detritus of
aboriginal social formations and the remnants of European commercial
experiments. They are defined in terms of what they are not (aboriginal, national)
rather than in positive terms. [Nugent 1993:xx]

Following Nugent, I view rural Amazonian Caboclos as a historically marginalized,
externally defined population, who have stood:
somewhat outside the two main areas of interest in Amazonian anthropology [that is, Amerindian societies and Transamazonica peasantries], namely a peasantry constructed in the course of an unsuccessful incorporation of Amazonia within the colony and, later, nation. It is a peasantry which was, until recently, a “modern” product, but “pre-modernized.” [Nugent 1993:4]

While they have mostly likely never viewed themselves as a cohesive group, nevertheless a set of people exists who live in a concrete set of geographic, social, cultural, and economic circumstances arising as the result of a conjunction of factors, including (but not limited to): colonial exploration, settlement and the purposeful dismantling of indigenous Amazonian society with the assistance of the Jesuit mission complex; the penetration of merchant capitalism into the region; and the intensification of Brazilian government projects to administer, settle, and exploit the resources of the Amazon region beginning in the twentieth century, leading to the founding of the Zona Franca de Manaus (ZFM) in 1967 and the resulting urbanization and industrialization of the surrounding area. I will discuss all of these factors in further detail in the coming chapters.

The establishment of the 10,000 square kilometer ZFM, or tax-free manufacturing zone, led to a marked demographic shift in the state of Amazonas as people moved from the rural zone into the capital city of Manaus. Thus, the “pre-modernized” individuals who Nugent (1993:4) described above became part of the urban proletariat whose work was, in the factories of the ZFM, to produce the commodities that soon became symbols of modernity in Brazil: cellphones, motorcycles, computer components, and cameras, among others.
From my first visit to Manaus in 2006 I was fascinated with the contrasts and contradictions that characterized the city. Located in the middle of the forested area onto which the world has focused its most intense primitivist desires, fears, and fantasies for hundreds of years, the city of Manaus today is relentlessly urban, its economy driven largely by the biggest industrial free trade zone in the country. A city of medium size and without especial attractions in terms of architecture, culture, or lifestyle, Manaus draws a disproportionate amount of disdain from visitors and those who have never visited but still hold surprisingly strong opinions about the capital of Amazonas state. And while the population of Amazonas is vastly more urban than rural—in 2010, 2,755,490, or 79% of the total population of 3,483,985 lived in urban areas (IBGE 2010)—there is a strong urban preoccupation with rural life and Caboclo lifeways. While Wagley (1976), Parker (1985), Pace (1997), and Slater (2002) reported that Amazonian individuals rarely identified as Caboclo, the Manauaras with whom I spoke in the course of my research, many of whom have lived urban lives for generations, often claimed to be Caboclos or to have Caboclo heritage. These latter individuals—the Manauaras of my study, who I will presently describe in greater depth—I differentiate from the rural Amazonian peasantry described by Nugent. I must emphasize, then, that while there exists a lack of group identity among the rural population that I (following Nugent) call “Caboclos,” such “Urban Caboclos” as these Manauaras often feel a strong sense of belonging to a group that shares a common history. I argue that this feeling of “Urban Caboclo identity,” which symbolically traces its roots to rural populations, has arisen in the context of urbanization and industrialization that followed in the wake of the ZFM.
This pride in rural ways of life is strongly emphasized in the boi-bumbá of Amazonas and manifests in the boi-bumbá of the Educandos neighborhood of Manaus, the focus of my study. In the next sections I will briefly summarize folklore studies in Brazil, and then describe the neighborhood of Educandos and characterize the populations which exist in this geographic and social space, focusing especially on those who participate in the creation and performance of the boi-bumbá.

**Folklore Studies in Brazil**

The history of the study of folklore in Brazil was strongly influenced by and runs parallel to its study in Europe and began in the latter half of the 19th century (Cavalcanti 2002). In the beginning, folklore studies in Brazil were generally carried out by intellectuals such as Silvio Romero and Amadeu Amaral who sought to document practices considered manifestations of country’s national character: first poetry and oral literature, then music, and finally popular dramas such as the brincadeira do boi (Cavalcanti 2002). However, it was in the second decade of the twentieth century that folklore studies in Brazil took on a new significance. As will be discussed further in Chapter 3, the Northeast region of the country was sectioned off by the government in 1919, in order to deal specifically with drought-related issues in that sector (Albuquerque Jr. and Hallewell 2004). In reaction to this bureaucratic action, Northeastern intellectuals such as Gilberto Freyre founded the Regionalist Movement of the Northeast of Brazil in 1924 in order to combat the economic and cultural marginalization of the region. One key part of this project was the collection of songs, dramas, rhymes, and other forms of popular cultural production that had not as yet been recorded systematically. Brazilian writer Mario de Andrade, while not a northeasterner, played a key part in this effort, traveling throughout the Northeast
and North (Amazon) regions of the country, taking notes and recording such cultural
eexpressions as the brincadeira do boi.

During Getúlio Vargas’s rule, especially during the 1937-1945 Estado Novo
regime, such activities were incorporated in a state policy of “cultural management”
which sought to craft a new Brazilian identity both at home and abroad and complete a
“political and cultural renovation” (Williams 2001:66). Vargas’s authoritarian
government put into place a “network of federal cultural policy-making institutions” that
even today are fundamental in the state apparatus of power (Williams 2001:53). Seeking
to educate and guide the moral development of the nation and protect against foreign
influence, these institutions both censored commercially produced film and radio, and
distributed government-sponsored patriotic movies and radio programs. Among other
modernist intellectuals co-opted by the authoritarian state, Mario de Andrade served as a
consultant to Vargas’s minister of education during this time (Williams 2001). Such
intellectuals managed to find a productive space within this restrive ideological apparatus
to pursue studies of Brazilian popular culture.

Central to the study of popular culture was the work of Luís da Câmara Cascudo
(1898-1986), whose decades of research (from the Regional Movement of the Northeast,
through the Estado Novo years, and beyond) resulted in the Dictionary of Brazilian
Folklore (mentioned above), first published in 1954 and currently in its 12th edition.
Cascudo’s work, which became the guide for students of the subject, defined folklore
thusly:

It is the popular culture, made normative by tradition. It comprises techniques and
processes utilities that are given value through an emotional amplification,
beyond the angle of rational operation. Its mentality, mobile and plastic, makes recent data traditional, integrating them in the mechanical assimilation of the collective fact […]. Folklore includes in its objects and popular formulas a fourth dimension, sensitive to its environment. Not only does it preserve, depend, and keep undisturbed patterns of understanding and action, but it also remolds, remakes, or abandon elements that become empty of the reasons or purposes that are indispensable to certain sequences or group presence.\(^{13}\)\(^{14}\) [Câmara Cascudo 1986(1954):335]

Undoubtedly influenced by Johann Gottfried Herder’s conception of the Volk, Cascudo viewed tradition as “the science of the people,” through which one could describe in detail “Brazil’s soul” as well as delineate the location of the Brazilian people in a vast universe of cultural practice (Neves 2000). Both poetic and systematic, Cascudo utilized folklore both to show the value of the knowledge of the nation’s common people, and to illuminate the connections between Brazil’s cultural practices and manifestations of expressive culture around the world.

A new level was reached in Brazilian folklore studies in the 1950s (Cavalcanti 2002). After World War II, folklore became a way to achieve “understanding between peoples, encouraging respect for differences and allowing the construction of different

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\(^{13}\) “É a cultura do popular, tornada normativa pela tradição. Compreende técnicas e processos utilitários que se valorizam numa ampliação emocional, além do ângulo do funcionamento racional. A mentalidade, móbil e plástica, torna tradicionais os dados recentes, integrando-os na mecânica assimiladora do fato coletivo […]. O folclore inclui nos objetos e fórmulas populares uma quarta dimensão, sensível ao seu ambiente. Não apenas conserva, depende e mantém os padrões imperturbáveis do entendimento e ação, mas remolda, refaz ou abandona elementos que se esvaziaram de motivos ou finalidades indispensáveis a determinadas seqüências ou presença grupal” (Câmara Cascudo 1986[1954]:335).

\(^{14}\) This and all translations are mine, unless otherwise noted.
identities among nations sharing the same international context” (Cavalcanti 2002:4). At the recommendation of the newly formed United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Brazil established its National Folklore Commission in 1947. The National Folklore Commission published a declaration of its aims and purposes in the 1951 “Letter on National Folklore,” rewritten in 1995. Promoting scientific research and documentation of the nation’s folklore, directing its use in education, acknowledging its importance in tourism, and promising governmental support for its ongoing practice, the Letter made official the importance of folklore studies to the nation. In 1958 the National Folklore Commission became the Campaign in Defense of Brazilian Folklore, with an urgent mission to defend “authentic cultural elements of the nation against the advance of industrialization and modernization” that threatened to erase them (Cavalcanti 2002:4). Since 2003, as the National Center for Folklore and Popular Culture (CNFCP), it is a part of the National Institute of Historic and Artistic Patrimony (IPHAN). When I use the words “folklore” or “folkloric” to describe the performance of the boi-bumbá in Amazonas, then, it is in the recognition both of the use of those terms by boi-bumbá enthusiasts in the state, as well as their place in the history of nation-building activities undertaken by the Brazilian intellectuals, often with the support of the federal government.

Folkloric Performance in Educandos

Folklore enthusiasts from the neighborhood of Educandos are prompt to declare it an especially festive neighborhood, where folklore has long flourished. Amazonas (2010:69) asserts that “since the beginning of the occupation [of the area that would become Educandos], the folkloric side was always very well represented.” Some of the earliest
folkloric manifestations included the “Brigue Independência,” the “Brigue Constantinópolis,” the “Nau Catarineta,” the “Pâssaro Sai,” “As Marujinhas,” and “Os Bocas Negras,” many of which had strong connections with local sporting clubs (Amazonas 2010:70-72). The Caninha Verde [Little Green Cane] dance, in particular, was perhaps the longest-lived and most popular of them all:

Founded in 1920, in Cruzeiro do Sul [in the state of Acre], brought to Manaquiri [in the state of Amazonas] in 1930 by the Acrean Tomé Moraes, who implanted it in Constantinópolis in 1956, transforming it into one of the most important cultural manifestations in the area around Nova Street, São Vicente de Paula Street, and surroundings, with the future participation of the local sons Ivo Moraes and Francisco Moraes, the well-known singer “Cheiro Verde,” as well as one of the neighborhood’s biggest supporters of the arts, Wilson Alves da Costa, known as “Zé de Cima.” [Amazonas 2010:72-73]

These young men became the backbone of folkloric performance in the neighborhood, with Ivo Morais and Zé de Cima eventually becoming important figures in the founding of Boi-bumbá Garanhão.

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15 Unfortunately, there is no information given on the details of these folkloric manifestations. Their names, however, translate as, “The Independence Brig,” “The Constantinópolis Brig,” “The Ship Catarineta,” “The Bird Left,” “The Little Sailor Girls,” and “The Black Mouths.”

16 “Cheiro Verde” [green fragrance] in Manaus refers to the bundles of herbs sold very cheaply for everyday use in cooking, generally cilantro with green onions, though sometimes cilantro alone is called by the same name.

Garanhão’s 2011 festival documentation acknowledges this long cultural heritage, beginning with the proclamation: “Through the years, the neighborhood of Educandos has been the cradle of many folkloric and cultural manifestations”\textsuperscript{18} (Boi-bumbá Garanhão 2011). Ivo Morais, then president of Boi-bumbá Garanhão, explained to me:

I think [Educandos] is the neighborhood that has the most events and folklore groups. Here they invent all kinds of things. There’s Carnaval,\textsuperscript{19} there’s the festival, there’s a samba school. In short, all of the cultural tendencies, we have a little of each here in Educandos. […] It’s because the people who are born here are born already knowing what is Garanhão, that there are dances here, there is \textit{Funk na Roça}\textsuperscript{20} here, that there’s the \textit{Bhanda da Bhaixa da Hégua} here, that there’s \textit{Pangaré} here, there’s Carmosa’s Band here, there’s the Band of somebody or other here, the Band of the Haunted\textsuperscript{21} it’s all here, you know? There’s the \textit{Caninha Verde} here, the Regional Dance of Amazonas, the \textit{Candomblé} Dance\textsuperscript{22} …there are all the tendencies. It’s a neighborhood where culture flourishes.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{18} “O bairro de Educandos ao longo dos tempos, foi berço de muitas manifestações folclóricas e culturais.”
\textsuperscript{19} I have chosen to use the Brazilian word “Carnaval” (in referring to the time of revelry before the Catholic period of Lent) rather than the English word “carnival,” reserving the latter spelling to refers to small, traveling amusement shows, which often play a part in both Carnaval and Festa Junina celebrations.
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Funk na Roça} is a Brazilian-style funk dance group. They perform at the Folklore Festival and other events.
\textsuperscript{21} These are all Carnaval bands.
\textsuperscript{22} These three are folkloric dances that are generally performed during the summer festival months.
\textsuperscript{23} “Eu acho que é o bairro que mais tem evento e grupo folclórico...aqui tudo inventam...é o carnaval, é no festival, tem escola de samba. Em fim, todas as tendências culturais, a gente tem um pouquinho aqui em Educandos. [...] É porque as pessoas, que quando nasce aqui já nasce...tudo que nasce já sabe quem é Garanhão, tem dança, tem aqui Funk na
While folkloric performance in Manaus is by no means restricted to Educandos, it does seem to be concentrated there. Rai, Garanhão’s treasurer, grew up in the more recently settled northern section of the city. Before becoming involved in Garanhão, he had never participated in the performance of folklore, because where he lived, “there wasn’t any. The northern zone is really lacking in folklore. There isn’t any. Folklore is more centralized around here, in the south zone, right? […] I don’t know if it’s because this is the oldest part of the city, and that everything began from here, and expanded into the other zones, you know?”

This long-time involvement in folklore is a point of pride in Educandos, and generally cited as one of the reasons why people enjoy living in the neighborhood, despite its social problems.

**Boi-bumbá Garanhão**

The most prominent folklore group of Educandos today is the *Associação Cultural Folclórica Educandense Boi-Bumbá Garanhão*, the Boi-Bumbá Garanhão Cultural and Folkloric Association of Educandos, or more simply, “Boi Garanhão.” Inhabitants of Educandos are proud of their neighborhood’s history of folklore groups. As will be further addressed in Chapter 3, Boi Garanhão was founded in 1991, when Educandos folklore devotees decided that the older folklore groups were dying out, and a new group was needed to maintain the vitality of folklore in the neighborhood. After discussing the
possibility of other kinds of folkloric dances, they decided on a boi-bumbá group, since
the boi-bumbá of Parintins was becoming extremely popular in the capital.

Educandos as a neighborhood (as will be discussed further in Chapter 2) was
profoundly affected by the 1967 implantation of the 10,000 km² tax-free manufacturing
zone known as the Zona Franca de Manaus (ZFM). In the wake of the establishment of
the ZFM, Manaus’s population swelled with the arrival of many individuals who came
from the state’s interior in search of work. Everyone in Educandos is affected by the
existence of the manufacturing zone, and the majority of households have at least one
member who works or has worked in the ZFM, or colloquially, “the District” (short for
“the Industrial District”). The majority of the District’s large manufacturing plants (such
as those of Honda, Yamaha, Panasonic, and Semp Toshiba) have corporate buses that
circulate through the neighborhood several times a day, depositing workers after their
shifts and picking up a new round of workers for the next. An elaborate system of legal
and illegal taxis exists as well to bring workers to the Bola de Suframa, where those who
do not get fetched by corporate buses can catch city buses to their workplaces. Others
(mostly women) work as cooks in restaurants and cafeterias that feed the thousands of
workers in the District or as after-hours cleaning personnel. The workers who are
employed in the district often leave their children to the care of household members who
then stay home to watch them; licensed and unlicensed in-home daycare centers are also
common throughout the neighborhood, as are after-school tutoring programs. Others still
are involved in building barges that carry materials to and from the District’s factories.

The Boi-bumbá Garanhão is largely comprised of such working-class residents of
the neighborhood. In addition to work in the District, individuals in Educandos are
employed in a variety of occupations. For working class families, it is most usual to buy or construct a small house that is within the household means, rather than buy a larger house with the assistance of a bank mortgage. As monthly budgets, then, need cover little more than food, clothing, and electricity, household members often cobble together a variety of ways to earn money, and unemployment is common. Unmarried adult children frequently remain in the house of their parents, contributing to the household economy as well.

Many women work in the home, taking care of children and managing the household economy. At times, this is combined with managing a small store located at the front of the house; such markets range from stands selling only eggs and a few vegetables to complete mini-supermarkets. Other common in-home work possibilities involve taking in laundry to wash; running small breakfast or lunch stands; performing manicures and pedicures; and sewing or costume making. As the majority of children only attend school for four hours a day, it is difficult to pursue a full-time career while taking care of small children. Often extended families live together or nearby, and help with childcare for women who work outside of the home.

The Boi-bumbá Garanhão reflects quite well the composition of the neighborhood: the dancers in the “tribes,” the percussionists of the drum corps, and the fans are largely working class; the “items,” musicians, and artists could be viewed as belonging to a professional artistic class; and most members of the board of directors have attained a higher level of education or have professional careers. One important

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25Groups of dancers in the boi-bumbá which represent the indigenous peoples of the forest. As dances are quite simple and easily learned, these are the largest subset of performers in the boi-bumbá.
subset, that of young gay men, cross-cuts these categories, though they are especially prevalent in the tribes. Another group is made up of participants in the terceira idade [third age] senior women’s program from the church. A final key category is what I call the “Old Guard,” the founders and long-term members of the folklore group, many who knew each other before the founding of Boi-bumbá Garanhão. Throughout all of these groups, one family is the most present and influential: the Morais family.

The Morais family has been rooted in Educandos for generations, and was long involved in folklore in Educandos. Of the seventeen official original founding members, three of those – Ivo, Edna, and Ricardo – are siblings. Jackson Morais, the director of the batucada, told me:

I began…the fact is that I’ve been participating in the boi for twenty years, right? I think that it’s been since the beginning. I was invited by my siblings, because in truth Garanhão was founded by the family – no, not one hundred percent, but let’s say that it was eighty percent by the Morais family. […] In the boi, there are six of us siblings there, all of us who participate in the boi. [Me, Ivo, Ricardo], Edna, and also Fátima participates too, and there’s Edilson, my oldest brother, he plays here in the percussion corps. There are six of us who participate in the boi, because it’s a whole generation in Garanhão. And in fact there are my children, there are Ivo’s children, and so it on…it’s generations.26

26 Eu comecei…no caso eu tenho vinte anos de participação do boi, né? Acho que é desde o inicio. …E foi convidado por meus irmãos, porque na verdade Garanhão foi fundado pela família – não, não cem por cento, mas vamos dizer que seja oitenta por cento da família Morais. No boi, nós somos seis irmãos aí, a gente todo mundo participa do boi. [Eu, Ivo, Ricardo] a Edna, e tem a Fátima também que participa, e tem o Edilson, meu irmão mais velho, ele toca na batucada aqui. Somos seis que participa do boi. É
Additionally, Ivo’s wife, Kelly Christina, also performed for several years as *Rainha da Batucada* [Queen of the Percussion Corps] and several of Jackson’s children are part of the batucada as well. While Boi-bumbá Garanhão is not officially owned by one person or one family, the Morais family certainly does form its backbone in a way that is not entirely dissimilar to the historically common pattern of boi-bumbá group organization, in which one person or family “owns” the group.

**Methods**

During the four years (2010-2014) that I spent in Manaus, I lived in the neighborhood of Educandos, close to the square where the rehearsals of Boi-bumbá Garanhão take place. During this time I participated in the daily life of the neighborhood, took part in more than fifty boi-bumbá general rehearsals, dozens of dance practices, four competition performances, one spectacle performance, three victory celebrations, numerous organizational meetings, one election, and hundreds of informal get-togethers, as well as a large number of other boi-bumbá related concerts and other events such as the annual multi-day *Boi Manaus* and *CarnaBoi* celebrations and their related weeks of pre-shows at which boi-bumbá music is played for enthusiastic crowds. As mentioned above, in 2010 and 2011 I performed as a member of Boi-bumbá Garanhão as a member of the female tribe, and in 2012 I switched to playing the bass drum in the percussion corps. In 2013 I was unable to participate in the performance due to the birth of my daughter in the middle of the year’s preparations, but still attended the performance as a member of the *galera* [organized cheering section]. In this time I took thousands of photographs and many hours of videos. I conducted in-depth life history interviews with 70 individuals, as well
as innumerable informal conversations on boi-bumbá related topics, and recorded observations and information in hundreds of pages of field notes.

The Parintins and Manaus boi-bumbá competitions are only two of a growing number of folklore festivals throughout Brazilian Amazonia. Cities and towns have used the competitive folklore festival as a way to create a marketable brand and attract tourists, and I was able to travel to visit four such festivals. While Brilhante, Corre Campo and Garanhão are the three best-known bois-bumbás of Manaus, many smaller groups exist as well, and I was able to attend and document several of these neighborhood and school performances through fieldnotes, photography, videography, and interviews.

Interviews focused on individual and family histories of participation in the boi-bumbá. These interviews were guided towards reminiscences of past boi-bumbá participation and the retrospective meaning these have for people, paying close attention to the varying backgrounds of each. This approach was chosen to as to understood participation in folkloric performance as embedded in the real spaces and times of people’s lived experiences.

**Play**

The boi-bumbá belongs to a class of related bull festivals which all fall into the category of brincadeira do boi, with “brincadeira” meaning “play,” esp. of children; fun, 

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Brincar is one of a set of words that in English we translate with the verb “to play.” Brincar means to play as children play, and its other possible translations are: “... [to] frolic, lark; to frisk, skip, cavort, romp; to amuse oneself; to make merry; to trifle, toy (com, with); to joke, tease, kid, make fun; to banter” (Taylor 1958:114). This kind of frisking, romping, merrymaking play is different from jogar, which is used in the sense of to play an organized game, such as to play soccer or to play poker. It is also different from tocar, which is to play an instrument, as one plays the piano or the guitar. A person who plays at boi-bumbá, then, is called a brincante, or “one who plays.” To complicate the matter further, the boi-bumbá also touches on two meanings of the English word
amusement; lark; jest, joke; banter; pleasantry; prank” (Taylor 1958:114), so the
“brincadeira do boi” is the “play/fun/amusement/lark of the bull.” With all of these words
in mind, you can understand that the boi-bumbá is talked about as if it were a light,
frivolous, fun activity. All of this is true.

At the same time, however, it is absolutely serious. In the Brazilian Amazon,
untold hours and millions and millions of reais28 are spent on creating and sustaining the
boi-bumbá each year. Boi-bumbá singers are regional celebrities, and boi-bumbá dancers
and performers have gone on to win national beauty pageants and tour the world. Up to
the 1970s, rival boi-bumbá groups regularly engaged each other in street brawls, often
leading to serious injuries and deaths. Today, it is hugely important for many
communities throughout the region both as a source of tourism revenue and also a marker
of local identity. The boi-bumbá has become so large and established that it has created
its own employment market for singers, dancers, scenographers, set builders, costume
makers, and musicians. While the boi-bumbá is part of modern economic development,
however, it stands as a space apart as well. While often put to use by city and state
officials to generate tourist interest and brand the state of Amazonas as a cultural entity,
to organizers and participants it is not solely or even fundamentally a money-making

“play,” as it is at once the verb, as in “to play like children” and also the noun, “a play,”
as in that which we watch on a stage in a theater. The words brinar and brincante are
also used to describe participation in Carnaval merrymaking, though I have also often
heard the phrase pular Carnaval, or “to jump Carnaval,” since Carnaval brincantes often
jump up and down in the air in time to the music, similar to the ‘pogo-ing’ of punk rock
concert-goers. Packman (2012) indicates that such jumping celebrants are known in
Bahia’s Carnival as the pipoca, or popcorn. As far as I can ascertain, this term is not used
in Manaus. While one may “brincar Carnaval,” one would never “pular” boi-bumbá; it is
always brincar.

28 The Brazilian currency is the real, the plural reais. At the time of this writing, one US
dollar was equivalent to roughly two reais.
venture. At its heart, the boi-bumbá remains play; a diversion from the difficulties of life in the urban capitalist matrix, and a place to remember and honor one’s history.

**Structure of the Dissertation**

In this dissertation I will demonstrate how the boi-bumbá of Amazonas came to attain its present form in conversation with and in the context of the rapid urbanization and the establishment of globalized industrial capitalism in the wake of the founding of the ZFM. I demonstrate how the boi-bumbá festival of Amazonas has become a central symbol in the struggle of Manauaras to define themselves as modern citizens of Brazil and the world. While “Caboclo” still remains in use to some degree as a pejorative label for mixed race rural Amazonians, it has been recuperated through the boi-bumbá to the extent that claiming this label has become a matter of pride for many citizens of Manaus. I will show how the symbolic importance of the Amazon region and assumptions about it as a space of authenticity and pre-modernity persist in the minds of many who visit Manaus, and how Manauaras use the boi-bumbá as a tool to disarm such discourse. The boi-bumbá in Manaus functions as a repository for nostalgia and collective memory, and as it is reconstructed anew with every festival cycle, its content is constantly being revised and rewritten. Thus, it remains a portal through which we can see the ever-changing stories that Manauara boi-bumbá groups tell themselves about who they are and where they have come from.

This nostalgia also has a dark side, however. The romanticized images of Indians and Caboclos promoted by the boi-bumbá serve to obscure the actual individuals that exist behind the imaginings. The Indians in the boi-bumbá are presented as nameless but wise and spiritual ancestors, rather than real people who live in the twenty-first century.
The glorification of the humilde [humble] way of life in the rural Amazon obscures the backbreaking labor of the roça [subsistence agriculture], the political invisibility of Caboclo society, and the lack of schools and healthcare in the interior. In this dissertation, then, I focus on the boi-bumbá not only as a site for the cultivation of nostalgia, but also explore the ramifications of the glorification of Indians and Caboclos as two kinds of noble savages.

In this chapter I have briefly introduced the boi-bumbá festival as situated in its historical and economic context, regionally and nationally. The remainder of the dissertation is divided into two sections. Chapters 2-4 are dedicated to background information, and examine modernity as an explicit project of Brazil, funneling down in scope from the national to the city of Manaus. Chapters 5-8 present ethnographic material, looking at how discourse around modernity and nostalgia play out in various contexts linked to the boi-bumbá.

While Brazil has long been seen as the “country of the future,” always striving but never attaining true modernity, over the last decade economists and political analysts have touted it as finally beginning to fulfill its potential. In Chapter 2, I discuss conceptions of modernity and posit (following Chakrabarty 2000, Ferguson 2010, and Williams 1973) that nostalgia is a common by-product of urbanization and the spread of industrial capitalism. I then address how the boi-bumbá of Amazonas exploded in size and popularity so dramatically as a reaction to these developments in the region, specifically in relation to the establishment of the Manaus tax-free manufacturing zone.

In Chapter 3 I discuss the roots of the bull festival in Europe and Africa, and its rise in the Brazilian colonial context, followed by its spread in multiple forms throughout
the country. I deconstruct the notion of an “original” auto do boi drama, as it is likely that
the auto that is today seen as primordial is simply one that became crystallized in its
current form due to academic investigation and documentation in the mid 20th century
during the modernizing nation-building project of folklore scholars, particularly under the
Estado Novo regime of Getúlio Vargas.

Chapter 4 focuses on the history of Manaus through the lens of the various
modernizing improvement projects that outsiders and insiders have imagined or tried to
impose upon the village/town/city, from the colonial explorers, through the gentleman
and –woman scholars and naturalists, to the modification of the city’s waterways of the
20th and 21st centuries. I especially highlight the way that the 1967 creation of the ZFM
changed social relations in and around Manaus and particularly in the neighborhood of
Educandos.

The ethnographic portion of the dissertation begins with Chapter 5, in which I
explore Bakhtin’s idea of the chronotope (a referenced location in space and time,
populated by people of a particular social configuration) and discuss how in the boi-
bumbá, the action shifts between different chronotopes – colonial plantation, present day
Manaus, Indian ritual in timeless mystical space, etc. – with all of these linked to the
present day viewers, creating a kind of historical consciousness in the present. I then
present a description and chronotopic analysis of the 2011 performance of Boi-bumbá
Garanhão.

From the explorers to modern day rock bands, in Chapter 6 I examine the
discourse of visitors to the Amazon, focusing especially on Manaus, and the way that
Manauaras dispute (often through social media) outsiders’ opinions of the perceived
backwardness of their city. In Chapter 7, I then discuss a new phenomenon: cities in the state of Amazonas and beyond are holding government- and corporate-sponsored Parintins-style competitive folklore festivals to brand themselves and attract tourist dollars.

In Chapter 8, I turn to the ways that the symbolic meanings of “Caboclo” have been and are being put into use in nation-building projects and specifically in Manaus, and how the boi-bumbá is presented as proof that there is culture and modernity in Manaus. I examine examples of the use of Caboclo identity and the boi-bumbá in Manaus as political tools.

Finally, in Chapter 9 I conclude by summarizing the overall primary conclusions drawn from my research project regarding the boi-bumbá of Manaus. I wrap up this chapter and the dissertation by discussing the implications of my research and suggesting possibilities for future exploration.
 CHAPTER 2  
Modernity and Nostalgia in the Country of the Future

The cynical popular saying goes, “Brazil is the country of the future – and always will be” [O Brasil é o país do futuro, e sempre sera]. With its inclusion in the BRIC designation, the hosting of the 2014 World Cup and the upcoming 2016 Summer Olympics, and its unruffled coast through the recent economic crisis and recession that shook the US and Europe, it seems that perhaps Brazil may have finally caught up to its own future.

The close of the first decade of the 21st century brought a flurry of books proclaiming Brazil’s new status, including Brazil as an Economic Superpower? (Brainard and Martinez-Diaz 2009), Brazil on the Rise (Rohter 2010), The New Brazil (Roett 2010) and even the somewhat odd Brazil is the New America (Davidson 2012). This appearance of “rising” or “taking off,” however, is not new. Brazil has long been seen as full of promise and just on the verge of something big. In 1847, Eliakim Littel’s Living Age magazine proclaimed that: “Brazil presents at this moment the spectacle of a young and vigorous society springing up among the debris of one out-worn; as the young vegetation of spring shoots up among the dead leaves and rotten branches” (Littel 1847:259). One century later, the “Brazil, country of the future” quip arose as a popular response to Stefan Zweig’s 1941 book of that name, in which he proclaimed that Brazil was “destined undoubtedly to play one of the most important parts in the future development of our world” (Zweig 2011[1941]:2).

Even in the fulsome descriptions of the country’s achievements, however, Brazil’s success usually remains teasingly across the horizon, as a potential rather than a fact. Brazil is always striving, but never arriving; like Alice’s red queen, the country must run
as fast as it can just to stay in place, and twice as fast to get anywhere. Rohter (2010:8) announces that “today’s Brazil . . . has clearly awakened from that comfortable slumber and has left the cradle behind as it strides with vigor toward full maturity.” He points out that “a great deal of catch-up is needed in the twenty-first century” (Roett 2010:1). The uncertainty of Brazil’s success is indicated by the question mark at the end of the title of Brainard and Martinez-Dias’s 2009 work, asking: Can Brazil really be an economic superpower? Davidson’s offbeat work is one that predicts the future rise of Brazil, in part due to the widespread global cooling (not warming) that he foresees. While resplendent in beauty, natural resources, and an inborn scrappiness, Brazil remains seen as a country of potential, trying to claw its way into the present, the future well out of its grasp.

Although the future is still at yet unreached in these works, it looms much closer at present than previously. This is largely because of the economic factors that have resulted in the rise of the urban middle class. As this occurs so also does an increasing sentimentality about the rural past that is being left behind. While this process is taking place throughout Brazil, the dramatic and accelerated pace at which it is happening in Amazonia makes it a key site from which to understand modernity. In Manaus, the rise of what has come to be called the “new middle class” is fundamentally linked to the 1967 implantation of the Zona Franca de Manaus. In this chapter I will show how the ZFM both created the desire for consumer objects that came to signal middle-class status and also provided the means through which such commodities could be attained. I will further highlight the role of the boi-bumbá both as just such an urban status symbol and also as a nostalgic vehicle through which festival creators could comment on changing economic and social roles, often through the language of “modernity” and “tradition.”
The Rise of the “New Middle Class”

Brazil’s upswing has been caused by a conjunction of factors, probably the most important being the success of the *Plano Real*, the scheme devised in 1994 by then Finance Minister Fernando Henrique Cardoso’s economic dream team to halt the country’s hyperinflation problem (Roett 2010, Soares 2013). The newest wave of enthusiasm about Brazil’s prospects comes in the wake of the publication of data indicating that more than half of Brazilians are now part of the middle class. From 2003 to 2009, more than 29 million citizens moved into what is known as “Class C,” or “the new middle class” (Neri 2010). This population was propelled out of poverty by a variety of factors including: the “*Bolsa Familia*”29 (“Family Grant”) program initiated under the Lula administration (Neri 2010) and other safety net programs; national economic growth leading to higher wages and a greater level of formalization of employment; the expansion of credit, increases in the minimum wage, and support for small businesses; and a higher level of education in the workforce (Barros et al. 2011). Members of the new middle class are able (often through the use of credit cards) to obtain in easy monthly installments the goods they desire (Jayo and Mateos 2010) including previously out of reach events like fancy weddings (Carneiro 2013), to travel to the US on extensive shopping trips (Garcia-Navarro 2013), and also to put their money back into the Brazilian economy which, though slowed, continues to grow (“Has Brazil blown it?” 2013). Jobs in

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29 It has been suggested that more than domestic policies were at work in the creation of the new middle class in Brazil, as similar new middle classes have sprung up in similarly “emergent” countries Russia, Iran, and China (Jayo and Mateos 2010), and that claims that the new middle class arose due to policies put in place by presidents Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff are simply clever marketing (Bartelt 2013). Lamounier (in Jayo and Mateos 2010) also suggests that the growth of the new middle class has more to do with the *Plano Real* and less with the *Bolsa Familia*, which he indicates only affected people at a lower socio-economic level.
the formal sector are growing and income inequality is at the lowest level since 1960, and as the new middle class is investing heavily in higher education (Neri 2010, 2011), personal advancement is more and more of a possibility.

Amidst the enthusiastic proclamations of Brazil taking off are more cautious appraisals: yes, Brazil is doing extremely well, but true progress will only come when corruption is eliminated, the cost of living is reduced, the public healthcare system is overhauled, public schools restructured, roads repaired and maintained, airports renovated, and public transportation expanded and made more affordable. Indeed, these are the principal demands that the new middle class was agitating for in the summer of 2013. Manaus, too, took part in these protests even to the point of setting fire to a public bus (Azevedo 2013), and the demands of Manauaras paralleled those of the inhabitants of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, and other capitals.

This new middle class is not to be understood as the equivalent of an American middle class, “with two cars in the garage,” and a standard of living to match, as Neri notes (Dantas 2012), or even as the “traditional” Brazilian middle class (Jayo and Mateos 2010). Those falling into “Class C” make, as a family, between R$1,200 e R$5,174, that is, roughly between $535 and $2,300, per month, or $6,420-$27,600 yearly\(^{30}\) (Neri 2011). Critics and supporters alike have pointed out that this is a very large and heterogeneous bracket (Barros et al. 2011, Jayo and Mateo 2013), but Neri (2011), building upon Thomas Friedman’s assertion that the middle class is defined not by what it has but by what it wishes to become, argues that there are enough commonalities among those included to call this a group, particularly that unlike the one step lower Class D they were

\(^{30}\) The adjusted range for 2013 is R$1,315 to R$5,672, or roughly $580-$2,500 monthly, $6,960-$30,000 yearly family income (Kerstenetzky and Uchôa 2013).
able to “walk with their own legs,” or that they had a certain level of autonomy that their poorer countrymen did not (Dantas 2012).

Be that as it may, in Manaus, the Class C is growing and making itself felt through its consumerism. SAE, the Secretariat of Strategic Affairs, released numbers in 2011 indicating that the middle class in Amazonas had tripled between the years of 1999 and 2009. These individuals were reportedly more concerned with paying their bills and maintaining good credit than other groups (Villar 2011), and also were investing in real estate in the center of the city, in order to be nearer workplaces and to avoid the city’s infamously problematic transportation issues (Stringueto 2012). On a negative note, this same class has been filling the city’s igarapés, or river channels, with cast off consumer goods: refrigerators and freezers, stoves, televisions, and once even “an ergonomic treadmill” (Hasimoto 2011).

While the city may be isolated from Brazil’s centers of power, both geographically and politically, it is no stranger to consumer production and consumption. The Manaus free trade zone (ZFM), which produces many of those consumer goods that later find a resting place in the city’s waterways, has been active for nearly fifty years and is a major source of jobs for Manauararas today. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the inhabitants of Educandos are intimately linked to the ZFM’s “District,” or manufacturing quarter. The District and its opportunities for employment have played an important part in manufacturing not only “modern” products for popular consumption but also consumer desires for such items. Working in the District has come to be seen, especially for young working-class men from Educandos, as a passport to a middle-class lifestyle. One key symbol of middle-class status is the carteira de trabalho assinada, the signed worker’s
document indicating that the bearer is legally employed with all the accompanying rights and benefits. More than anything, having a signed carteira de trabalho in Educandos demonstrates that a young man is not a marginal [poor person suspected of criminal activity] but instead a law-abiding and hardworking citizen.

Additionally, having a job in the District means a steady paycheck from a reputable company, which opens the door for many possibilities. The first is a bank account and the possibility of obtaining a credit card, which in turn facilitates the purchase of consumer goods in low monthly payments, conveniently charged automatically to one’s card. Having such a steady paycheck and credit card has enabled many to obtain key products that signal middle-class status, including smartphones, flatscreen TVs, cars or motorcycles, washing machines, frost-free refrigerators, and designer clothing. Additionally, a steady paycheck from the District can help in buying a home or apartment, the ultimate indication of middle-class status. Thus, as work in the District and exposure to such commodities creates consumer desires, the District also provides the way that such desires can be satiated as well. For those who do not have a steady paycheck and thus are not able to purchase the newest iPhone or Sony flatscreen TV, there are still ways to signal middle-class status, including the purchase of “Xing Ling.” These Chinese-made copies of high-status products, although often poorly constructed, are easily obtained on the streets of Manaus and provide a way for those with fewer economic resources to maintain the appearance of middle-class belonging.

Today, the ZFM is touted as a green triumph: rather than relying on the extraction of forest products, the Manaus free trade zone allows Amazonenses to earn their money in the city, instead of through heavy-footprinted ranching or farming, or extraction of
forest products. In fact, the success of the free trade zone has been linked to a sharp deceleration in deforestation (Rivas et al. 2009). This has not always been so. The “greening” of the ZFM, and development of policy actively in favor of forest preservation can be traced to the late 1980s. Chernela (2000) traces four factors leading to this change: the failure of the grand projects for colonization and ranching in the region; the opening of the country’s economy through the relaxing of trade restrictions; identification of international eco-tourism as a regional financial strategy; and the influx of international financial support for sustainable development projects. Before the country’s economic opening in the late 1980s, Manaus was a shopping destination for the Brazilian elite from the southeast, who were each allowed to purchase up to $2,000 in imported goods, duty-free (Chernela 2000). After President Fernando Collor de Melo’s removal of the import bans in 1991, however, domestic tourism dropped off sharply and with it, retail trade (Chernela 2000). Those who had previously sneered at environmental protection now embraced it as a strategy to booster Amazonas’s slipping economy.

Now eco-tourism is everywhere in the Brazilian Amazon, and centrally located Manaus is a major gateway through which tourists pass. Eco-lodges, jungle tours, river cruises, sport fishing expeditions, and visits to “real Indian villages” are all on offer in the state capital. Eco-talk is everywhere, too, in schools, on posters at the airport, in discussions of the Manaus Free Trade zone, and in the biggest folkloric celebrations of the state of Amazonas, such as the boi-bumbá.
Modern Methods and Pre-Modern Workers: Rubber and the Urbanization of the Amazon

Eco-valorization and the celebration of the rural life are occurring today as the population rapidly urbanizes. The current spatial configuration of urbanization in the Brazilian Amazon is a palimpsest of earlier trade and settlement patterns. Beginning in 1540, small colonial outposts and mission villages began to join native towns along main waterways. These grew but slowly over the next centuries, as the Amazon remained isolated from the cities of the eastern seaboard. The economy of the region remained small, largely consisting of boom and bust cycles of the extraction of drogas do sertão [forest products] (Browder and Godfrey 1997). These drogas do sertão, including wood, tree nuts, furs, and hides were extracted in remote areas in the interior and brought to market, relying on a system of supply and transport carried out by riverboat traders called regatões.

As wild rubber trees did not tend to grow in close proximity, lone seringueiros [rubber tappers] braved danger as they walked estradas [rubber trails] in the forest, going from tree to tree to collect the natural latex (Garfield 2013, Schmink and Wood 1992, Weinstein 1983, Wilkinson 2009). This latex they would smoke and make into large balls, which would be picked up by the intinerant traders. In the first half of the 19th century, tappers worked for themselves, with wives and families whose subsistence farming allowed them to remain independent (Schmink and Wood 1992). While vulcanization had been invented in 1839, it was the 1853 introduction of steamships that provided a viable way to bring rubber to market and so intensified economic investment in the region (Schmink and Wood 1992). Beginning in the second half of the century, tappers were generally single men who worked for patrons and became dependent upon
the tools, firearms, and food they could buy on credit from the *barracões* [riverside merchants] supplied by the *regatões* (Schmink and Wood 1992). Tappers were indebted to the barracões, which in turn were indebted to *aviadores* [suppliers in local towns], who sold the rubber to higher level aviador houses in Manaus and Belém, who sold it to overseas purchasing houses, who then sold it to global manufacturers (Schmink and Wood 1992, Wagley 1976, Weinstein 1983). This hierarchical aviamento system tied the region together in a chain of debt and social obligation: the rural tappers to the merchants, the merchants to the riverboats, the riverboats to the towns, the towns to the cities, and the cities to international commerce and manufacturing.

Thus, in the second half of the 19th there was also a shift in regional urbanization, as rubber extraction developed and migrants, many from the drought stricken northeast flocked to the region, and a “proto-urban” network of supply stations and outposts emerged for the processing and shipping of rubber (Browder and Godfrey 1997, Machado 1999, Schmink and Wood 1992). The growing rubber industry laid down the basic network of larger and smaller cities, with Manaus and Belém the largest in the region. With the collapse of the rubber market the network of commerce began to dissolve after 1912, with many towns and cities stagnating or disappearing altogether. Browder and Godfrey (1997) indicate that a large number of workers from the northeast who had come to work in rubber were effectively stranded in the Amazon and moved from rural areas into cities when the industry collapsed.

Even as the city of Manaus struggled to accommodate a growing population that strained its decaying infrastructure, the economy continued through a cycle of much smaller booms and busts. During times of bust, “rubber prices dropped, workers
abandoned the properties, commercial firms collapsed, and public finances contracted” (Garfield 2013:11). In the boom times, however, Manaus historian Agnello Bittencourt noted that “everything comes to life again: ships that had been docked load up with merchandise and passengers; businesses hire new employees; imports increase as do customs receipts; and new buildings and other urban improvements crop up in Manaus, where life pulsates in streets, the theaters, the schools, and the business firms” (Garfield 2013:11-12). In addition to rubber, forest products such as Brazil nuts and hides and skins from “capybara, jaguar, iguana, boa, anaconda, and caiman” were collected and sold (Schmink and Wood 1992:46), with extractive activities still occupying 60% of the region’s workers (Dean 1987). While the aviamento system continued on, rural Caboclo extractors were freed from the power of the plantation-owning rubber barons and enjoyed a high degree of autonomy (Schmink and Wood 1992).

Attention was drawn again to the Northern (Amazonian) region during the Second World War:

Distinct from many other commodities derived from tropical flora, rubber was indispensable for modern warfare. From airplanes, army trucks, tanks, battleships, motorcycles, gun mounts, bullet-sealing gasoline tanks, submarine storage battery jars, blimps, and barrage balloons to life rafts, hoses, raincoats, boots, and gas masks, rubber ensured the mobility, speed, and efficiency critical for military defense. [Garfield 2013:50]

When the United States entered the war after Pearl Harbor, Brazil signed the 1942 Washington Accords, agreeing to export rubber on an exclusive basis to the US for a five-year period (Dean 1987, Schmink and Wood 1992). In 1943, Brazil promised to
subsidize the relocation of 50,000 workers, or “rubber soldiers,” to the Amazon and set up a system to transport these men and supply them with food and other necessary materials, to be purchased in cash (Garfield 2013). Migrants were urged to join the modernization project as vigorous frontiersmen, bound to penetrate the “virgin” forest and supplement the slacking Indian and Caboclo populations (Garfield 2013). While the wartime “Battle for Rubber” may not have significantly increased rubber production, it did intensify the role of the Brazilian government in the region, setting the scene for further intervention (Wilkinson 2009).

Rubber had become a symbol of modernity and progress at this time in the US as well, associated as it was with the automobile tires that brought freedom, speed, pleasure, linguistic and cultural homogeneity, and new routes of consumption to Americans (Garfield 2013). The need for the US to obtain rubber from South America cast Americans as rational protagonists in a cultural, racial, and scientific morality play, with Amazonians as their pre-modern foils. A phase of industrial and urban growth experienced in the United States at the end of the 1800s had heightened American “perceptions of Latin Americans as ‘backwards’ and undisciplined” (Garfield 2013:56). Pre-war views of tropical peoples in general emphasized their inability to govern themselves, and the forest as a wild adversary that actively opposed human intervention, while New Deal-influenced progressivist discourse of the “common man” saw Amazonian rubberworkers as helpless serfs crushed under the wheel of American capitalism, and their counterparts in Vargas’s Estado Novo painted them as “abandoned brothers” waiting to be freed from the entrenched debt peonage system of aviamento (Garfield 2013:113). Aviamento proved to be a thorn in the side of the international
rubber effort as it sought to implement a suitably “modern” rubber extraction system. Schmink and Wood (1992:48) note that “formidable problems beset the execution of the program, notably the active resistance by merchants to attempts to modernize rubber extraction and to circumvent the aviação system.” In the 1940s, government reformers sought to restructure the rubber trade in the Amazon in a similar fashion to agrarian reforms that had taken place in São Paulo (Garfield 2013). However, “unable to fully overcome the opposition, the Accords only reinforced the position of the rubber elites without significantly improving the conditions of the producers themselves” (Schmink and Wood 1992:48).

Discourse around US extraction of rubber in the Amazon followed in these same well-traveled grooves and reinforced prejudices against Amazonians. Such views were buttressed as well by the Brazilian racial and class bias that had long viewed the unruly Amazon and its dark-skinned inhabitants (both Caboclos and newer, frequently Afro-Brazilian, migrants from the Northeast) as able to prosper only under a capable, white hand. Garfield (2013:64) notes that upon visiting Henry Ford’s ill-fated Belterra rubber plantation in the Amazonian state of Pará in 1938, Brazilian novelist Gastão Cruls wrote that “there one sees the most clamorous rebuttal to those who still assume that it is impossible nowadays to achieve agricultural production in the Amazon…our caboclo is affixed for the first time to the land, and his hand, which once only knew how to forage and pillage, has grown accustomed to the act of planting.” The failure of Belterra despite Ford’s intensive investment and paternalistic management philosophy (and in part due to the latter, which included prohibition of alcohol and demanded adherence to a strictly
regimented work schedule) only solidified American and Brazilian views of the intractable nature of Amazonia and Amazonians.

After the war ended, the regional importance of rubber diminished, though its extraction was still supported by the Brazilian government (Dean 1987). Starting in the 1950s, a new phase of regional urbanization began, with the purposeful development of the Amazon a part of the government’s desire to defend its western forest border. The move of the nation’s capital to the newly constructed modernist city of Brasilia was the first step into the interior of the country, shifting the country’s center of power to the west (Monte-Mór 2004). The urbanization of the Amazon was a fundamental element of state strategy, and from the new capital began a series of projects to develop and populate the region (Becker 1998, Browder and Godfrey 1997, Hecht 1985, Schmink and Wood 1992). With the mottos “integrar para não entregar” [integrate so as not to deliver the lands into enemies’ hands] and “uma terra sem homens para homens sem terra” [a land without men for men without land], the military regime’s 1970 Plano de Integração Nacional [National Integration Plan] brought settlers to live along the newly built Transamazônia Highway. Additionally, workers came to the area to settle highways and to work in isolated mining camps and cattle ranches, on hydroelectric projects, and in company towns for the exploration of various national resources. During this period, consumer goods were thoroughly disseminated even into the interior, and a cash economy finally disrupted the earlier aviação system (Schmink and Wood 1992), although aviadores actively resisted modernization (Dean 1987).

Throughout this time, the city of Manaus slowly grew, as many people who came to the region as settlers or workers abandoned unsuccessful projects and settlements and
moved first to small urban centers and then on to the capital (Browder & Godfrey 1997). Manaus provided possibilities for migrants at the manufacturing and assembly plants in the Manaus Free Trade Zone (ZFM), which was established in 1967. The state of Amazonas was already urbanizing, but the ZFM contributed to that process. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, in 1960, only 35.5% of residents of Amazonas lived in urban areas. By 1970 the population had risen to 42.6%. The growth of the Amazon region at this time was not an isolated phenomenon. During the 1960s Brazil, like much of Latin America, was undergoing a move towards urbanization, and the North Region, which makes up the bulk of Amazonia, had experienced significant and widespread urbanization by 1980 (Browder & Godfrey 1997). In 1980 slightly more than half of the state’s population lived in urban areas. By 1991, the urban population had reached 57.8%; by 2000 it jumped to 69.8%, and by 2010 it climbed to 73.5% (IBGE 2010). In 2010, the state of Amazonas had a population of 3,483,985 inhabitants, with a full 79% living in urban areas; 51.7% in the capital city of Manaus, which is now the largest city in Brazilian Amazonia, with 1,802,525 inhabitants within city limits and 2,316,173 in the greater Manaus metropolitan area (IBGE 2010).

Urbanization in Amazonia, however, has never been tidy and neat, but bears the scars of these many boom-and-bust cycles, government-sponsored projects, and waves of migrants hoping to start new lives. Settlement in the Amazon region, though not chaotic, is uneven, asymmetrical, and varied, built on the bones of the rubber boom proto-urban network (Browder & Godfrey 1997). Rather than moving through a linear pattern of migration from rural area to village to small town to big city, Amazonians move back and forth between the rural and the urban, taking advantage of better health care, job
possibilities, and educational opportunities. This untidy pattern of urbanization, with many small settlements scattered throughout the region has created an Amazonia which today is a “predominantly urbanized region with intricate, multifaceted, and internally varied linkages to national and global spheres” (Browder & Godfrey 1997:441). For this reason it makes little sense to try to impose a rural/urban dichotomy on the region (Barbieri et al. 2009, Monte-Mór 2004). Noted Brazilian geographer Bertha Becker (1995, 1998, 2005) has coined the phrase “urbanized forest” to more accurately describe this phenomenon. This interconnection between the variety of urban settlements in the Amazon—agrovilas [housing communities located at the edge of cleared roads], rural slums, boom towns, big cities, mining camps, and others—means that even the Amazonian who has spent most or all of her life in a city may still maintain a strong affective link to the countryside and even frequent travel to visit family who remain in rural areas.

**Nostalgia**

The connection between widespread rural-to-urban migration and surges in nostalgia for rural life is well-documented (Williams 1985[1973]). Frequently, this nostalgia is expressed in musical form, often as folk music, country music, folkloric music, or music as part of folkloric performance. In the United States, Aaron Fox (2004: 74) talks about the meaning of country music in the “liminal industrial-agricultural wasteland” of postindustrial, globalized America. Brazil is also no stranger to this phenomenon. *Música sertaneja* and *música caipira* are two types of “country” music that look backwards to a rural life, contrasted to life in the city (Dent 2007, Ulhoa Carvalho 1993). *Forró* music as well is characterized by *saudades*, or bittersweet nostalgic longing, and a critique of life
in the urban Southeast (Draper 2011). The Gaúcho movement, the “largest popular culture movement in the western world,” also has its own music, which is a key part of remembering and preserving the culture of the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul (Oliven 2000).

Postcolonial critic Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) theorizes that an intense nostalgic longing for an authentic past is often to be found in the wake of capitalism. Australian anthropologist Jane Ferguson (2010:237) points out that this “fetishistic desire” is mediated through consumption, and that “certain places in spatial geography become flash points for mediated manifestations of ‘authentic’ images and sounds.” While Manaus and the bulk of Brazilian Amazonia are no strangers to capitalism—Nugent (1993) points out that beginning in the 16th century merchant capital dominated the region—until relatively recently, capitalist interventions in Manaus and the surrounding area were fairly light. This began to change with the establishment of the ZFM in 1967. As the free trade zone – and with it, the core of the economy of the state of Amazonas – was shifting from what Rivas et al. (2009:33-34) call the third of four phases: “import substitution in an environment of limited competition,” to the fourth and current phase, “hightech industrial modernization in an internationalized capitalist environment,” the intensely nostalgic boi-bumbá, which had existed in a latent state for decades, became a huge phenomenon, focused on valorization of the environment and a rural lifestyle. It is my assertion that the growth of this new, nostalgic boi-bumbá in Amazonas occurred not simply at the same time as the implementation of such “hightech industrial modernization” but was rather intimately entwined with this development and developed in conversation with it.
It is helpful to remember the roots of the term *nostalgia*, which in current American usage evokes a sentimental, self-indulgent lingering on the past (Seremetakis 1994). Seremetakis (1994:4) disparages this use, which “freezes the past in such a manner as to preclude it from any capacity for social transformation in the present, preventing the present from establishing a dynamic perceptual relationship to its history” and turns the past into “an isolatable and consumable unit of time.” The Greek *nostalghía*, in comparison, “evokes the transformative impact of the past as unreconciled historical experience” and is deeply tied to sensory experience:

In Greek the verb *nostalghó* is a composite of *nostó* and *alghó*. *Nóstó* means I return, I travel (back to homeland); the noun *nóstos* means the return, the journey […] *Alghó* means I feel pain, I ache for, and the noun *álghos* characterizes one’s pain in soul and body, burning pain. Thus *nostalghía* is the desire of longing with burning pain to journey. It also evokes the sensory dimension of memory in exile and estrangement […] *nostalghía* is linked to the personal consequences of historicizing sensory experience which is conceived of as a painful bodily and emotional journey. [Serematakis 1994:4]

Seremetakis is writing of the disappearance of her favorite childhood peach, which is no longer grown. Those who personally experienced the delights of this peach experience a psychological disconnect, as the peach, which no longer exists externally, still lives on within. This loss is not unlike the experience of a death. Seremetakis points out, however, that the peach quickly became merely another exotic item for the younger generation who had not personally experienced it.
The nostalgia of which I am writing is not a monolithic entity, just as those involved in the boi-bumbá are not just one kind of person. For some, surely, it is the desire and longing of nostalghía, the burning to return to a place and a way of life that no longer exists. For the younger generations, however, the nostalgia made be of a more sentimental kind that glamorizes the backbreaking work they have never personally known. This type of nostalgia has indeed turned the past into an “isolatable and consumable unit of time” and built a lucrative industry on it, in the form of the boi-bumbá festival. This is not to say that their strong affective attachment to the imagined rural life of their parents or grandparents is not genuine. As with Italian-Americans who have never been to Europe or Irish-Americans who have never visited the Emerald Isle, the sense of being part of a collective ethnic identity can be extremely potent and bring meaning to life. People whose families were uprooted after generations spent connected to a particular place may feel that their new city life has dangerously shallow roots; “a shift has been accomplished from sedimented depth to surface with no past” (Seremetakis 1994:2). This type of nostalgia is a symptom of the existential disorientation brought on by the sweeping changes that have taken place globally in the wake of the implantation of industrial capitalism.

**“Reaching for Modernity” in the Amazon**

In his analysis of the history of the sociological study of Brazil, Tavolaro (2008:109) states that “modernity” has long been a central preoccupation of Brazilian society:

The issue of modernity has occupied the center stage of Brazilian sociology ever since its beginning. It is fair to say that "reaching for modernity" is a sort of obsession that crisscrosses and permeates the public imagery of a wide range of
sectors of Brazilian contemporary society: “Are we really a modern society? How close is Brazil from the so-called 'modern way of life' experimented by First World nations?”

In spite of the economic successes of today, Brazil continues to be seen, and to view itself as less than modern. There exists as well an internal scale of modernity, in which the Amazon region is seen as the least modern area of the country.

“Modernity” generally is thought of as emanating from Europe, and usually is used to refer to the historical period that is post-medieval, with an economic system changing from feudalism and an agrarian-based society to capitalism and widespread industrialization, first within the frame of the nation-state, and later in the context of globalization. It indicates “modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence” (Giddens 1990:1). Modernity, however, did not remain in Europe. The modern era was characterized by colonization of large parts of the globe by European nations, and then the emergence of post-colony nation-states coming to terms with their own modernity while shaking off their colonial past, in a context of expanding globalization.

While the creation of the modern nation-state rests upon a narrative of homogenizing, or “the many as one” (Bhabha 1994), work by postcolonial scholars has troubled such Eurocentric narratives of modernity and the nation. Nation-state origin myths rest upon the erasure of difference into a narrative of homogeneity and timelessness, created from the “scraps, patches and rags of daily life [which] must be repeatedly turned into the signs of a coherent national culture” (Bhabha 1994:215). In
Brazil, origin myths focus on the erasure of racial difference through miscegenation, or *mestiçagem*. Concealed by this idyllic image of racial harmony, however, are hundreds of years of systematic discrimination against those of African and indigenous heritage. This includes a history of official policy for “whitening” the population by miscegenation with people of European heritage, to the point of government-sponsored campaigns to encourage Germans and other similarly “white” Europeans to immigrate (Skidmore 1993).

Recognizing that modernity does not look the same in Bangkok as it may in Bangor or Bangalore, some have even found it useful to speak of not one singular “modernity,” but rather multiple (Eisenstadt 1999) or alternative (Gaonkar 2006) modernities, each characterized by different histories, attitudes, and narratives, or as Chatterjee (1997:9) put it, “if there is any universally acceptable definition of modernity, it is this: that by teaching us to employ the methods of reason, universal modernity enables us to identify the forms of our own particular modernity.” Even those living in areas that are often considered non-modern are connected to social networks that spread far beyond their immediate location or even the nation-state in which they find themselves. Modernity is characterized by, among other things, the disembedding or “lifting out” of social systems from contexts of interaction based in concrete localities (Giddens 1990), resulting in patterns of interaction and commerce that are global, rather than local in nature. Some have even pushed the concept of modernity further, to suggest that we are today living in a period of “postmodernity” (Harvey 1989), “liquid modernity” (Bauman 2000), or “high modernity” (Giddens 1991).
Modernity is associated with urbanization and also with new ways of thinking and being, often associated with city life. While it was clear that new ways of life could offer some advantages, modernity also has its darker side. Early investigations into modernity by social scientists focused largely on the negative effects of life in the city on the individual. French poet, essayist, and social critic Charles Baudelaire (1995[1857]:13) first coined the word “modernity” to mean “the transitory, the fugitive, the contingent, which make up one half of art, the other being the eternal and the immutable,” to describe this new way of being and thinking in his observations of life in industrializing Paris in the 19th century. Weber (1966[1905]) produced the first modern look at the city as a subject in itself in his 1905 work The City. Although he believed the city acted as a kind of incubator for new ideas and ways of life by throwing together different kinds of people, he also saw life in the city as one in which unrelenting bureaucracy crushed creativity. Less pessimistic, Durkheim (1997[1893]) viewed the changes in society as resulting from a necessary division of labor due to industrialization, while Marx envisioned the capitalist system as a necessary period of suffering, out of which would emerge a better world order (McLellan 2000).

As Giddens (1991) notes, a life lived in modern society has consequences for self-identity. Confronted through multiplying media channels with myriad choices for lifestyle, work, belief, bodily appearance, and consumption in an increasingly segmented social world and able to trust authorities only conditionally, modern citizens are under increasing pressure to plan the trajectory of their own lives. Appadurai (1996) recounts his first experiences of modernity as one of desire for first an Anglophone and then an American-style modernity. This heavy mediation of our own lives allows the modern
subject not only to view (and desire) the lifestyles of others, it also opens a door to viewing how various types of people are seen: the poor African-American single mother, the Paris high fashion model, the Amazonian jungle dweller. Since modernity is seen as originating in Europe, those who are viewed as being farther from Europe are thus less modern, less capable of modernity, and on an evolutionary scale, located in the past. A common narrative for those who visit areas, such as the Amazon, that are judged to be un- or pre-modern is the “journey backward in time,” in which “geographical difference across space is figured as historical difference across time,” a phenomenon that McClintock (1995) dubs “anachronistic space.” Similarly, images of “panoptical time,” frozen in place, allow us to view the whole of history at one glance, with Europe representing the most advanced place in time, and places such as Amazonia located somewhere in pre-history.

Nostalgia has become a way of life for those living in the modern age, who crave experiences of authenticity, often traveling to more “traditional” locations in search of such encounters (MacCannell 1989[1976]). The boi-bumbá, I believe, provided a unique consumer opportunity for the inhabitants of Manaus. As I pointed out above, the implantation of the ZFM and the opportunities for work in the District both created a new set of consumer desires and also provided the means through which individuals longing for middle-class status could fulfill such desires. The boi-bumbá festival of Parintins existed exactly at this nexus of desire and nostalgia. Even as the ZFM drew population away from the rural areas of the state of Amazonas, nostalgia grew for a romanticized vision of a lost way of life in the country. The festive and communal multi-day journey by riverboat to Parintins for the boi-bumbá festival reinforced such feelings of nostalgia,
allowed the traveler to reimagine her- or himself as an “Urban Caboclo,” and also became a symbol of middle-class status.

With money earned in the District, Manauaras, particularly young men, gained the ability to finance trips to Parintins. The ability to complete a trip to Parintins demonstrates both financial success and also a devil-may-care adventurous spirit: many are the stories of people who quit their jobs in the District to go to Parintins, spend all their money on a private cabin on a boat, bottles of Johnny Walker Black Label whiskey, and the company of delightful and willing women. The teller of such a story generally reports easily being able to find work again after his heroic pilgrimage, and so gains further status. Interestingly, the Parintins boi-bumbá is not the dusty old boi-bumbá of old, but a revamped one with all the trappings of modernity: a new arena, cutting edge lighting and sophisticated firework shows, enormous moving alegorias, all of which is broadcast nationally on television and sponsored by Coca-Cola. This is not, one might say, your grandmother’s boi-bumbá.

Paradoxically, Parintins, in the public imaginary of Manaus, also represents a seat of authenticity, and travel from Manaus to Parintins is often framed as a journey back in time. But this searching for authenticity in the past permeates also those locations deemed to be holders of the “traditional,” as this fetishization of the past is a symptom of capitalism itself (Chakrabarty 2000, Ferguson 2010). Speaking from India, Chatterjee (1997:20) reflects:

No one there believes that we could be producers of modernity. The bitter truth about our present is our subjection, our inability to be subjects in our own right. And yet, it is because we want to be modern that our desire to be independent and
creative is transposed on to our past. It is superfluous to call this an imagined past, because pasts are always imagined. At the opposite end from “these days” marked by incompleteness and lack of fulfillment, we construct a picture of “those days” when there was beauty, prosperity and a healthy sociability, and which was, above all, our own creation. “Those days” for us is not a historical past; we construct it only to mark the difference posed by the present.

In the following chapters I show how the Manaus boi-bumbá utilizes the past to create an idealized presentation of Amazonian society. As the festival is recreated each year, it becomes a vehicle through which urban folklorists can assert both a connection to their own rural past and the value of an Amazonian conception of modernity. In Chapter 5 in particular I use Bakhtin’s (1981) concept of the chronotope to demonstrate how the creators of the boi-bumbá craft linkages between historical and imagined time-spaces and the participation framework of the urban boi-bumbá viewer of Manaus and Parintins.

Today, the majority of Brazilian Amazonians live in urban areas. The greater part of the Amazonian economy is engaged with industrial capitalism, often linked into global networks of commerce through such entities as the ZFM. Why, then, do Amazonia in general and Manaus as a specific location, remain in the national imaginary today as still existing outside of modernity? One reason is suggested by Giddens’s (1998:94) observation that modernity is:

- a shorthand term for modern society, or industrial civilization. Portrayed in more detail, it is associated with (1) a certain set of attitudes towards the world, the idea of the world as open to transformation, by human intervention; (2) a complex of economic institutions, especially industrial production and a market economy; (3)
a certain range of political institutions, including the nation-state and mass democracy. Largely as a result of these characteristics, modernity is vastly more dynamic than any previous type of social order. It is a society—more technically, a complex of institutions—which, unlike any preceding culture, lives in the future, rather than the past.

Amazonia is imagined to be largely immune to “transformation, by human intervention,” as it is overdeterminedly a place of nature, rather than culture. In the popular imagination it is located outside of the market economy, and seen as a place where the nation-state barely penetrates. But most telling of all, it is seen as a place that lives in the past, and not in the future. Whether it is viewed as a place where time forgot, or home to stone-age tribes, the Amazon region is actively and discursively constructed and reconstructed as located in anachronistic space.

With its extensive manufacturing and free trade zone, Manaus is deeply implicated in government-sponsored and globalized high-tech industrial capitalism and its concomitant forms of bureaucracy. In spite of their role in quite literally producing the goods that have become symbols of middle-class status and “modernity” itself, Amazonians are still considered at best “consumers” rather than “producers of modernity,” forever shopping in a “supermarket of foreign goods” (Chatterjee 1997:20). Manauaras are painfully aware of how they are evaluated by this outside gaze. On social media sites such as Facebook.com, stories are often published and then endlessly forwarded that tell variations of the following story: when asked by a smug outsider if people from Manaus earn their living by making native handicrafts to sell, the Manauara
replies, “Yes, asshole. In Manaus, the natives make such handicrafts as the 90-inch high-definition flat screen television.”

In the “messiness” of global capitalism, the particularities of cultures are created in the “friction” generated by encounters of disparate elements, “the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference” (Tsing 2004:4). Through these encounters, Tsing asserts, cultures transform the universals of capitalism into something no longer alien, but local and particular, while allowing disparate areas to participate in global phenomena. In the boi-bumbá, we will find a particular manifestation of modernity that has arisen through the friction of the encounter between the overdeterminedly natural space of Amazonia and the urbanization and industrialization brought by global capitalism. In the following chapter, I examine the history of the brincadeira do boi, the dramatic dance of the bull, which from its beginning was a vehicle for nostalgia in the rapidly changing world of Brazilian colonization.
CHAPTER 3
History of the Boi-bumbá

The history of origin of the boi-bumbá is, to a certain extent, a mystery. Mystery lies at the very heart of the boi-bumbá, the drama called the auto do boi: although it has long been considered a remnant of some forgotten original play, new research indicates that a definitive original play may never have existed. And while the Old World antecedents of the Brazilian bull festivals are fairly clear, their Brazilian history is less straightforward. Exactly where and when they arose in the New World is hotly contested. While it is generally agreed that the bull festivals sprung into being somewhere in the northeastern region, more than that is not known, with Piauí, Maranhão, and Pernambuco (and perhaps others) all claiming the honor. And while conventional wisdom indicates that the boi-bumbá was brought to Manaus by northeasterners who came to the Amazon during the late-19th century rubber boom, the “bumba” was already well established in Manaus in 1865, well before the waves of migration from the northeast began in earnest.

What is not a mystery, however, is the role that the bull festivals have played, and continue to play, in the Brazilian national imagination. Seen since the Estado Novo regime of Getúlio Vargas (1937-1945) as a metaphor for the history of racial mixing, the bull festivals present a depiction of Brazilian social relations in the context of African slavery, the organization and “civilization” of indigenous peoples under the auspices of the colonial government, and the division of land into large parcels or latifúndios, administered by wealthy friends of the crown. This symbolism was promoted by writers and folklorists as they worked to define the characteristics of a modern national personality in the first half of the 20th century. While the boi-bumbá described during this period by such intellectuals as Mario de Andrade depicted a certain moment in Brazilian
history and society, the boi-bumbá of the state of Amazonas depicts another idealized set of social relations, focusing on the contributions of indigenous and mixed-race Amazonians. Today, while the bumba-meu-boi festival remains a symbol of the venerable folkloric spirit of the Northeast, in the current context of urbanization and internationalized industrial capitalism brought by the Zona Franca de Manaus, the boi-bumbá of the Amazon has taken on new significance both as a rallying point for regional pride, and a method of generating revenue for communities of the Amazonian interior.\footnote{The widespread adoption of the Parintins-style competitive folklore festival by communities in the Amazonian interior will be discussed in Chapter 7.}

In this chapter, I will first present the auto do boi itself. Next, I will review the literature on the modern history of the group of dramatic dances known as the brincadeira do boi, from its roots in northeastern Brazil to its migration to the Amazon region. Next, I will briefly discuss the bull festivals of the Old World, as the creators of the boi-bumbá of Amazonas incorporate and present their version of this history in the festivals of Parintins and Manaus. Then, I will explore briefly the impact of folklore studies in Brazil on the auto do boi, and examine how twentieth-century folklorists were implicated in modernizing projects of the Brazilian state. Finally, I will discuss the history of folkloric performance in the city of Manaus and specifically of the object of my study, the Boi-bumbá Garanhão of the Manaus neighborhood of Educandos.

**Part I: The Auto do Boi**

Bull festivals in Brazil are grouped into the general category of the brincadeira do boi, the “bull game/merrymaking/festivity/amusement.” Every region of Brazil has its own brincadeira do boi: in Piauí it is called bumba-meu-boi; Maranhão bumba-meu-boi or boi-de-reis; in Pernambuco bumba-meu-boi, boi-calemba or bumbá; in Rio Grande do...
Norte bumba-meu-boi, boi-de-reis or boi-calemba; in Ceará boi-de-reis, boi-surubí(m), or boi-zumbi; in Santa Catarina boi-de-mamão; in Alagoas, três pedacos or bumba-meu-boi; in Amazonas boi-bumbá; in Pará boi-bumbá or pavulagem; in Paraíba cavalo-marinho; in Espírito Santo bumba-de-reis; in Rio de Janeiro reis-de-boi; in Rio Grande do Sul boizinho; in other regions there are the bumba-boi, the boi pintadinho, and the boi duro, \(^{32}\) (Assayag 1997:27; Borba Filho 1966:11; Cavalcanti 2001:91; Gottheim 1984:6; Mazzillo et al. 2005:13).

The boi-bumbá of Manaus today has very little in common with the form in which it existed here in the city until about thirty years ago. Until the late twentieth-century, in Manaus the boi-bumbá was a working-class street drama (Monteiro 2004), historically financed (like other brincadeira do boi variants) by individuals fulfilling religious vows. In the small town of Parintins, where the new style Amazonas boi-bumbá originated, it was associated with the mixed-race rural cultivators, fishers, and gatherers known as Caboclos. Before the new spectacle-style competition of Parintins arose, the boi-bumbá was losing its popularity, due in part to this unglamorous connection: “No one wanted to play any more. People would criticize and say, Oh! I don’t like the [boi-bumbá]; it’s only for the poor, caboclos, fishermen, people like that, charcoal burners” (Cavalcanti 2001:79). Today, Parintins-style competitive boi-bumbá style performances have spread throughout Amazonas state, performing teams comprise casts of thousands, and the production of the event is a year-round process of creating new themes, music, floats, and costumes. If a Manaus practitioner of the boi-bumbá of a century ago were to see a

\(^{32}\) Among many others; the list goes on and on.
performance today, he would recognize the characters of the central drama, the auto do boi, but little else.

An *auto* is a “short play or drama” (Taylor 1958:85). Fundamentally, the “auto do boi” [bull drama] appears to be a short historical play, which takes place on a cattle ranch in the northeast of Brazil in an unspecified time, most likely the early 1800s.\(^{33}\) As the manifestations that fall under the category of “brincadeira do boi” are many, and as they are characterized by a high level of flexibility, mutation, and variation, I hesitate to write in a generalizing manner about the auto do boi. In general, these manifestations tell the story of a man (whose name is usually Francisco, Chico, Xico, or some other variant) who kills a ranch owner’s favorite bull to satisfy the craving of his pregnant consort (whose name is usually Catarina, Catirina, Catita, or some variant), and how that bull is brought back to life. Beyond that, the versions diverge into a dizzying array of variants. Below, I will outline the story as it was told to me in Manaus between 2006-2014 by members of Boi-bumbá Garanhão. The autos do boi of the other bois-bumbás in Manaus tend to follow closely along the same lines, as do those of the bois-bumbás of Parintins. I have tried to give some, albeit limited, indication of other auto do boi variations in the footnotes.

\(^{33}\) Though I suspect it could easily be about the 1700s, an exercise in gently mocking nostalgia since its beginning. Many authors (Queiroz 1967 for one) have argued about whether the auto do boi was satirizing the upper classes or mocking the lower; perhaps instead it was poking fun at the how things were twenty or thirty years earlier; one generation removed, as today we laugh at hairstyles and clothing of the 1990s, disbelieving that we had ever been so ridiculous.
In Manaus’s Boi-bumbá Garanhão, the main characters of this little drama are a couple named Pai Francisco and Catirina, who along with Francisco’s friend Cazumbá and his wife Mãe Guiomã are some sort of workers on the ranch. The ranch

_Pai_ means father, but in the biological, rather than the priestly, sense, and could be translated as “Father Francisco” or perhaps as “Papa Francisco.” (Or, as Cavalcanti 2001 rather rustically dubs him, “Pa Frank.”) Francisco is also at times called “Nego Chico” (Chico is the Portuguese language nickname for Francisco, and _nego_ is a corruption of “negro,” so this is the equivalent of “Black Frank”), or “Nego Velho” (Old Black Man) (Assayag 1997:20), and Menezes (1993) also adds “Preto Velho” and “Preto Chico,” which have roughly the same meanings, though _preto_ is the word for the color black, and is currently considered offensive. Francisco, Catirina, and Cazumbá all appear in blackface, dressed in rags or outrageously colorful and mismatched clothing.

The Francisco character may be called “Mateus” in other auto do boi variations, especially in the Northeast (Possi Neto 1977:6).

In Boi-bumbá Garanhão’s presentation, Catirina is simply Catirina. In some other versions, such as that of Boi Caprichoso of Parintins, she is Mãe (Mother) Catirina. She is also sometimes called Catarina or by the nickname Catita. Assayag (1997) points out that Francisco and Catirina may be a play on Queen Catarina de Medici and King Francisco I, who reigned during the time that the French founded the city of Sã Luiz in the state of Maranhão, in 1612. Catirina and Mãe Maria are customarily played by men dressed as women, though occasionally in some boi-bumbá groups today some of the roles are played by women (the Parintins boi-bumbá group Garantido has long had a female Catirina).

Sometimes the name is spelled Gazumbá. Writing about the northeast, Joel Jacinto (2011) suggests that the popular pronunciation is _Cazumba_, with no final accent (leaving the stress to fall on the penultimate syllable); “Cazumbá” being used primarily by researchers and academics. Matos and Ferretti (2010) suggest instead that the stressed syllable differs from one location to the next. Cazumbá (I choose this spelling as this is how it is most often spelled and pronounced in Manaus currently) assumes a somewhat different form and function in the bumba-meu-boi of Maranhão state. There, many Cazumbás appear in masks and perform key roles in opening the performance of the bumba-meu-boi; in scaring children; and in the performance of the drama of the auto do boi. This Maranhão version of Cazumbá has clear roots in Africa and Iberia.

For more on Cazumbá, see the aforementioned sources as well as the interviews with Cazumbá performers and artists and the striking photographs of Cazumbá masks in _Caretá de Cazumba_ by Mazzillo, Bitter, and Pacheco (2005). When Pai Francisco appears under the name “Mateus,” as happens at times in the Northeast, his companion may be known as “Birico” (Possi Neto 1977:6). Possi Neto asserts that in the North region (where Manaus is located), Pai Francisco appears with a companion called Sebastião. I have not yet encountered this variation. Possi Neto also indicates that in the performances he is familiar with, there is indeed a character named Cazumba, “also called Folharao. A witch covered with green leaves and a horrifying mask.” This
owner, known as the *Amo do boi*, has a particularly wonderful bull, who is a kind of special pet of his daughter, known as the *Sinhazinha da Fazenda*, roughly the “little miss of the plantation.” The Sinhazinha dances and plays with the special bull every day, feeding him grass and salt. Nearby the ranch is an Indian village, which is run by a powerful chief, or *tuxaua*.

Disaster comes to this peaceful scene when Catirina, who is pregnant, informs her husband that the unborn babe is causing her to crave beef tongue – and that her craving Cazumba is accompanied by a female (male transvestite) character named Cunha. The variations, clearly, are endless.

Mãe Guiomã does not currently appear in Manaus Boi-bumbá Garanhão’s performances, though she is present in the presentations of Parintins groups. Instead, Mãe Maria, who is the wife of the Amo do Boi, appears as a comical figure along with Francisco, Catirina, and Cazumbá. It is not entirely clear how she remained a part of the clowns of the auto do boi, while her husband, the Amo do Boi and their daughter the Sinhazinha da Fazenda became non-comical separate performing items. I suspect there was some historical hiccup that caused this strange disconnect. Another companion to Catirina in the Northeast region is called *Dona Joana* (Possi Neto 1977).

According to Taylor (1958:43), “amo” can be translated as “master, head of household; landlord.” Some boi-bumbá groups consider him to be the owner of the ranch, as I believe is indicated by Taylor’s translation. However, Assayag (1997), in writing a history of Parintins Boi Caprichoso, indicates that the ranch owner (who never appears in the drama) is named “Senhor Branco” (Mr. White), while the Amo do Boi is merely a “feitor,” or administrator. He points to Menezes (1993) and Carneiro (1982) as containing versions which treat the Amo do Boi as the caretaker only, while in Tocantins (2000) and Carvalho (1995) the Amo do Boi is the ranch owner and bull caretaker all in one.

A form that came originally from “Senhora” plus “-zinha,” a diminutive suffix; it is the equivalent of the Spanish *señorita*, though no longer in use. It refers to an unmarried woman of the upper class.

According to Assayag (1997), historian of Parintins Boi Caprichoso, in the Northeast, the Indian village in the drama is generally run by a character playing the Director of the Indians, a position that was created in 1757, after the abolition of Indian slavery in 1755. The Directors replaced the Jesuit missionaries, who were expelled and whose lands were confiscated in 1759. The director received 1/6th of what the Indians produced, as his payment. The job of the Director was to assist the Indians in cultural assimilation (Assayag 1997:21-22).
will only be satisfied by eating the tongue of the Amo do boi’s favorite bull. Francisco gives in under Catirina’s insistence, and kills the bull and presents her with the meat for her to eat. However, this sin is soon discovered, and the Amo do boi is furious that his daughter’s playmate has been slaughtered. Upon hearing of the ranch owner’s anger, Francisco flees into the forest and hides. The Amo summons the Indians of the nearby village and orders them to find Francisco and bring him back for judgment, which they quickly accomplish. Shaking his fists in the air, the furious Amo presents Francisco with the evidence, and demands that he resolve this situation. Francisco, desperate, first summons a doctor to administer medicine, but this does not help the inanimate bull. Next, a Catholic priest is called to pray over the bull, but this too yields no positive result. Finally, a shaman is summoned, and he performs a ritual and returns the bull to its

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42 The belief that a pregnant woman’s *desejos*, or cravings, must be satisfied is an Amazonian folk belief. If the mother is not given the foods she craves, the baby may be born with a *boca torta*, a twisted mouth. The Auto do Boi of Garanhão 2012 includes this detail, as does Assayag (1997:24), who indicates that the baby could be born crippled and with a twisted mouth.

43 In some versions of the auto do boi (see for example Assayag 1997 writing about Parintins Boi Caprichoso), the Indians are baptized before they are sent to catch Francisco, presumably so that if they die in the battle, they will go to the Christian heaven. Boi Garanhão’s performance does not include a baptism.

44 Sometimes multiple doctors appear, and sometimes only one. Doctors are called *Doutor da vida* (Doctor of life), *Doutor Relâmpago* (Doctor Lightning), or *Doutor Cachaça*, Dr. Cachaça. Cachaça is a white Brazilian sugarcane liquor. Dr. Cachaça weaves and wobbles around the arena, demonstrating his inebriety to comic effect. In the performance of Boi-bumbá Garanhão, the two doctors are Dr. Cachaça and Doutor da Vida. Assayag (1997, citing as sources also Carvalho 1995, Menezes 1993, and Monteiro 1972) lists also “Dr. Curador,” “Dr. Palma Nego,” “Dr. Curabem,” “Dr. Faísca,” “Dr. Sabe Nào Diz,” “Dr. Da Juntaria,” and “Dr. Sara-Cura.” Dr. Cachaça and Dr. da Vida are required items in the auto do boi in the Folklore Festival of Amazonas, where Boi-bumbá Garanhão competes.
previous state of vivaciousness. The bull arises, begins to dance, and everyone is happy. The drama ends with all of the Indian tribes arriving to celebrate this happy event.\textsuperscript{4546}

My own initial reaction to performances of the boi-bumbá was that of confusion: the boi-bumbá seemed to be composed of two completely unconnected and incompatible parts, haphazardly stuck together, with each retaining its own characteristics. The first element is that of the choreographed dances, accompanied by songs presented by the 

_Levantador de Toadas_ [Raiser of Melodies] or less frequently, the Amo do Boi and the group’s musicians. The second part is the drama of the auto do boi itself, the story, acted out like a mini-play, with either the characters singing their lines, or more commonly today, the Levantador sings a narration of the story. I deduced that the auto do boi was an original story, onto which had been grafted choreographed dances of more recent origin. To my surprise, rather than being a new occurrence, this very juxtaposition of two disparate parts forms the basic definition of the entire genre of dramatic dances. Here is Andrade’s (1982[1928]:57) characterization, widely accepted and used by scholars of the brincadeira do boi today:

$$\text{[\ldots]} \text{the dramatic dances are divided into two very distinct parts: the procession,}$$

$$\text{choreographically characterized by pieces which allow the movement of dancers,}$$

\textsuperscript{45} This is the most common version of the auto as explained to me by members of Manaus Boi-bumbá Garanhão. There are, of course, many variations, for example in the part of the bull that Catirina says that she needs to eat (see Assayag 1997:24 for further discussion of this subject), or in the sequence of healers that Francisco calls (and the names of the healers), and the types of cures that the healers attempt. The cures customarily often tended to the slapstick, with, for example, the doctor inserting an enormous suppository into the anus of the bull, or giving the bull an injection with an enormous hypodermic needle. In Possi Neto’s (1977) version, a small boy is inserted into the bull’s anus, as an “enema.” Other versions of the auto can be found in Assayag 1997:20-27, Cavalcanti 2006, Monteiro 2004, Possi Neto 1977 and others.

\textsuperscript{46} Garanhão’s 2011 synopsis provides a very similar auto do boi.
generally called “ballads;” and the part that can be properly considered dramatic, generally called the “embassy,” characterized by the more or less choreographed representation of a dramatic plot, requiring a fixed arena, room, stage, courtyard, front of a house, or church.47

While these terms are not used in the boi-bumbá of Amazonas and the dances performed today in Manaus almost certainly little resemble those documented in the 19th and 20th century, the two-fold core of the dramatic dance remains in essence the same. In the following section I will examine those early documentations of the brincadeira do boi in Brazil.

**Part II: Origins of the Brincadeira do Boi**

*The Brincadeira do Boi in Brazil*

Much of colonial Brazil was divided into large lots known as *latifúndias*, which were generally given to friends of the crown to administer. On these vast plots of land, raising cattle soon became one of the colony’s economic mainstays, and bull-related festivities were popular from the beginning:

> Since the time of Brazil’s colonization in the sixteenth century when large herds pastured on vast farmlands of hostile terrain and the bull was an animal of economic esteem (even creating legends of the major cattle-breeders), the idea of an amusing and dancing bull entertaining the masses was reflected in the frolicsome *tourinhas* (calf-fights or sham bull-fights), which were originally

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47 “[...] as danças dramáticas se dividem em duas partes bem distintas: o cortejo, caracterizado coreograficamente por peças que permitem a locomoção dos dançadores, em geral chamadas de “cantigas;” e a parte propriamente dramática, em geral chamada de “embaixada” caracterizada pela representação mais ou menos coreográfica dum entrecho, e exigindo arena fixa, sala, tablado, pátio, frente de casa ou igreja.” [Andrade 1982:57]
practiced in Portugal and Spain. In the calf-fights the Portuguese young men fought meek animals requiring no extraordinary courage, where in the popular sham bull-fights a fragile wooden frame made of wicker and bamboo covered with fabric was used, manipulated from underneath by a man who danced and jumped to intimidate the audience. The shallow basket-like bull bodies, with menacing make-believe heads, imitated the runs of a real bull while the young men joyfully simulated the courage and maneuvers of the famous toreadors for the whooping audience. There was no theme, plot, songs, dance, or rhetorical display, as there is in *Bumba-meu-boo*. The *tourinhas* were simply a pastime for entertaining the crowd. [Gottheim 1984:28-29]

Touradas and tourinhas were first recorded in Rio de Janeiro in 1818 (Melo Morais Filho 1981) and in São Paulo in 1826 (D’Orbigny 1976[1836]), which demonstrates the existing passion for bull-related pastimes.

The *bumba-meu-boo* festival of the Northeastern region of Brazil, which is popularly accepted as the predecessor of the boi-bumbá, was first mentioned in writing in 1829, in a brief letter to the editor of the newspaper *O Farol Maranhense* [The Maranhão Torch], published on July 7th:

Mr. Editor, Sir – I live in Bacanga [Maranhão] and visit the city only on rare occasions. However I have a close friend, a neighbour of mine, who cannot let a revelry go by without coming to watch it. He came to see the St. John’s Day feasts, just to see the frenzy of *Bumba-meu-boo*, and on his return told me the following news, which, since I’m a little doubtful of their authenticity, I shall try to recount for you do me the favour of saying whether they are true or not. This
friend said to me that on St. John’s Eve there were many fireworks: that bands of 40 to 50 people wandered through the streets armed with squibs, all very happy, that the police did not arrest anyone while no disorder occurred.\footnote{“Sr. Redactor – Moro no Bacanga e poucas vezes venho à cidade. Mas tenho um compadre que me fica visinho, que não passa festa que não venha assistir a ella. Pela de S. João veio elle, só para ver as correrias do Bumba-meu-boi, e na volta contou-me as seguintes novidades que por duvidar um pouco déllas, tencionei contar-lhas para me fazer o favor de dizer si sào ou não verdadeiras. Disse-me o tal meu compadre, que na noite de São João houve muitos fogos: que andavão malocas de 40 e 50 pessoas pelas ruas armados de buscapês, todos mui alegres que a Polícia não prendeo a ninguem por quanto nenhuma desordem acontecera.” Translation from Portuguese to English by David Allan Rodgers; his version can be found in “Myth and variants on the death and resurrection of the ox in Brazil,” translated from Cavalcanti’s original \textit{Mana} article.} \cite[cavalcanti 2006b:91]{Cavalcanti2006}

While the writer does not provide a detailed account of the bumba-meu-boi, it is clear that in 1829 it existed in a vigorous manifestation that attracted people from the surrounding region.

The first real written description of the brincadeira do boi appeared in the periodical \textit{O Carapuceiro} \cite[The Hoodmaker\footnote{On the front page of this periodical appeared an image of a hat store with a hatter placing a hood or cowl on the head of a hunchback.}]{Rodgers1982}, in an opinion piece written by priest Miguel do Sacramento Lopes da Gama (1791-1852), published on January 11, 1840 in Recife. His piece carried the title: “\textit{A estultice do Bumba Meu Boi},” or “The Folly of the Bumba Meu Boi,” and reflected his trademark irreverent style:

\begin{quote}
Of all the diversions, frolics, and popular amusements in our Pernambuco, I do not know one as foolish, as stupid, and as lacking in grace/humor, as the also well-known \textit{Bumba-meu-boi}. A black man placed under a cloth is the bull; a rogue inserted into the bottom of a large, old, wicker basket calls himself the seahorse; another screwball, under some sheets, is named the little donkey; a boy
\end{quote}
with two skirts, one from the waist down, the other from the waist up, ending at
the head with a manioc sieve, is what is called the *caipora*; besides these there is
also another rogue that they call Father Mateus. The “seahorse” is the master of
the bull, the little donkey, the *caipora*, and Mateus. All the amusement revolves
around making the master of all these rascals dance to the sound of guitars,
tambourines, and the infernal bawling of that drunken Mateus. (...) Besides this,
the bull always dies, for no reason, and is resuscitated by means of an enema
delivered by Mateus, something very pleasant and amusing for the judicious
spectators. Up to this point this is just the fun of a popular and greatly ungraceful
frolic, but for some years around here there has not been a *bumba-meu-boi* that is
considered good if a guy does not appear dressed as a priest or even in a rochet
and stole, to serve as the fool of the function. Who usually plays the part of the
buffonish priest is a shameless rascal, chosen to execute the task up to the most
disgusting ridiculousness; and as a finishing touch of derision this priest hears the
confession of Mateus, and that captive negro makes his confessor fall upside
down with his legs in the air, and finishes, naturally, by giving the priest a lot of
lashings.50

50 “De quantos recreios, folgâncias e desenfadas populares há neste nosso Pernambuco, eu
não conheço um tão tolo, tão estúpido e destituído de graça, como o aliás bem conhecido
Bumba-meu-Boi. Um negro metido debaixo de uma baeta é o boi; um capadócio enfiado
pelo fundo dum panacu velho, chama-se o cavalo-marinho; outro, aloprado, sob lençóis,
denomina-se burrinha; um menino com duas saias, uma da cintura para baixo, outra da
cintura para cima, terminando para a cabeça com uma urupema, é o que se chama a
caipora; há alem disto outro capadócio que se chama o pai Mateus. O sujeito do cavalomarinho é o senhor do boi, da burrinha, da caipora e do Mateus. Todo o divertimento
cifra-se em o dono de toda esta súcia fazer dançar ao som de violas, pandeiros e uma
infernal berraria o tal bêbado Mateus. (...) Além disso o boi morre sempre, sem que nem
para que, e ressuscita por virtude de um clister, que pespega o Mateus, coisa mui
By 1840, then, the bumba-meu-boi was well established in at least two states of the Brazilian northeast. We do not know, however, whether the “frenzied” version of Bacanga, Maranhão had any resemblance to the “folly” of Recife, Pernambuco.

We can imagine that the bumba-meu-boi did not emerge full-blown as the goddess Athena from the cleft head of Zeus, but rather through a gradual process of change and the addition of elements to the entertaining but plot-less tourinhas and touradas. This is the opinion of Brazilian folklorist Luís da Câmara Cascudo, writing about the bumbá-meu-boi of Maranhão state:

And so began the bumba-meu-boi in Brazil. The gymnastic movements of the boi-de-canastra⁵¹ brought the ranch hand character and the auto created itself by binding together other dances which had less density in the collective appreciation. The center of the biggest and strongest attraction draws to itself the common motifs of country work and typical figures of the nearby towns and villages: bush captain, vicar, healer, tax collector, bully, runaway slave, and the vision of oral literature in the old elves, Caipora,⁵² Bate-Queixo,⁵³ Dead-Body, Giant, and natural beings, donkey, ostrich, vulture. It opened up the door to an

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⁵¹ “Canastra” means basket; the boi-de-canastra was a bull built on a basketry frame.
⁵² The caipora is a creature of Brazilian folklore, a kind of forest guardian. Sometimes he is associated with bad luck.
⁵³ Bate-queixo literally means “chin beater.” I have searched for other references to this figure, without luck.
inexhaustible collaboration with the puppet dancers, with Europe and other nationalities, new blood for the perpetuation of the folkloric dance. (…) The *bumba-meu-boi* is an *auto* of exceptional plasticity and the most intense emotion and social penetration. It was the first to conquer the sympathies of the natives that it represents, preferentially, as the *Timbiras* of Maranhão, and it is diffused through the South by the faithful memory of Northeastern migrants. The black is in the *congos*. The Portuguese is in the *marujada* or *fandango*. The mestizo, creole, *mameluco*, dancing, singing, living, is in the *bumba-meu-boi*, the first national *auto* in its thematic and lyric legitimacy and in its assimilative power, constant and powerful.” [Cascudo 1986(1954):151-153]

The “exceptional plasticity” of the brincadeira do boi is still very much in existence, making room for a larger frame around the auto, additional characters, a new style of

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54 Another folkloric dance.
55 Ditto.
56 A *mameluco* is a historical racial category indicating the offspring of a European and an Indian. I have never heard this term used in Manaus, where *Caboclo* is generally used instead.
57 “…Assim começou o bumba-meu-boi no Brasil. A movimentação ginástica do boi-de-canastra trouxe o vaqueiro e o auto se criou pela aglutinação de outros bailados de menor densidade na apreciação coletiva. O centro de maior e mais forte atração fez gravitar ao seu derredor os motivos comuns ao trabalho pastoril e figuras normais dos povoados e vilas próximas, capitão-de-mato, vigário, doutor-curado, cobrador de impostos, o valentão, escravo fujão, e as visões da literatura oral nos duendes velhos, Caipora, Bate-Queijo, Corpo-Morto, Gigante, e entes naturais, burrinha, ema, urubu. Abria-se a porta para a colaboração inesgotável dos títeres bailarinos, da Europa e dos arredores nacionais, sangue novo para a perpetuidade do folguedo. (…) o bumba-meu-boi é um auto de excepcional plasticidade e o de mais intensa penetração afetuosa e social. Foi o primeiro a conquistar a simpatia dos indígenas que o representam, preferencialmente, como os timbiras do Maranhão e é difundido pelo Sul através da memória fiel dos nordestinos emigrados. O negro está nos congos. O português no fandango ou marujada. O mestiço, crioulo, *mameluco*, dançando, cantando, vivendo, está no *Bumba-meu-boi*, o primeiro auto nacional na legitimidade temática e lírica e no poder assimilador, constante e poderoso.”
music, and changing commentary upon new social, geographic, and political realities, as we will see later.

Migration of the Brincadeira do Boi to the Amazon

The boi-bumbá, popularly considered to be the Amazonian version of the bumba-meu-boi folk drama, is widely believed to have been brought from the northeast of Brazil by migrants fleeing the crippling drought and poverty of their home region for the hope of a better life in the north (Assayag 1995; Farias 2005; Valentin 2005). Northeasterners, including ex-slaves freed by the 1888 Golden Law of emancipation, flocked to the Amazon region to work in the booming rubber industry in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Even after the 1913 end of the Brazilian rubber monopoly (Chernela 2000), many remained, intermarrying with the local Caboclo population.

Somewhere along its way to Parintins and Manaus, the main character of the drama, the Black ranch hand Pai Francisco became a Caboclo; the bull (boi) of the title became a zebu, the common cattle of the Amazon region; the pajé’s resurrection of the bull became an intense dramatic climax, the roles of Cazumbá and Mãe Maria diminished in importance while that of the Sinhazinha grew, and the lyrics changed, shifting from an idiom resounding with the accents and languages of African slaves to one reflecting the Amazonian dialects, full of vocabulary borrowed from the Tupi languages (Assayag 1995:29, 32-34).

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58 Participants in my research were divided on whether they considered Pai Francisco and Catirina to be “Caboclos” or “Negros.” Pai Francisco and Catirina are generally portrayed in blackface (i.e. their faces are painted totally black). When I asked study participants why their faces were black, some people indicated that this was because they were of African origins, while others stated that they were rural people, and their faces were dirty.
In both the northeastern and northern regions alike the bull drama was first documented in the nineteenth century as being performed in the streets or in courtyards by relatively small groups of amateur players and musicians who traveled from house to house and received food, drink, and coins in return, and a practice which remains to this day in some areas (Assayag 1995; Bitter et al. 2005; Cavalcanti 2001; Valentin 2005).

While most who write histories of the boi-bumbá indicate that the brincadeira came with migrants from the northeast, there are a few who believe that it arose throughout the country simultaneously. Borba Filho (1966) specifically refutes the assertions held by such as Pereira da Costa (1967[1908]), who suggested that the brincadeira do boi might have originated either in the state of Piauí, or in the state of Pernambuco, but more

59 Most of these histories, it must be noted, are focused on Parintins, and the growth of the boi-bumbá festival in that small city. Assayag (1995), for example, notes that Bates and Wallace passed through Parintins in their famous travels, and mentioned no boi-bumbá, hence it must have come to the Amazon with the great wave of migrants from the Northeast that reached Parintins in the 1870s. I am certain that had Assayag’s focus been on Manaus, he would have been aware of Avé-Lallemant’s above account from a performance he viewed in Manaus in 1859.

60 Pereira da Costa (1967[1908]) suggested Piauí as the birthplace of the bumba-meu-boi because of an old folk song:

O meu boi morreu
Que será do mim
Mando buscar outro maninha
Lá no Piauí.

(“My bull died/what will become of me/?I sent for another, little sister/There in Piauí.”)

To me, this suggests that Piauí was known for its cattle ranching, and not necessarily that it was known for the bumba-meu-boi.

61 Pereira da Costa’s reason for suggesting Pernambuco as the origin of the bumba-meu-boi lies in another old folk song:

Cavalo-marinho
dança bem baiano
bem parece ser
um pernambucano.

(“The sea-horse/is good at dancing the baiano/so good that he could be/from Pernambuco.”) The cavalo-marinho is a character in the bumba-meu-boi.
broadly he attacks any theorization on the subject of which Brazilian brincadeira do boi may be the original:

The thesis does not hold. First of all, there is nothing to stop each region from adding local references to the text, on the contrary, that is the general rule; in the second place, no document proves that the Bumba-meu-boi of Pernambuco is older than the boi-bumbá of Amazonas, the boi-de-reis of Maranhão, the boi Surubi of Ceará, the boi Calemba of Rio Grande do Norte, the Cavalo marinho of Paraíba, the bumba-de-reis of Espírito Santo, the Reis de boi of Rio de Janeiro, the Boi de mamão of Santa Catarina, the boizinho of Rio Grande do Sul.\(^{62}\) [Borba Filho 1966:11]

And indeed there is no way to prove, one way or the other, which version might be the original brincadeira, should such a thing have even existed. I suspect that soon after the earliest, proto-brincadeira do boi appeared on the scene, it exploded into hundreds or thousands of variants, which spread quickly throughout the country. Brincadeira do boi groups often arise only to endure twenty or so years and die out again when the founder loses interest or no longer has time or money to sustain the group. Very frequently one boi group splits into factions over disagreements about money, artistic decisions, or personal issues, and two somewhat different groups are born. It is very likely that the variations that remain today are only related in the loosest fashion to the earliest versions.

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\(^{62}\) “A tese não se sustenta. Em primeiro lugar nada impede que, em cada região, se acrescente ao texto referência local, ao contrário, esta é que é a regra geral; em segundo lugar, nenhum documento prova que o Bumba-meu-boi de Pernambuco seja mais antigo que o boi-bumbá do Amazonas, o boi-de-reis do Maranhão, o boi Surubi do Ceará, o boi Calemba do Rio Grande do Norte, o Cavalo marinho da Paraíba, o bumba-de-reis do Espírito Santo, o Reis de boi do Rio de Janeiro, o Boi de mamão de Santa Catarina, o boizinho do Rio Grande do Sul.”
Be that as it may, it is clear that the brincadeira do boi did not arrive in Manaus only with the rubber migrants, who began to appear in force in the 1870s and 1880s. And while Manaus was a focal point of trade in the region, travel only began to open up in 1853, with the beginning of steam travel. The third historical accounting of the brincadeira do boi in Brazil was of the “bumba” of Manaus, in 1859. German world traveler and medical doctor Robert Christian Berthold Avé-Lallemant (1980[1859]) recorded what seems to be a well-established public performance:

I saw another procession shortly after I arrived, this time in honor of St. Peter and St. Paul. They called it ‘bumba.’ From afar I heard from my window a singular singing and syncopated drumming. In the dark, coming up the street, arose a great multitude that stopped in front of the police chief’s house, and seemed to organize itself, without doing anything that I could recognize. Suddenly the flames from some torches illuminated the street and the entire scene. Two lines of people of color, in the most varied apparel of masqueraders, but without masks—because dusky faces were better—placed themselves one across from another, thus leaving a free space. At one end, wearing an Indian’s party costume, the tuxaua, or chief, with his wife; this was a big, well-proportioned youth, because no woman or girl appeared to take part in the celebration. This chieftainess exhibited a beautiful costume, with a short, many-colored skirt and a pretty feathered crown. If you adorned the head and hips of a saucy dancer in Paris or Berlin with this costume, it would certainly knock down a whole audience. In front of the couple was stationed a shaman, the pajé; in front of him, at the other end of the line, a bull. Not a real bull, but rather an enormous and light framework of a bull, on whose
sides hung pieces of cloth, with two real horns at the front. A man carried this
carcass on his head, thus creating the figure of a bull of great dimensions.63

Avé-Lallemant continues, happily for us describing in detail the movements of the
celebration of the bumba:

While the choir accompanies the beat of the drums, intoning in a kind of *bocca
chiusa*64 monotone, the *paje*, or shaman, advances in danced steps to his partner
and sings:

The bull is very angry
he needs to be tamed.

The bull does not like this, and pushes his partner with his horns, also dancing
backwards towards the place of the Indian chief. But, with the same taming
formula, the *paje* dances and pushes the bull back again; and after this he does the
same to the *paje*, and so continues this singular dance through all kinds of
twistings and grimaces by both actors, and faced with this exhibition, even the

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63 “Vi um outro cortejo, logo depois de minha chegada, desta vez em homenagem a S.
Pedro e S. Paulo. Chamaram-no bumba. De longe ouvi de minha janela uma singular
cantoria e batuque sincopados. Surgiu no escuro, subindo a rua, uma grande multidão que
fez alto diante da casa do Chefe da Polícia, e pareceu organizar-se, sem que nada se
pudesse reconhecer. De repente as chamas da alguns archotes iluminaram a rua e toda a
cena. Duas filas de gente de cor, nos mais variegados trajes de mascarados, mas sem
máscaras—porquanto caras fuscas eram melhores—colocaram-se uma diante da outra,
deixando assim um espaço livre. Numa extremidade, em traje índio de festa, o tuxaua, ou
chefe, com sua mulher; esta era uma rapazola bem proporcionado, porque mulher alguma
ou rapariga parecia tomar parte na festa. Essa senhora tuxaua exibia um belo traje, com
uma saia curta, de diversas cores, e uma bonita coroa de penas. O traje na cabeça e nos
quadris duma dançarina atirada teria por certo feito vir abaixo toda uma platéia em Paris
ou Berlim. Diante do casal postava-se um feiticeiro, o pajé; defronte dele, na outra
extremidade da fila, um boi. Não um boi real, e sim um enorme e leve arcabouço dum
boi, de cujos lados pendiam uns panos, tendo na frente dois chifres verdadeiros. Um
homem carrega essa carcaça na cabeça, e ajuda assim a completar a figura dum boi de
grandes dimensões” (Avé-Lallemant 1980 [1859]:106).

64 *Bocca chiusa* is closed mouth or hummed singing.
worst tempered confirmed bachelor could not remain serious for very long, or indifferent to the maracas and the songs of the onlookers.

Finally, the bull becomes tame, quiet, spellbound, drooping, and falls to the ground, and instantly there is total silence. All around reins the silence of the dead!

What happened to the bull? Is it dying or is it already dead, the good bull, that so recently was playing its part so well? They quickly call another paje to save it, even before getting a priest, who could put the holy viaticum in his mouth. This, however, is now prohibited, and so one must be content with only a paje.

This one begins to sing a very sorrowful melody in front of the bull, but this, however, produces no effect. The bull does not move. He rehearses an even more efficacious conjuring melody, but in vain; the bull, immobile! And after he alone did not manage to accomplish anything, the whole company helps, but unfortunately with the same result. The bull is dead.

This was then interrupted by a square dance, accompanied by hymns, with regular and cadenced leaps, which certainly required fine study and rehearsals. With hands on their waists, forming a long chain, all the dancers at the same time take a step to the front and another to the back with the right foot, pause for an entire beat, and repeat the same movements with the left foot, with a graceful swaying of the body to the side that makes the movements. They dance thusly around the center, close to the torches placed around the bull, which produce

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65 The “holy viaticum” refers to the Eucharist given to someone near to or before death.
marvelous light effects with the various animated characters. In particular they sing the word ‘lavandeira’, as they pronounce the word ‘lavadeira’ [washerwoman], who gives them clean handkerchiefs, so they can cry to their hearts’ content, and who could also probably wash the bull. The paje, however, always sings in the intervals apparently improvised verses, exactly like a Viennese singer, taking plenty of time.

And as, finally, all should be convinced of the sad reality of the death of the bull, they decide, as a final great act, on a general sung announcement:

........................... cry

The bull is already leaving now, that is, will be buried.

And they leave with the bull, singing and beating drums, while it, exactly like a dead hero of the theater after the cloth falls, resolves, with praiseworthy consideration, to accompany them on his own two feet. That is, with those which carried him; he stops on the first corner, and so, repeatedly, until the wee hours, dying five or six times in the same night.

As to what was glimpsed there, whether spirit and allusion or reminiscence of an old forest celebration, I cannot say. For me, however, it

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66 Manaus folklorist Mário Ypiranga Monteiro asserted that quite possibly Avé-Lallemant’s observations were not entirely accurate (though undoubtedly extremely good). The two lines here: “chora/O boi já vai embora” (“cry/The bull is already leaving now”) might actually have been a more common formulaic despedida, or farewell: “Meu bem,/não chora,/dá teu adeus/que o boi/já vai-se embora,” or “My dear,/don’t cry,/say your good-bye/because the bull/is leaving” (Monteiro 2004:115-116, English translation is mine). I find this a wholly reasonable explanation.

67 “Enquanto o coro acompanha o compasso do batuque, entoando uma espécie de bocca chiusa monótona, o pajé, o feiticeiro, avança em passo de dança para o seu par e canta: ‘O boi é muito bravo/Precisa amansá-lo.’ O boi não gosta disso e empurra com os chifres seu par, também dançando, para trás, para o lugar do tuxaua. Mas, com a mesma fórmula amansadora, o pajé dança e empurra o boi novamente para trás; e depois este o pajé, e assim durou a singular dança, em meio de toda sorte de voltas e trejeitos de ambos os atores, diante de cuja exibição, mesmo o mais mal-humorado dos solteirões não poderia ficar sério por muito tempo e indiferente ao ritmo do maracá e ao canto dos circunstantes. Por fim, o boi fica manso, quieto, absinto, desanimado, cai por terra, e no mesmo instante tudo silencia. Reina em volta um silêncio de morte! Que aconteceu ao boi? Está morrendo ou já está morto, o bom boi, que ainda há pouco representava tão bem seu papel? Chamam depressa outro pajé para socorrê-lo; dantes iam mesmo buscar um padre, que devia meter-lhe na boca o santo viático. Isso, porém, é proibido agora, e têm de contentar-se só com o pajé. Esta começa a cantar diante do boi uma melodia muito sentida que, porém, não produz efeito. O boi não se mexe. Ensaia uma melodia esconjuratória ainda mais eficaz, mas em vão; o boi, imóvel! E depois de sozinho, nada ter conseguido, toda a companhia ajuda, infelizmente, porém, com o mesmo resultado. O boi está morto. Irrompeu então, acompanhada de cânticos, uma dança de roda, em saltos regulares e cadenciada, que exigia certamente apurado estudo e ensaio. As mãos na cintura, formando uma longa cadeia, todos os dançarinos dão a um tempo um passo para frente e outro para trás com o pé direito, fazem então a pausa dum compasso inteiro, e repetem os mesmos movimentos com o pé esquerdo, com graciosos meneios do corpo para o lado que faz os movimentos. Dançam assim em volta do centro, perto dos archotes atirados junto do boi, o que faz com que os variegados vultos animados produzam maravilhosos efeitos de luz. Cantam particularmente sobre a palavra “lavadeira”, como pronunciam o vocábulo lavadeira, que lhes dá um lenço limpo, para que se possam fartar de chorar, e que provavelmente deverá lavar também o boi. O pajé, porém, canta sempre, nos intervalos, versos aparentemente improvisados, exatamente como num descante vienense, levando nisso muito tempo. E como, por fim, todos devem estar convencidos da triste realidade da morte do boi, decidem-se, como último grande ato, por uma intimação geral cantada: .........................chora/O boi já vai-se embora, isto é, vai ser enterrado. E partem, cantando e batucando, com o seu boi, enquanto êste, exatamente como um herói morto de teatro, depois de cair o pano, resolve, por uma louvável consideração, acompanhá-los com os próprios pés, isto é, com os que o tinham trazido; pára na primeira esquina, e assim repetidamente, até altas horas, morrendo cinco ou seis vezes na mesma noite. Até onde se vislumbram aí, o espírito e alusão ou reminiscência duma antiga festa na selva, não posso dizer. Para mim, porém, representava, com seus coros e saltos cuidadosamente cadenciados, algo atraente, algo de lídima poesia selvagem.” (My translation.) (After this he compares quite favorably the Boi-bumbá of Manaus to the boeuf gras of the Parisian carnival season.)
Our next notice of the brincadeira do boi in Manaus is an advertisement in the local newspaper *O Amazonas* [The Amazon] from June 23rd, 1867, in which one João de Sousa (otherwise known as João Calafate, or João the Caulker) invited the public at large to attend the performance of the bumba-meu-boi in his courtyard on the Estrada Grande, today Boulevard Amazonas. More detail than this was unfortunately not offered, but it does demonstrate that the brincadeira do boi was an ongoing phenomenon in Manaus from the mid-19th century.

**Old World Origins**

As the boi-bumbá of Amazonas today heavily promotes creativity and innovation, festival creators feel the pressure to constantly find new avenues of exploration in their search for interesting images, music, and dance. Choregraphers, costume and set designers, songwriters, and scenographers overwhelming told me that research (library, field, or internet) informed the decisions that they made in their work. The creators of the boi-bumbá festival of Manaus and Parintins consider the festival’s past history as a repository of images and information to be freely mined and reincorporated into performances today. While the general populace accepts as self-evident that the brincadeira do boi arose in the country’s Northeast region, boi-bumbá intellectuals often trace the history of the festival to the Old World, especially Iberia and Africa. As festival creators in Amazonas are aware of and reference this deeper genealogy, I give here a brief overview of the Old World origins of the bull festival.

Bulls have been reverenced, mythologized, and celebrated since the domestication of cattle. From the worship of the golden calf in the Christian Bible, to the running of the bulls at Pamplona, to Carnival’s *Boeuf Gras* in Paris and New Orleans, bulls have been
potent symbols in many societies. However, bull-centered celebrations often end badly for the beast of honor. Take, for example: Spain’s famous bullfights, or the South African Zulu *Ukwenhama* festival in which young warriors tear apart a living bull with their hands. Although it is only playacting, the Brazilian brincadeira do boi also centers around the death – and the following revival – of a bull. In the past, an actual bull was frequently killed at the end of the presentation of the drama, and the barbecued parts shared among performers and audience (Braga 2002).  

Popular and religious festivals featuring bulls are common throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa (Assayag 1995, Gottheim 1984), and have been since at least Egyptian times. Some boi-bumbá scholars see the Amazonian bull festivals of today as the end point of thousands of years of cultural mixing. For example, Amazonian writer Leandro Tocantins asserts:

The drama of the *Boi-bumbá* in the Amazon aligns itself among some of those of the most difficult cultural reconstitution, so many were the ethnic agents that intervened in it. What can quickly be affirmed is that the boi is a totemic survival, with remote origins in the Egyptian cult of the bull Ápis. The bull theme was common in the ancient popular dramas in Europe, and also can be found in the folk plays of Greece and in the dramas enacted during the Middle Ages.  

[Tocantins 2000:238]

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68 I have been assured that this practice still occurs in some communities, but have not seen it myself. I suspect its practice today is largely nostalgic and organized as a special event.

69 “O auto do Boi-bumbá na Amazônia alinha-se entre os de mais difícil reconstituição cultural, tantos foram os agente étnicos que nele intervieram. O que se pode desde logar afirmar é que o boi é uma sobrevivência totêmica, de origens remotas no culto egípcio do
Artur Ramos (1934) points also to the African history of reverence for and worship of bulls, and views the bull in the brincadeira do boi as a totemic Bantu survival (see also Braga 2002). Ramos focuses on the Bantu tribe of the Ba-Naneca, who at the time of the harvest performed a ceremony to worship Geroa the bull, with hymns and special instruments. Such religious celebrations were strongly linked to the work and social life of the tribal group, and Ramos posits that the bumba-meu-boi of the Northeast can trace its heritage in part to such African religious ceremonies.

While it is undeniable that African music and dance left their imprint on the brincadeira do boi, there is little doubt that the boi-bumbá can also trace its lineage to the various folk dramas of the Iberian Peninsula that feature bull figures (Assayag 1995; Queiroz 1967), and is related to the other bull dramas common throughout Latin America (such as the Nicaraguan Touro Al Guaque,70 Gottheim 1984). The European precursors that seem most closely related are the Boi de Fingimento,71 the Boi de Canastra, and the Tourinhas de Minho. The Boi de Fingimento72 was animated by a man underneath a cloth who made the bull dance and jump around (Assunção 2008:16, Assayag 1995:32). The Boi de Canastra, the central figure being a basketwork bull, was somewhat more advanced, able to imitate the movements of real bulls, and played in the streets,
frightening and delighting onlookers (Assunção 2008:16, Assayag 1995:32). The Tourinhas, popular in Spain and Portugal but practiced also in Brazil from the 16th century (Gottheim 1984:28), were the most simple, with a bull made sometimes of a board with a piece of wood nailed onto one end, representing the bull’s horns (Assunção 2008:16), or a fragile wood-and-bamboo frame covered with cloth, and animated by an actor beneath (Gottheim 1984:28). The bull was made to attack “bullfighters,” for the amusement of crowds (Assunção 2008:16). To this list of bull-related celebrations, Rossini Tavares de Lima also adds the boi de São Marcos, “which, decorated, enters the church, surrounded by songs and dances,” and the touradas cômicas of Portugal (Rossini Tavares de Lima, quoted in Tocantins 2000:244). None of these boi-bumbá forerunners had a dramatic plot, however, but only served to amuse an audience with mad antics. The actual plot of the brincadeira do boi appears then to be of wholly new world origin (Câmara Cascudo 1986[1954]; Queiroz 1967:88).

**Regionalism, Modernism and the Search for the Brazilian Character**

At the end of the 19th century, Brazil, which had previously not been divided up into official regions, began a discursive, administrative, and social process of sectioning off from “the South” (the center of power), the region called “the North” (everything else) (Albuquerque Júnior and Hallewell 2004). Albuquerque Júnior and Hallewell (2004:4-43) emphasize that the Northeast region is a social product, and not a naturally occurring phenomenon.  

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73 Gottheim (1984:28) asserts that at times the tourinhas were also fought with living calves. The purpose in both cases was not to enact a drama, but simply for the amusement of the onlookers.

74 Garfield (2013) makes the same point about the North, or Amazonian region, as well, as I address in Chapter 4.
The Northeast is not in fact inherent in the natural world. It is not some eternal
given. Geographic divisions and regions are human creations—pieces of the
magma of history solidified by conflicts, attempts to drop anchor in the lava flow
of the social struggle that once upon a time erupted and engulfed this territory.
The Northeast is a geographic division created in history and given reality by a
tradition of thought, a way of looking at things and of writing about them. Its
creation was, however, a process of fragmentation, not to be confused with the
natural, orderly development that we would expect from the evolutionary view of
history that seeks signs or footprints in the past pointing toward such and outcome
in advance—precisely one of the strategies used by the nordestino regionalist
discourse to legitimize the creation of this spatial division.

The “North” as a region distinct from the “South” was in fact a product of the increased
awareness of drought in the northern part of the country that arose from the Great
Drought of 1877, and the following campaigns that urged southerners to donate to the
relief efforts (Albuquerque Júnior and Hallewell 2004, Freyre, 1985[1959]).

In the early 1920s, the terms “North” and “Northeast” were used synonymously
for the drought-stricken region, and it was not until the government began in 1919 to
address the problem of recurring droughts in the northeastern part of the country that the
“Northeast” was officially sectioned off from the “North” of the country, the latter of
which came to refer to the Amazon region (Albuquerque Júnior and Hallewell 2004;
Garfield 2013). The “North” only came to mean specifically the Amazon region through

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75 As the Northeast was specifically delineated as a region of recurring droughts to be administered by the Inspectoria Federal de Obras Contra as Secas (IFOCS, the Federal Inspectorate of Works Against the Droughts), it is redundant to describe the Northeast as a place wracked by drought (Albuquerque Júnior and Hallewell 2004).
popular discourse focused on concerns about *nordestinos* [Northeasterners] migrating to the northwestern part of the north of the country to escape the drought conditions they faced in the northeastern part of the north.

Resisting the growing view of the home as a place to be defined primarily by its economic and cultural inferiority, Northeastern writers and intellectuals began to organize a regionalist Northeastern separatist movement centered in the city of Recife, a historical center of regional economic power and thought. The great Brazilian intellectual, social scientist, artist, historian, and writer Gilberto Freyre, born in Recife in 1900, was a leading force in the Regionalist Movement of the Northeast. Freyre and others in the group valorized their region as the true seat of Brazilianness, opposing it to the increasingly cosmopolitan city of São Paulo and the political and economic forces of the south which pushed national integration. The Regionalist Center of the Northeast was founded in Recife in 1924, and as historian Joaquim Inojosa (1975) notes, had the purpose of collecting “elements of Northeastern life and culture, organizing conferences, excursions, and art exhibitions, creating a library of the intellectual productions of the region, past and present, and publishing the journal *O Nordeste*” (Albuquerque and Halliwell 2004:49).

This project was by its very nature one of nostalgia, seeking to cobble together a linear narrative of the region in a time of great instability:

The "traditional Northeast" is a product of modernity, which can only think of the present. The feeling of loss is the process whereby the individuals affected become aware of the need to construct for themselves something that is disappearing. As the country’s economic, political, and social structure loses its
regional character and local cultural codes enter a crisis, the need arises to think about the region and invent it: a place created out of romantic nostalgia, a fantasy portrait of places that no longer exist, a spatial fairytale. It is not for nothing that the supposed traditions of the Northeast are always sought in the fragments of a rural and precapitalist past, in patterns of social interaction and sensibility that are patriarchal if not indeed holdovers from the time of slavery. [Albuquerque and Halliwell 2004]

One of the important resources for building this vision of the Northeast was folklore, and researchers such as regional native son, anthropologist, and folklorist Luís da Cândido Cascudo, who spent his life dedicated to documenting Brazilian folklore, as mentioned in Chapter 1.

The work of the Northeastern cultural elites found resonance with southern intellectuals as well. One of the most important public intellectuals in Brazil in the early 20th century was the São Paulo musician, philosopher, poet, author, ethnomusicologist, and proponent of Brazilian modernism, Márcio de Andrade (1893-1945). A piano prodigy as a child, the loss of his brother to a childhood soccer accident left Andrade with a hand tremor that forced him to find a new occupation. Andrade channeled his passion for music into an intensive study of Brazilian literature and musical forms, and became a key figure in the Modernist movement in the 1920s. The Modernists “sought to revive and Brazilianize Brazilian culture through dynamic and unscripted combinations of region and nation, tradition, and modernity” (Williams 2001:41). Modernists commented on the nation’s current direction through creative reference to an often romanticized primordial and wild Brazil of the past (Williams 2001:45).
Concerned with the influence of European thought on their country, Brazilian modernists sought to “brazilianize Brazil”\(^\text{76}\) (Botelho 2012). This movement comprised “an aesthetic project based on an eagerness on the part of Brazilian intelligentsia to participate in the process of modernization that dominated the Western world, and a political, ideological project, aimed at defining the country’s literary identity” (Coutinho 2007:759). The key event that launched Brazilian modernism was the 1922 Modern Art Week in São Paulo. From this controversial event of poetry, music, visual arts, and lectures were launched two major Brazilian cultural movements. The first were the Cannibalists, who promoted *antropofagia*, or a kind of cultural cannibalism, which sought to take in (or symbolically, to eat) all influences, native and foreign, and create a new sensibility that was wholly Brazilian (Andrade 1982[1928]). Led by Plínio Salgado, the nationalist *Verde-Amarelistas* (the Green-and-Yellowists, referring to the primary colors of the Brazilian flag), on the other hand, sought to exclude all external influence and distill the pure essence of Brazil (Treece 2000). Salgado eventually went on to found the fascist Integralist political party, but was exiled to Portugal after he promoted the overthrow of Getúlio Vargas’s dictatorship.

Folklore studies were not only conducted by independent intellectuals, but also flourished under the support of the regime of Getúlio Vargas (1930-1945), as the state joined in the search for regional expressions of Brazilian national culture, or *brasilidade* (Brown 1994[1986]:149). Vargas was concerned about the growing regionalist movements that threatened to fracture the country; to combat this, he promoted scholarly

\(^{76}\) Andrade, as noted by Botelho (2012:14) wrote in a 1924 letter to Carlos Drummond de Andrade, “É preciso começar esse trabalho de abrasileiramento do Brasil...” [It is necessary to begin this work of the brazilianization of Brazil].
investigation into folklore, in order to co-opt the regional variations into a national folklore that would unify the country and the Brazilian identity rather than divide it.

Vargas was a complex political character, a champion of the working class, but at the same time undeniably a dictator. Gilberto Freyre described his time in office as “monarchical”:

He was frankly authoritarian, but being also a very astute politician he disguised his authoritarianism by assuming the additional role of a smiling populist and a champion of labor and the common people against the interests of the bourgeois.

And he adopted a nationalist posture over and above the narrow, particular interests of individual states, especially such economically and politically powerful states as São Paulo. [Freyre 1985(1959):xv]

Vargas dreamed of a “new Brazil, with new values, intervening in all areas of culture, politics, education, and economy, with a view to build a picture of a unified country, homogenized in its language, customs, behaviors, and ideas” (Ponciano 2001).

However, while Vargas’s brasilidade campaign worked to promote national unity and celebrate regional difference, it also stifled intellectuals and controlled cultural expression (Hentschke 2006, Levine 1970). Although Vargas championed regional diversity, at the same time he wished for it to melt into a greater national culture. On November 29, 1937, a symbolic burning of Brazilian state flags took place (Williams

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77 One initiative to unify the country was the “Marcha para Oeste,” the “March to the West,” which sought to unify the western parts of Brazil (including Amazonia, and the states of Mato Grosso and Goiás) with the eastern sector, by bringing settlers, infrastructure, and jobs to less-inhabited areas.

78 “…um Brasil novo, com novos valores, intervindo em todos os domínios da cultura, da política, da educação e da economia, com vistas a construir a figura de um país unificado, homogeneizado em sua língua, costumes, comportamentos e idéias.” The English translation is mine.
2001), symbolizing the “yielding of regional identities to brasilidade, and regional authorities to central power” (Henschke 2006:262-3). He supported regional culture, art, and music insofar as they would be incorporated into a state-sanctioned, homogenous national identity that would be accepted by all Brazilians (Henschke 2006:263, Williams 2001:86).

Despite Vargas’s motivations in supporting their research, folklorists were able to make great strides in research into and the valorization of regional folklore, especially from the newly prominent Northeastern region. In 1935 Mário de Andrade organized and then became director of São Paulo’s Department of Culture, and in 1938 led an expedition to conduct research on and catalog music in the country’s Northeast and Northern regions. Andrade, however, came to oppose Vargas’s authoritarian Estado Novo regime, which led to his eventually taking a less prominent role in the government.

The intellectual investigations of the Regionalist Movement of the Northeast had already laid the groundwork for folklore studies, and it was only natural that Andrade and his Modernist associates, who also opposed the hegemony of the South, would seek the roots of the true national character in the Northeast. Andrade’s enthusiasm for the “authenticity” of the bull festivals caused them to become part of the canon of brasilidade, being widely considered “the most ‘Brazilian’ expression of popular culture” (Cavalcanti 2006). Deeming the bull dramas the “most complex, strange, [and] original” (Andrade 1982[1928]:51) of the Brazilian dramatic dances, Andrade viewed them as a metaphor for the uniquely Brazilian union of the indigenous, the European, and the African (Farias 2005:25). Andrade’s view of the bull festival as a perfect example of Brazil’s cultural and biological miscegenation was very much in keeping with the tenor
of Vargas’s Estado Novo, whose “nationalistic project centered on the image of the ‘cordial mestiço,’” and which promoted emblems of miscegenation, especially in music (Reily 2000). While this is today the hegemonic understanding of the boi-bumbá, it is important to note that I was unable to find any characterization of the brincadeira do boi as an allegory of Brazilian race relations before Andrade’s studies.

_Regionallist Intellectuals and the Brincadeira do Boi_

Mário de Andrade classified the brincadeira do boi as a part of the folkloric phenomena that he called “danças dramáticas,” or “dramatic dances.” His definition: “a danced sequence of dramatic scenes, loosely articulated from a team of characters depicting the central motif.” Mário de Andrade defined the danças dramáticas as being comprised of the pastoris, the chegâncias, and the reisados (Cavalcanti 2004:66). The reisados are distinguished by their rather unique theme: “Reisados, then, is the term chosen to encompass the entire class of dances which have as the theme ‘always the subject of immemorial meaning in which magically life and resurrection is given to an animal or plant’.”

Folklorist Luís da Câmara Cascudo believed that the bumba-meu-boi, as it has existed since the beginning of the twentieth century, was created by the bringing together

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79 This is all addressed by Mário de Andrade (1982).
80 “…uma sequência dançada de cenas dramáticas, livremente articuladas a partir de um conjunto de personagens alusivos ao motivo central” – quoted in Cavalcanti 2004:58.
81 Respected Brazilian folklorist Theó Brandão included the dances known as danças-cortejos and the cavalhadas in the category of the danças dramáticas as well (Brandão 1961:31-37). The danças-cortejos portray battle between the Moors and the Christians, while the cavalhadas depict equestrian tournaments (Queiroz 1967:88).
82 “Reisados, então, é o termo escolhido para englobar toda essa classe de danças que tematizam “sempre o assunto de inmemorial significação mágica em que se dá morte e ressurreição do bicho ou planta” (Andrade, p. 39),” (quoted in Cavalcanti 2004:66).
of various reisados that had bull-related themes (Gottheim 1984:30; see also Queiroz 1967:88); Borba Filho concurs, declaring that there is “no doubt that the [brincadeira do boi] is an agglutination of reisados around one main reisado that had as its motif the life and death of a bull” (Borba Filho 1966:10). As reisados (despite their underlying theme of death and resurrection) are small plays celebrating the coming of the three kings to bring gifts to the infant Jesus, they are associated with the Christmas season. This would suggest that the brincadeira do boi might have been associated with Christmas pageantry in its earliest incarnations in Brazil.

Although we do not know the exact location or date of the birth of the brincadeira do boi, the danças dramáticas experienced a great florescence in the late 1700s and early 1800s (Abreu 1998). These dramatic dances were focused around key festive dates in the Catholic calendar, including Christmas, Carnaval, and the Festa Junina, the June celebration of St. John (June 24th), St. Peter (June 29th), and St. Anthony (June 13th).

It is possible that the development of the danças dramáticas was influenced by the semi-popular religious theater of the Jesuit priests of the time, which was intended to catechize the masses (Assayag 1995; Farias 2005). One such Jesuit, José de Anchieta (1534-1597), wrote plays for this purpose in a combination of Latin, Spanish, Portuguese and Tupi (Fernandez 1978, Wasserman 1999). Reisados, as mentioned above, are

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83 The term reisados is derived from reis, i.e., kings, the reisados being customarily performed around the festival of the Three Kings, or Epiphany, celebrated at the beginning of January.
84 See also Coutinho (1992:670) for more on Câmara Cascudo and the reisados, and Vieira (1989:5) for more on when the festival happened.
85 “Não resta dúvida que se trata de uma aglutinação de reisados em torno do reisado principal que teria como motivo a vida e a morte do boi.”
86 Farias points out the themes of baptism and resurrection in the boi-bumbá. Earlier versions of the boi-bumbá had a scene in which a priest baptized the Indians before they headed into the forest to fetch Pai Francisco after he fled there and hid.
characterized by stories of death and resurrection; in the boi-bumbá, it is the bull that dies and rises again from the dead. It is also hard not to see Adam and Eve in Francisco and Catirina, the latter of which tempts her husband to snatch a forbidden bull from his benevolent master’s paradisiacal ranch. In some versions of the brincadeira do boi, the Indians who retrieve Francisco from the forest are baptized first, presumably to protect their souls if they were to die during the altercation. In some areas, such as Maranhão, the bulls are baptized as well. The “auto do boi as catechism” theory would suggest that the underlying motive of that scene was actually to teach uneducated Brazilians about the importance and purpose of baptism in the Christian faith.

The brincadeira do boi has long presented substantial obstacles to the researcher. It is difficult to coherently describe a performance of today’s boi-bumbá, because although it is made up of a lot of stuff, there is little in the way of concrete, linear narrative to grab on to. The more one scrutinizes the boi-bumbá and attempts to explain it, the more that it appears to be a kind of doughnut, with plenty of substance but nothing at the center. At its base, the boi-bumbá of today is a kind of folkloric musical theater, including dancing, singing, and movable stage sets. Simão Assayag, who has played a significant role in the Conselho de Arte (Art Council) of the Boi-bumbá Caprichoso of the city of Parintins, described the boi-bumbá of Parintins as a “Caboclo opera” (quoted

Interestingly, another reisado relict that is still very popular in the Manaus region is the dramatic dance known as the ciranda. Although its auto has lost somewhat its form as a coherent drama (if there was indeed a coherent original), the ciranda tells the story of a bird that was killed and brought back to life. Hints of this earlier drama can be seen in certain characters and dance steps that are still part of the ciranda today. The ciranda was also documented by Mário de Andrade, first in his notes that he took during his travels in the North and Northeast from 1927-1929, which were later published in 1976 as O turista aprendiz. In these observations, Andrade notes that the drama itself has little interest, not being as “legitimate” as the boi-bumbá, but that the music is “really good.” The ciranda of the city Manacapuru is discussed further in Chapter 6.
in Cavalcanti 2001). If we accept the idea of the Amazonas boi-bumbá as a local, folkloric opera, however, it is also a postmodern opera. While (as mentioned above) its format still bears traces of its medieval origins, it has many postmodern characteristics as well. Postmodern theater is transformative, characterized by a fragmented narrative often comprised of multiple interwoven stories, a pastiche of media and texts, and a meaning that is co-created in the interaction of actor and audience (Schmidt 2005). As we will see in the following pages, the boi-bumbá of Parintins and Manaus is all this. Beyond that, it is a competitive opera, in which the actors on the stage and often even the audience are judged on their performance.88

The variability and elusiveness of the boi-bumbá’s narrative, however, is not just a characteristic of a new, postmodern sensibility. From the earliest appearances of the brincadeira do boi, scholars have been commenting on its “fragmentation,” which results in part from its improvisational nature (Andrade 1982, Borba Filho 1966, Câmara Cascudo 1986 [1954], Cavalcanti 2000, 2006, Galvão 1951, Meyer 1963, 1991, Monteiro 1972, Possi Neto 1977, Queiroz 1967, Salles 1970). This is reflected even in the very first account (cited above), in which Lopes Gama (1996) described the plot as “an aggregation of tomfooleries.”89 Mario de Andrade wrote that the brincadeira do boi is not:

[…] a unitary whole in which an idea, a sole theme is developed. Its length, as well as its ideological meaning, does not depend from the basic theme. Generally,

88 This is not to say that all performances of the boi-bumbá are aimed at competition. Public practices, or “ensaios” are non-competitive, and a type of performance called the “espetáculo” – spectacle – is also non-competitive. This will be discussed later. There are also several groups that are not competitive, but perform for tourists, and others that only perform for fun. However, the most well-known boi-bumbá performances are competitions.
89 His original words were “agregado de disparates.” This is my translation.
the theme gives way to a sole episode, rapid, dramatically concise. And this basic nucleus is then filled with themes added to it; romances and any other traditional pieces, even of yearly use, are glued to it; texts and even nuclei of other dances are annexed to it. At times, even these additions do not have any connection to the nucleus. [Andrade 1982[1928], translation from Cavalcanti 2006a.]

It appears, then, that the boi-bumbá has always been characterized by malleability, by change, and by its hazy and hard-to-discern character.

Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz (1967) points out that it is this very lack of a consistent and fixed dramatic script has allowed the brincadeira do boi to adapt to and comment upon changing situations:

The researchers who have studied the Bumba-meu-boi are unanimous in regards to the lack of fixity of the text. The central structure…remains more or less similar, while every time that the little drama is performed, secondary scenes are deleted, others are created, according to the desire of the organizer of the spectacle, or depending on important events that occurred and upon which he cares to comment. Around a more or less fixed core, various themes can then be added, with an “astonishing technical audacity” (Câmara Cascudo 1986[1954]:142) in the manner in which they are adapted to the principal theme. The central nucleus itself still allows a great deal of variation; in general, monologues and dialogues are improvised, although they almost always follow a traditional orientation.⁹⁰

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⁹⁰ “Os pesquisadores que têm estudado o Bumba-meu-Boi são unânimes em apontar a falta de fixidez do texto. A estrutura central que acabamos de descrever se mantém mais ou menos semelhante, mas tôdas as vêzes que o pequeno drama é representado, cenas
It is likely this very ability to adapt that has led to the persistence of the brincadeira do boi. Always current, always shifting, it never repeats itself, and so can be watched again and again without becoming old or out-of-date.

Although it is generally stated in the literature that the current version of the boi-bumbá presents a diluted version of an original popular folk drama, even in the 1940s the plot was deemed “nebulous” and “incoherent” (Cavalcanti 2006, Ferreira 1944). Brazilian folklorists of the mid-20th century devoted considerable time searching for the true, original auto do boi. However, in a radical move, Cavalcanti suggests that there is no actual single original narrative at all, but a plethora of originals. It appears that the now canonical tale may have originally been merely one of many variations on a theme (Cavalcanti 2006). The current Francisco-and-Catirina plot, Cavalcanti suggests, only became set in stone during the 1950s, when Brazilian folklorists set out to record and preserve as many folkloric artifacts as possible (Cavalcanti 2006).

Cavalcanti speculates that the persistence of the bull’s death and resurrection as a thematic may spring largely from bureaucrats’ desire to maintain and promote what is seen as traditional and time-honored, a frequent effect of folklorization (Cavalcanti 2006:6-7). The Folklore Festival of Parintins no longer requires the inclusion of the auto do boi in the performances of iconic bois-bumbás Garantido and Caprichoso. Although it is not an officially required (i.e. judged) element of the Parintins Boi-bumbá presentations, Boi-bumbá Garantido and Boi-bumbá Caprichoso generally include

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secundárias são suprimidas, outras são criadas, segundo a vontade do organizador do espetáculo, ou segundo os acontecimentos importantes que se passaram e que se quer comentar. Em torno de um núcleo mais ou menos fixo, temas variados podem pois ser acrescentados, com uma 'assombrosa audácia técnica' (Câmara Cascudo 1986[1954]:142) na maneira de se proceder à adaptação ao tema principal. O próprio núcleo central permite ainda muita variação; em geral, monólogos e diálogos, embora seguindo quase sempre uma orientação tradicional, são improvisados.” [Queiroz 1967:89]
in Manaus, it is not only a required item of competition performances, it is touted as an indication of the purer and more true nature of the Manaus boi-bumbá. This view—that the Manaus boi-bumbá is inherently better because of the inclusion of the auto do boi—is widely repeated by Manaus boi-bumbá organizers, who sternly expound on the importance of preserving the folkloric origins of the dramatic dance.

It is possible as well that the widespread acceptance that there was once a pure, original auto do boi drama springs from a belief that the folklore we have now must needs be a weakened, watered-down version of a previous genuine, vital version. Something, we feel, has been lost in the process of modernization. This feeling has been expressed by many folklorists over the years. 1906, for example, is a year which surely most people practicing the boi-bumbá today would imagine to be a time when people practiced the "true" or nearly true form of the dramatic dance, being only 47 years after the very first mention of the boi-bumbá in Manaus, and only 66 years after the very first documented mention of the brincadeira do boi anywhere in Brazil. But in 1906 Artur Azevedo lamented, "It is even probable that the bumba-meu-boi, in its primitive form, was an auto composed by some poet of the people in accordance with all the rules of the genre (...) Today it is a simple merriment without any meaning, displaying various characters, the functions of which are not logically determined." Again and again, we

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the characters of the auto (at minimum Catirina and Francisco). The characters cavort around the arena, cutting up and entertaining the audience. Rarely do they perform the actual auto do boi drama itself, though the drama may be alluded to over the course of the performance. There have been proposals to remove the auto do boi as a requirement in the Manaus competitions, but in general it is seen as an important symbol of authenticity which marks an important difference from the more "modern" bois-bumbás of Parintins. 92 “É mesmo provável que o bumba-meu-boi, na forma primitiva, fosse um auto composto, com todas as regras do gênero, por algum poeta do povo (...) Hoje é simples
see the sad commentary that the original play has been lost, but we never encounter the original play itself.

**The Boi-bumbá of Manaus**

During my research into the boi-bumbá of Manaus, I was repeatedly told that the Amazonian version was the descendant of Northeastern bumba-meu-boi. Returning to the more complete historical accounts excerpted above (those by Lopes da Gama and by Avé-Lallemand - unfortunately we have no description of the bumba-meu-boi on offer in João the Caulker’s courtyard, or from the event in Bacanga), the differences between the nineteenth century Amazonian bumba and the bumba-meu-boi of Maranhão are striking. First, this early description of the Manaus boi-bumbá is comprised of Indian chiefs and chieftainesses, and pajés, and square dances, with the focus of the event being the death of the bull—with no on-stage resurrection. The Maranhão bumba-meu-boi is full of wondrous personages: the Seahorse, the caipora, the little donkey. Even today, the bumba-meu-boi of the northeast continues to have a great number of fantastical figures, while the boi-bumbá of the Amazon is focused to a great degree on Indians and rituals. Perhaps the boi-bumbá is not a descendant of the bumba-meu-boi, but rather the two are cousins, branches of the brincadeira do boi tree, each one having sprung from a different variant of the ephemeral auto do boi. As boi groups are generally founded not by a group of people, but by a single person or sometimes a family, it is completely plausible that a person or family could have come to Manaus bearing one auto do boi variant, which took folguedo, sem significação alguma, exibindo vários personagens cujas funções não estão logicamente determinadas.” (Azevedo 1906) 

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93 I suppose one could say that the bull is “resurrected” in a sense when the performer gets up and moves on to the next location to perform the drama again, but that is outside of the frame of the drama itself.
root and flourished, while another variant survived in the Northeast, with both eventually becoming documented by students of folklore (as will be discussed below), and thus institutionalized and set into stone.

Tocantins also noted fundamental differences between the Northeastern bumba-meu-boi and the Amazonian boi-bumbá:

Please note, however, some differences of form and at the most basic level between the northeastern and the Amazonian boi. It begins with the name: in the Northeast, Bumba-meu-boi, in Amazonia, Boi-bumbá. Although the same syncretic dramatization of cowboy scenes exists in both, the personages of the play in the northeast sometimes distance themselves from the figures represented in the Amazonian version in their psychological intentions and in their characters. And, finally, a fundamental difference: while the Bumba-meu-boi belongs to the cycle of Christmas festivities, the Boi-bumbá is obligatory in the June festival.94

[Tocantins 2000:238]

And so we have both the lack of a definitive original auto do boi, and the presence of many variations of the auto, including in such fundamental areas as characters, plot, and music. These differences—both between the bumba-meu-boi and the boi-bumbá, and also within the boi-bumbá itself—again lend credence to my belief the boi-bumbá is not a descendant of the bumba-meu-boi, but rather the two are cousins, each sprung from a

separate auto do boi. It is even totally possible (and quite likely) that the boi-bumbá today celebrated in Manaus is not a descendant of the version described by Avé-Lallemant, but rather sprung from a later arrival on the scene. Even today in Maranhão, many different versions of the bumba-meu-boi exist, each one called the sotaque (literally, “accent”) of a particular place (Gottheim 1984).

Mário Ypiranga Monteiro, the great scholar and folklorist of Manaus, in his 2004 *Boi-Bumbá: História, Análise Fundamental e Juízo Crítico* compared the performance described by Avé-Lallemant and the boi de rua [bull of the street] performances which he had seen and participated in on the streets of Manaus in the mid to late twentieth century. Of seventeen elements which he identified in the 1859 account, he declared only three of these as having disappeared 130 years later: 1) the female consort of the chief (played by a man dressed as a woman), 2) the maracas which served as musical accompaniment, and 3) the lavadeira, the crying farewell to the bull. And so we see the contradictory and dual nature of the boi-bumbá: it is at once extremely conservative in the core elements of which it is made, and at the same time plays fast and loose with everything else, emphasizing spontaneity, innovation, and change.

So if not the flood of rubber migrants of the late 19th century, who first brought the boi-bumbá to Manaus? Benchimol describes the inhabitants of the region at the time: “In the decade of the 1860’s, the population of Manaos had reached a little more than two thousand;95 that of the whole Province, 46,187. It was still composed of the same kind of

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95 There seems to be some dispute about the actual number of inhabitants. In 1821 a great fire destroyed most of the 200 houses of the city (Benchimol 1947:29-30). In 1830 the population was 1,188. There was little growth from 1835-1839 due to the violent fighting of the Cabanagem War. Writing of his visit to Barra, William Lewis Herndon in *Exploration of the Valley of the Amazon*, published 1853, gives the population at 3,614
people as it had been since the earliest colonial days: soldiers, missionaries, clerks, 
slaves, some merchants. Most of them were pure Indians, and mestizos, a fair number of 
Portuguese, and a few Negroes and mulattoes” (Benchimol 1947:40). Was it brought to 
Manaus by a soldier, a merchant, or slaves from the Northeast? Perhaps it came in the 
memory of a servant, a small tradesman, or even a missionary, who then became 
homesick and longed to recreate the folklore of his childhood? We will never know. 
Manaus historian José Saldanha (2000) believes that the fact that João the Caulker was 
inviting people to view the performance in 1867, ten years before the great drought in the 
northeast brought large numbers of immigrants, proves that it was slaves who brought the 
“bumba” to Manaus. Considering that Avé-Lallemant described the procession as being 
comprised of “people of color,” that seems like a very possible conclusion. 
In the 1850’s and 1860’s brincadeira do boi performances on the streets were 
often banned by the police, or were confined to closed spaces to avoid social disorder 
(Gottheim 1984). Boi-bumbá folklore groups were long associated with violent street 
brawls (see Tocantins 2000:245), with this behavior being common well into the second 
half of the twentieth century. This is not surprising, considering that boi-bumbá and 
bumbá-meu-boi groups have historically been fueled by liberal supplies of cachaca

Benchimol has the population listed at 2080. It appears that the latter number comes from 
A. C. Tavares Bastos’s 1865 work O Valle do Amazonas. The population numbers in 
1865 are as follows: 676 Native Whites; 168 Foreign Born Whites; 480 Mulatoes and 
Mestizos; 56 Negroes; 700 Indians. The breakdown in sex is as follows: 1084 Men; 996 
Women. Of those, 1673 were Single; 338 Married; 69 Widowed. 1923 were Freemen, 
while 157 were slaves. Occupations tally as follows: 256 Soldiers; 344 Servants; 242 
Craftsmen; 238 “Agregados”; 126 Government clerks; 88 Merchants’ clerks; 76 
Merchants; 700 Not-declared occupation (Benchimol 1947:33-34).
[cheap sugar cane rum], supplied by the group sponsors or patrons. Author, boi-bumbá enthusiast and chronicler, and folklore scholar Mário Ypiranga Monteiro (1964) described one of these brawls in Manaus, between Boi-bumbá Mina de Ouro [“Goldmine”] and Boi-bumbá Corre Campo [“Runs in the Field”]:

Early this morning, there was a clash between ‘bumbás,’ in Epaminondas Avenue. [note: Epaminondas is one of the major streets in the city center.] At that time, according to the many onlookers, the bumbás ‘Mina de Ouro’ and ‘Corre Campo’ were moving down the aforementioned main road. The impending meeting of the two ‘bumbás’ was made known by the customary challenges: ‘Oh! iron, Oh! steel, I look but I don’t find any,’ and “Rival, don’t pick a fight if you don’t want a beating’. And there was the clash. Panic among the participants of the Boi-bumbá. Screams and running around. The incident had already grown to gigantic proportions when, opportunistically, the Military Police and the Civil Police authorities arrived on the scene, fenced the group in, and took amos, vaqueiros, Catirinas and Father Franciscos, along with a large number of Boi-bumbá fans, to the government jail on Marechal Deodoro Street, where they spent the rest of the night.” [Monteiro 1964:70]

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96 This custom has come to an abrupt end in Manaus’s boi-bumbá competitions. While participants may drink beer during rehearsals, alcohol is expressly forbidden in the competition arena.
97 I have in other locations seen this challenge as “Tu és ferro, eu sou aço, Eu procuro mas não acho,” meaning, “You are iron, I am steel, I look but I don’t find [you].” I have also seen this chant associated with Afro-Brazilian religious groups, where as far as I can tell it is apparently used to summon spirits.
98 “Amos” = amos do boi, or persons playing the ranch owner or the caretaker of the bull.
99 “Vaqueiros” = persons playing cowboys.
100 “Às primeiras horas da madrugada de hoje, ocorreu um choque entre ‘bumbás’, à avenida Epaminondas. Aquela hora, seguidos de grande acompanhamento,
Two boi-bumbá participants were wounded in this street brawl. Study participants also reported having seen or taken part in street fights in Manaus as recently as the 1960s or 1970s. Zé Maria Guedes, the first president of Boi-bumbá Garanhão, remembered those fights from his childhood:

…our parents, they didn’t let us go out, because in those days there were a lot of fights…there were a lot of fights. In the past, we didn’t have those front walls of brick and concrete, you know, they were board fences. And so, when there had been a fight, in the morning we would see that they’d pulled up the boards of those fences to fight with one another. And so our parents wouldn’t let us [go out to join the boi-bumbá].

These memories linger among the people of Manaus until today, still lending it a slight air of ill repute. Actual incidents of violence are rare today, and folklorists insist that this rivalry has been channeled into the competition in the arena instead.

The public performance of folkloric dances, as we have seen from Avé-Lallemand’s account, dates back to at least the mid-nineteenth century, when Manaus was not yet Manaus, but only the Cidade da Barra do Rio Negro. Such folkloric performances

movimentavam-se na referida artéria os ‘bumbás’ ‘Mina de Ouro’ e ‘Corre Campo’. A aproximação dos ‘bumbás’ foi anunciada pelos desafios da praxe: ‘Oh! ferro, Oh! aço, eu procuro mas não acho’ e ‘Contrário não te assanhas senão tu apanhas’. E deu-se o choque. Pânico entre os brincantes. Gritos e correrias. O incidente já tomava proporções gigantescas, quando surgiu no local, oportunamente, a Polícia do Exército e as autoridades da Polícia Civil, que fizeram um cerco e levaram amos, vaqueiros, Catirinas e Pais Francisco, além de grande número de ‘torcedores’ rumo ao xadrez de repartição da rua Marechal Deodoro, onde passaram o resto da noite (Monteiro 2004:140, quoting his own publication Roteiro do folclore).”

101 “…nossos pais, eles não deixavam a gente sair, porque naquela época tinha muita briga…tinha muita briga. Antigamente, não tinha muro de tijolos e de cimento, entendeu, era estaca. Ai, quando tinha briga, de manhã a gente ia ver eles arrancavam aquelas cercas por estaca para brigar um com outro. Ai nossos pais não deixavam.”
continued into the twentieth century, when neighborhood *arraiais* [fairs] were a common occurrence during the *Festa Junina* [June festival], and performances of folklore abounded in the summer months. These scattered festivals were consolidated in 1946, when the first Festival Folclórico de Manaus was founded through the leadership of respected Manaus folklorist and professor Mário Ypiranga Monteiro. Originally, the festival took place in a lot next to the now defunct Balalaica Bar in the city center. From 1947 to 1956 it moved from one place to another, in search of a home.

The Folklore Festival’s next iteration was as the Folklore Festival of Amazonas, which first began the 21st of June 1957 in the field of the barracks of the 27th Battalion of Riflemen at the small General Osório Stadium, located in the city center. This was due to the initiative of one Manaus newspaperman Bianor Garcia, the help of the State Folklore Commission, and the support of the family of newspaper tycoon Archer Pinto and other important citizens of Manaus. From the beginning, a wide variety of folkloric manifestations were present, there being roughly fifty dances performed by groups from all over Manaus. Among the most popular groups were the bois-bumbás and *garrotes* [children’s boi-bumbá groups]; dances called *tribos*, in which participants dance as members of Indian tribes; *quadrilhas* [square dances]; and a variety of regional dances, including the famous *Caninha Verde* [Little Green Cane] folklore group of Educandos. In spite of the torrential downpours that have always plagued open-air folklore performances in Manaus, the city’s folklore enthusiasts turned out in force.

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102 The bulk of this history of the Festival Folclórico de Amazonas comes from the unfortunately now defunct website of AGFAM, the Associação dos Grupos Folclóricos do Amazonas; from Araújo and Ávila (2007), da Costa (2002), Mota (2010), and Silva and Gama (2008). In these sources there are some conflicts in terms of dates and locations of the festival, but I have done my best to put together a correct telling.
The festival grew in popularity throughout the 1970s, with ever increasing participation of folkloric groups throughout the city of Manaus. Unfortunately, the festival encountered some problems in finding a permanent home after the original performance area was incorporated into the Military College of Manaus, which was established in the 1970s. From the General Osório Stadium, the festival moved first to the Park of Amazonas, next the Colina Stadium, and then the Vivaldo Lima Stadium (known as the Vivaldão, or the Great Vivaldo), but none of these performance spaces were really adequate for the growing festival.

In 1979, with the help of the Secretary of Culture Róberio Braga and the newly founded Associação dos Grupos Folclóricos do Amazonas [Association of Folklore Groups of Amazonas, AGFAM], the festival was moved to the amphitheatre at the “Bola de SUFRAMA,”¹⁰³ which provided a great deal more space both for performing groups and fans. While the new location was outside of the city center, it attracted many young people from the areas closer to the Bola, especially many people who worked in the Industrial District of the Zona Franca de Manaus, operated by SUFRAMA. The new location proved a much better fit for both fans and performers, and even had a large area for couples and children to stroll and socialize, enjoying the many booths selling typical foods of the Festa Junina, drinks, and children’s toys and balloons. The festival remained at the Bola for over a decade.

¹⁰³ SUFRAMA is the Superintendência da Zona Franca de Manaus, the Superintendency of the Free Trade Zone of Manaus. In Manaus, large traffic circles are officially known as “rotatórios” but colloquially known as “bolas,” and the amphitheatre is situated inside a particularly large traffic circle. As you might imagine, this creates certain issues with parking and pedestrians every year at festival time. The official name for the area is the “Praça Francisco Pereira da Silva,” but I have never heard anyone refer to it as anything but the “Bola de SUFRAMA.”
In the early 1990s, under the auspices of Governor Gilberto Mestrinho, the Convention Center of Amazonas (today officially the “Cultural Center of Amazonas,” but generally referred to as the Sambódromo) was constructed, and in 1992 the Festival was moved there. Unfortunately, the new location did not attract the same number of folklore groups, and the yearly Festival slid into decline, due to a cycle of lower attendance leading to less government support, leading to even lower attendance. Members of Boi-bumbá Garanhão agreed that the move to the Sambódromo (located on the far side of the city center) made participating in and attending the festival much more difficult. While the Bola de SUFRAMA is easily accessed from the neighborhood of Educandos, arriving at the Sambódromo necessitates a long and exhausting ride on Manaus’s poorly maintained and overstuffed busses through the most traffic-clogged arteries radiating from the city center.

However, in 1997, folklore groups gained the support of then acting mayor Omar Aziz (later governor beginning in 2010), and managed to return the Festival to the

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104 People from the city center, Educandos, and surrounding neighborhoods can arrive at the Bola de SUFRAMA by bus or also by the informal system of taxi-lotação. In this system, taxis drive a looping route from the city center to the Bola and back. Riders can enter a car at any point along the route, and pay a low, flat rate. While a given taxi can only carry four or five passengers at a time, the success of this extremely popular public transportation system lies in its flexibility (no schedules, no bus stops, a route that can be changed to meet riders’ needs) and in the large number of taxis participating (one rarely waits more than thirty seconds in Educandos without a lotação taxi passing by). The main function of this system is to bring workers to the Bola, where they can transfer to smaller buses taking them to the Industrial District of the Zona Franca de Manaus.

105 With time, the splintering of AGFAM created more folklore associations, the principal of which are the Associação dos Grupos Folclóricos de Manaus (AGFM), the Liga Independente dos Grupos Folclóricos de Manaus (LIGFM), and the Associação Movimento Bumbás de Manaus (AMBM). The president of the latter is Raimundo Nonato Negrão Torres, vice-president of Boi-bumbá Garanhão. AMBM was created in 2002 to promote the style and presentations of the Manaus bois. Currently, the only official folklore group performing under the umbrella of this group is Boi-bumbá
Bola de SUFRAMA amphitheatre. New infrastructure was created to house the Festival, and fans responded by turning out in large numbers, with approximately 80,000 attendees on the first night alone. The Festival continued to regain its popularity and remained at the Bola until 2001, when Governor Amazonino Mendes approved construction at the site of the Bola of the Memorial da Amazônia (today the Centro Cultural dos Povos da Amazônia, the Cultural Center of the Peoples of Amazonia), which forced folklore associations to seek a new home. The Festival returned to the Sambódromo, but this time the only space available was a field located outside of the structure itself.

The Festival alternated between the Sambódromo and the Vivaldão stadium until 2005, when construction was finished on the Centro Cultural, and the so the folklore groups returned until this day to perform at the Bola de SUFRAMA amphitheatre. In 2011, an additional event, somewhat incorrectly called the 1st Folklore Festival of Manaus (as the “Folklore Festival of Manaus” had existed previously from 1946-1956, before it was renamed the “Folklore Festival of Amazonas”) was held in the Sambódromo. The competition of the bois-bumbás was held in at that festival, while at the Folklore Festival of Amazonas, in the Bola de SUFRAMA, the bois performed a non-judged “spectacle.” In 2012 the Folklore Festival of Manaus did not take place, and the judged competition of the bois took place, as usual, in the Bola.

*The Boi-bumbá of Manaus Today*

Today’s boi-bumbá, as practiced in the city of Manaus, has changed a great deal from the form it had when first documented by Avé-Lallemant. First, while I see a shadow of the Garanhão, but AMBM has done very valuable work in creating a space for the Manaus bois.
auto do boi in Avé-Lallemant’s description, it is a very faint one. Today and in 1859 we have both a pajé and a bull; there, the resemblance ends. In today’s drama, the pajé is set on resurrecting the bull from the dead, while in the older version, we have the pajé and the bull locked in a kind of battle of wills in which the shaman tries to tame the bull, and finally ends up killing the bull, so that even another pajé cannot bring it back to life. In effect, if anything, the 1859 version is a kind of mirror-image of today’s Manaus auto do boi. More likely, it is simply a completely different auto do boi than the one that survives today in Manaus and has become the most common variation currently performed.

In addition to this fairly key difference between the two performances, today’s auto do boi is but a kernel of coherence at the center of a great deal of spectacle. Today there are a number of additional female parts: the Cunhã-Poranga, or the most beautiful warrior woman of the Indian tribe; the Rainha de Folclore [Queen of Folklore], who represents popular culture; and the Porta-Estandarte [Standard-Bearer], who presents the flag of her boi-bumbá. These are all danced parts; they do not participate in the auto do boi, but are part of the frame that surrounds it. The Indian tribes still exist, but are much greater in number and adorned in fantastical costumes reminiscent of those of Vegas showgirls or Carnaval passistas. The vaqueiros [cowboys], the rapazes [boys who act as bodyguards for the bull], and the burrinhas [horsemen] still take part, but while in the past their function was to provide light and security for the performance, today they are

106 Admittedly, Avé-Lallemant was a medical doctor rather than a trained folklorist, and may have misunderstood or misrecorded what he saw in the fleeting performance of the bumbá in Manaus in 1859.
merely decorative. Their true function is purely one of nostalgia: to remind the audience of the origins of the boi-bumbá.

Avé-Lallemant, though he gives us an excellent visual picture of the bumba that he saw in Manaus, neglects to fill the reader in on the musical side of the performance except to describe drumming, a variety of kinds of singing, and maracas. Manaus folklorist Mário Ypiranga Monteiro (1964) writes that the batucada [percussion corps] of the mid-twentieth century boi-bumbá in Manaus was made up of surdos [bass drums worn on a strap around the waist and beaten with a soft-headed drumstick], caixas [snare drums], pandeiros [tambourines], ganzás [metal frame rattles], pandeiros mistos [mixed tambourines], caçarolas,¹⁰⁷ and reco-recos [wooden ridged instruments with a stick that you run across the ridges to make a sound; “reco-reco” is the sound that a frog is said to make], with ferrinhos [triangles] added later (Assayag 1997; Monteiro 1964). Today, Boi-bumbá Garanhão’s musical accompaniment has a batucada made up of surdos of various sizes (there are even tiny ones for children to play), caixas, ganzás (popularly called xeque-xeques) and palminhas [pieces of wood that are held in the hands and clapped together]. In additional to the batucada, however, there is an entire professional band, with backup singers, multiple electric keyboards, acoustic guitars with electric pickups, and electric basses.

A Brief Look at Parintins

To understand the boi-bumbá of Manaus, it is necessary to take a look at the much more famous Folklore Festival of Parintins, a small town located roughly 260 miles downriver from Manaus. The history of the Parintins festival and the Manaus festival, and thus their

¹⁰⁷ I have not been able to determine what instrument this might be; “caçarola” means “sauce-pan.”
boi-bumbá groups, are linked. Although documented manifestations of the boi-bumbá of Manaus predate those of Parintins, the spectacular rise of the Festival Folclórico de Parintins and the apogee of its popularity, in the 1990s, gave new life to the brincadeira do boi in the capital city.

The earliest documented accounts of the boi-bumbá of Parintins describe a situation similar to that of Manaus: simple boi-bumbá groups, comprised only of men (the women’s roles were and usually still are played by men in drag) began to appear in the streets, performing in the street and in the courtyards of houses for food, drink, or a little money. The history of the bois-bumbás of Parintins is the matter of heated dispute, and there is no lack of origin stories. As far as I am able to discern, the two earliest groups recorded in Parintins appeared at the beginning of the 20th century and were named *Fita Verde* [“Green Ribbon”] and *Galante* [“Gallant”], rivals who have since fallen into near total obscurity (Silva 2007:24-25).

These, however, are not the bois-bumbás for which Parintins is famous. That honor falls to Boi Garantido and Boi Caprichoso, the two great teams which compete yearly in the festival. Boi Garantido, founded in June of 1913 by Lindolfo Monteverde, is a white bull with a red heart on his forehead. His rival, Boi Caprichoso, a black bull with a blue star on his forehead, was founded later the same year108 by three brothers:

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108 This would make 2013 the 100-year-anniversary of the founding of both boi-bumbá groups. Interestingly, in 2012, as the groups announced their plans for celebrations, the two folklore associations simultaneously denounced each other as not really having been founded in 1913. See *A Crítica* article “Comemoração do centenário dos boi de Parintins está sob suspeita,” by Rafael Seixas (2012), and Rodrigues (2006:59-77) for a more in-depth discussion of competing origin stories.
Raimundo, Pedro, and Félix Cid.\textsuperscript{109} Both bois-bumbás were founded as a result of a promise made to St. John the Baptist. At this time, the boi-bumbá festival was still a fairly humble production, generally put on by small groups of amateur players (Valentin 2005:17) often in fulfillment of religious \textit{promessas} [vows], as is common in Brazilian festivals (Assayag 1997; Braga 2002: 344, 354, 397-405; Gottheim 1984:113; for promessas in the \textit{folias de reis} see Reily 2002:xiv and Vieira 1989:24) as well as in festivals in other parts of Latin America (see Rodriguez 1996 for promessas in the New Mexico Matachines Dance).\textsuperscript{110}

Boi Garantido and Boi Caprichoso—and many other boi-bumbá groups as well, including Boi Diamantino, Boi Fita Verde, and Boi Ramalhete (Rodrigues 2006:58)—performed on the streets and in the courtyards of citizens of Parintins from the turn of the century until the early 1960s. Groups traded insults through provocative verses sung by the respective Amos dos bois and clashes between the costumed bull figures, in which they literally smashed into each other with their heads (usually at that time made from actual horned bull skulls), were common. These \textit{encontros} [encounters] generally grew into physical altercations between the members of the two groups, often ended in police intervention (Silva 2007 & 2009). Then, in an effort to contain the violence that surrounded the folkloric groups, the church youth group \textit{Juventude Alegre Católica}

\textsuperscript{109} Other versions of Caprichoso’s founding story indicate that this boi actually was created in the mid-to-late 1920s as a group that splintered off the Boi Galante after an internal dispute.

\textsuperscript{110} There are many excellent histories of the Bois-bumbás Garantido and Caprichoso, so I will not go further into their history here. For more in-depth history of the \textit{bois} of Parintins, please see Braga 2002, Valentin 2005, and numerous others.
created the Folklore Festival of Parintins, “domesticated” the bulls, and changed the history of the \textit{brincadeira do boi} forever\footnote{Silva 2010 looks at this event of the “domestication” of the bois-bumbás and the creation of the festival through the lens of Sahlins and Captain Cook; structure and event, this fork in the road that reorganized the culture and channeled this aggression into a huge festival. The same thing that happened in Parintins, interestingly enough, happened in Manaus. As mentioned in the text above, there used to be bloody street fights in Manaus (a common part of the \textit{brincadeira do boi}; what is unclear, however, is whether the early groups were prohibited because of racism – the brincantes tended to be “of color,” as Avé-Lallemant described the boi-bumbá in Manaus in 1859 – or because they were disorderly) that ended at roughly the same time. I asked people in the Manaus bois today if there are still fights between the groups, and they all responded that no, they put their aggression and rivalry into the performance, and try to “beat them in the arena.”} (Braga 2002:28).

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the Parintins boi-bumbá is the presence in the arena of the \textit{alegorias}, or movable stage sets. These are now the most eye-catching part of the performance: up to forty feet high, they dominate the arena. Alegorias are not a long-standing part of the boi-bumbá, but rather an innovation introduced quite recently by Jair Mendes, a boi-bumbá artist from Parintins. In the early 1970s Jair spent time in Rio de Janeiro, working as an artist for the famous Carnaval samba school parades, and there learned how to make Carnaval-style alegorias, or parade floats. These floats are famous for their large, moving figures and complex designs, and are mounted on movable platforms. Returning to tiny Parintins, which did not have a very elaborate custom of Carnaval celebrations, Jair began to create Carnaval-style alegorias for the Parintins Folklore Festival, and from that day they took hold and today are a required part of the festivals in Parintins and in Manaus (Valentin 2005).

\textit{Garanhão brings Parintins to Manaus}

Today’s boi-bumbá in Manaus can be considered a hybrid of an older Manaus boi-bumbá (though not necessarily the strand that Avé-Lallemant saw and recorded) and the boi-
bumbá of Parintins. The cause of this hybridization can be traced directly to the Boi-
bumbá Garanhão, the main subject of my study. In my interviews with long-term
participants, I asked about the founding of the Boi Garanhão. The story of the founding
was repeated to me, with remarkable consistency, by a large number of Garanhão
participants.

The year was 1991, and a group of friends from Educandos got together to discuss
the deplorable lack of folkloric groups in the neighborhood. Educandos had long been
known for its lively folklore groups such as “Vitor e Vitória,” a rowdy dance group in
which the women dressed as men, and vice versa; “Caninha Verde,” a dance from the
sugarcane plantations of the Northeast region, and “Candomblé,” which portrays an Afro-
Brazilian religious practice and exists to this day. While these friends were enthusiastic
participants in the neighborhood’s folklore performances, many older folklore
associations were slowly dying out, as the founders grew old or tired of the work and
expense involved in running a folklore group. In the beginning, no one suggested a boi-
bumbá group, as no one of the united friends had ever participated in the brincadeira do
boi, though in 1991 the Garantido and Caprichoso groups of Parintins were making a
name for themselves throughout the region.

So one friend suggested a quadrilha, while another thought a ciranda would be a
good idea. Finally someone suggested a boi-bumbá, and after much lively discussion, the
matter was decided. Ivo Moraes proposed the name “Garanhão,”¹¹² in homage to the
Parintins group Garantido, and the bull’s color was decided to be black, as Boi

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¹¹² “Garanhão” literally means “stallion,” though it is also used to refer to a “ladies’ man,” or “woman chaser.” Some study participants suggested that the name was also related to Ivo’s own reputation with the ladies.
Caprichoso from Parintins is black as well. The official colors of green and white were chosen in homage of the nearby Reino Unido samba school of the adjacent neighborhood *Morro da Liberdade*, which has the same colors. More friends and associates were added to the founders of Boi Garanhão, and the project was announced to the neighborhood. José Maria Guedes de Souza and Paulo Fernandes were dispatched to Parintins to learn about the business of putting on a boi-bumbá group, and returned full of material and ideas.

In 1992, Garanhão performed in the “Extra” category at the Amazonas Folklore Festival in Manaus, and after receiving highest marks in all categories, was invited to do a special performance at the Convention Center, where it was a great hit. The following year Garanhão competed against other Manaus boi-bumbás in the main competition at the Convention Center, and the group’s success continued.

The popularity of Garanhão is generally attributed to the fact that they did not follow in the footsteps of the existing boi-bumbá groups of Manaus. The groups of that time, of which still exist Corre Campo and Brilhante, followed a mode of performance that had not yet been affected by the spectacles of Parintins. Since the 1991 debut of Garanhão, Corre Campo, and Brilhante have also adopted Parintins-style performances as well, though the performances in Manaus still retain their own character, especially due to the required element of the auto do boi, which plays a central part in festival performances.

While Manaus has a longer documented history of boi-bumbá than Parintins, the latter is better known for the performance of the boi-bumbá. And while the Folklore Festival of Amazonas (held in Manaus, the state capital) significantly predates the
Folklore Festival of Parintins, the latter is the better funded, larger, and more famous.

This was not always so. The Folklore Festival of Amazonas, held in Manaus, officially first began the 21st of June, 1957 at the Praça General Osório (Araújo and Ávila 2007:9). Folklore groups were nothing new to Manaus, and had performed since at least the 1930s in neighborhood celebrations of saint’s days, especially during the Festa Junina, the June Festival. The Festa Junina coincides with one of the two yearly breaks from school for children (the other begins before Christmas and runs until the beginning of February), and often runs well into July, as most neighborhoods take their turns putting on an arraial [fair]. The Festa Junina celebrates folklore and the rural life, and children and adults dress in gingham dresses or plaid shirts with torn jeans, straw hats on their heads and freckles and moustaches painted on their faces.

In Manaus, the folklore groups have historically perform a variety of regional dances, dances based on indigenous practices, “international” dances, dances associated with the Festa Junina, and dramatic dances. Regional dances include such dances as the carimbó, associated with the neighboring state of Pará, and variants of the cangaço, which comes from the Northeast region of Brazil and celebrates the Robin Hood-like folk hero, Lampião. Very popular are the dances based on indigenous Brazilian groups, such as the dança do cacetinho [club dance, in which young men dress in “Indian” costume and dance in a circle, doing acrobatics with sticks that represent clubs]. Another dance of this type that has a long history in Manaus are the tribos, folkloric dances performed by groups wearing “Indian” costumes. “International” dances most likely are also Brazilian in origin, but have their inspiration in foreign cultures, and include dances like the dança do arabe (Arabian dance). The dance most commonly associated with the Festa Junina is
the quadrilha, a kind of vigorous square dance in which participants dress up in rural costume and cut up in a way that is meant to evoke the high spirits of country folk at a seasonal dance.

Manaus is located in the middle region of central Amazonia, where life is punctuated by the rhythm of the yearly rise and fall of the Amazon River and its tributaries. The Festa Junina holds a special place in the imagination of Amazonian peoples, as it marks the end of the rainy season (roughly November through May, and referred to as *inverno*, winter) and the beginning of the dry season (roughly June through October, and referred to as *verão*, summer). Throughout the Amazon region, Caboclo communities of stilt-house dwellers perch in clusters on the riverbanks. When the rainy season begins, this is a time of social contraction and isolation, with families spending long hours in their small wooden houses, imprisoned by the torrential rains. Movements are restricted, as the land is slowly swallowed up by the rising waters. Cattle are crowded onto rafts or stilt platforms, often up to their ankles in the water. In some years, high flood waters (such as in 2012, which at 29.97 meters was the highest year in recorded history) cover the floorboards of houses or higher, causing further discomfort and restriction of movement. Travel between houses at high flood stage is only by boat; and the long hours of boredom are compounded by the clothes that will not dry in the humid, cloudy days, and the lack of food. As there is more water, it is difficult to locate the fish in the rivers and lakes, and the fish that are caught are leaner, as they too find more difficulties in encountering their food. Even in Manaus, a city with a fairly large resource base, the pickings at the fish markets grow lean. During the 2010 high water phase, a vendor at the downtown Manaus Moderna market mournfully informed me that the
Tucunaré I was hoping to buy for a fish stew was unavailable. “Tucunaré? Ele virou lenda,” he sadly told me. Tucunaré had become only a legend, no longer reality. In rural areas, the lack is of course much more strongly felt, even in non-record breaking high waters.

And so when the dry season begins, and the land begins to reappear, it is a time of rejoicing. As the waters recede, food becomes more abundant. The cattle return to pastures, roads can be used instead of riverways, planting begins, laundry dries in the sun, and children and pet dogs can play on the land. And so the Festa Junina falls at a time when the heart is gladdened. Rural folks travel to the nearest cities to dance and drink with old friends and family, to buy needed items, and to dress up and be sociable.

Although Manaus, as a highly modern city of nearly two million people, is less affected by seasonal changes, they are still noticed. In the capital the rains are also an oppressive force. In addition to the fact that people simply do not want to leave the protection of their houses during heavy rains, there is also extensive flooding in the city, especially in poorer neighborhoods. The city’s roads, which are mediocre at the best of times, are severely afflicted with plagues of potholes, which appear and spread like mushrooms with every downpour. The rainy season is punctuated by Christmas and New Year’s, and then Carnaval, which generally falls in February. Only after Carnaval, people like to say, does the year really begin. March, April, and May, then, are months of work, school, cloudy skies, potholes, relative cold, and rain, rain, rain.

In June, the children are released from school, the rains stop, and the roads are repaired, people visit families. It is the time of the Festa Junina, of boi-bumbá, of fairs with cotton candy and “typical foods” of the season: vatapá, tacacá, pamonha, canjica,
pé-de-moleque, fried bananas, grilled meats, and rubbery cakes made with manioc or tapioca flour. It is the time of buttered corn on the cob, of bags of popcorn, of ferris wheels, of dancing, of throwing rubber balls at stacked bottles to win stuffed animal prizes, of parties where people dress up in gingham dresses and jeans and straw hats, where little girls children paint their faces with rosy cheeks and freckles, and little boys suddenly grow penciled-on moustaches. In rural regions of the Amazon (and Brazil in general), folkloric dances have always been a part of such seasonal gatherings. Queiroz points out that “the function of the spectacle of the Bumba-meu-boi is and always was much more important than its economic functions, or the reinforcing of group solidarity. Primarily because it is one of the few artistic manifestations in the monotonous life of the towns and groups of neighbors in the rural Brazilian environment” (Queiroz 1967:91). In both rural and urban settings, and always most popular with the working classes, the brincadeira do boi has long been a bright spot in lives characterized by hard work.

Even today, the Northeast is seen as the “true” seat of Brazilian folklore, and the boi-bumbá of the Amazon only as a mutation of the more “authentic” bumba-meu-boi. In spite of this, the Amazonian boi-bumbá has quietly (and sometimes not so quietly) spent over a century and a half putting down roots in Manaus, Parintins, and innumerable small cities, towns, and isolated settlements. Carrying with it the memory of its Northeastern origins, it ties the past to the present. Today it is deeply woven into the psyches and discourses of identity in the Amazon region, from state level official speeches to local street talk about neighborhood events. In the next chapter I will describe my study site, the city of Manaus and the neighborhood of Educandos, which is especially tied to the boi-bumbá and the daily work of producing folkloric performance.
CHAPTER 4
The Modernizing of Manaus

Expectations of Modernity, Backwardness, and Progress

From first contact with Europeans, the Amazon region has served as a space onto which outsiders could project their preoccupations with modernity. Following Garfield (2013:1), I view the magnetic power of the Amazon not as natural, but as “a social product, forged by people and institutions that have made material and symbolic investments in the region.” In the 16th and 17th centuries European exploration parties came to claim lands for their countries and collect natural resources. 18th century adventurers arrived to do the hard work of extracting forest products, or drogas do sertão. The 19th century brought naturalists collecting specimens and waves of immigrants to work in and support the workers of the booming rubber industry. In the 20th century there was a proliferation of projects aiming to settle, defend, beautify, and harness the resources of the Amazon. All of these contributed to the creation of the Amazon, through their various and often conflicting symbolic and material investments.

Each round of newcomers has viewed the region as a liminal space to be brought under control. Amazonia’s immensity of rivers and forests, its lush flora and diverse fauna, its exotic location, and its tropical climate all promise endless fertility and productivity, if only they could be harnessed with the most modern techniques, know-how, and above all, the get-up-and-go to get the job done. The perception that the Amazon has not yet been developed to its fullest potential has led newcomers to the region to conclude that the problem must lie with the inhabitants of the region, who were either adversely affected by the balmy weather and the easily caught fish in the river, or who were simply lazy, due to their inferior racial stock. This has resulted not only in a
long series of local, national, and international projects intended to settle, defend, and develop Amazonia, but also the entrenching of negative views of Amazonians as unable to be full participants in modernity. Manaus, the largest city in the interior of the Amazon region, has long been a focus for such modernizing sentiments, and host to the Zona Franca de Manaus, the modernizing project that most dramatically changed the nature of social and economic relations in the city. In this chapter I will first trace the history of Manaus, briefly touching on the symbolic and material investments various groups have made in its creation as a social product. In the second part of the chapter, I will introduce the neighborhood of Educandos, the main focus of my study. I will demonstrate how Educandos, host to the Boi-bumbá Garanhão performing group, came to attain its present social and economic configurations through the influence of the ZFM.

**Part I**

This part of the chapter will be divided into the following sections: pre-rubber boom (1500-1850); rubber boom (1850-1912); post-boom hiatus (1912-1967); and the establishment of the Zona Franca to the present (1967-2014).

**Section I: Before the Boom**

**Colonial Encroachment into the Amazon**

The population of indigenous peoples of the lowland Amazon region has been estimated at having been between 4 and 5 million individuals in 1500 (Hemming 2008), representing more than four hundred different peoples (Garfield 2013). These societies were marked by extensive and sedentary settlements located on the riverbanks of the Amazonian waterways, cultivating manioc, fishing, and hunting (Garfield 2013).
To early explorers, Amazonia represented an area of untold potential to be exploited for gold, spices, and exotic wood. In the 1500s, the region teemed with European explorers. In the first seventy years of that century, the Spanish sent twenty-two expeditions, while the English made eight voyages along the coast and at the mouth of the Amazon; the French ventured seven times into the region, and the Dutch made five trips (Valentin 2005). In 1542 Spanish Dominican missionary Gaspar de Carvajal accompanied and documented the expedition led by the Spaniard Francisco de Orellana, including the first written record of the sighting of the Rio Negro (Medina 1934). While the Portuguese eventually took hold of the region, their presence in the area was limited by the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas, and after first establishing their presence along the Atlantic coast, Portuguese appeared in the Amazon in numbers only beginning in the 1640s (Benchimol 1947), wiping out the English, Dutch, and Irish trading posts in the area and eventually dominating it entirely (Whitehead 2014). Credit is usually given to Pedro Teixeira as the first representative of the Portuguese crown113 to pass through the region around what would eventually become Manaus, on a military mission tracing the journey of Orellana to Quito in 1639 (Benchimol 1947).

By the mid-1600s, Portuguese occupation of the Amazon region was consolidated and stable, and a new period of missionary activity replaced the previous military campaigns, though with much the same level of violence and bloodshed (Whitehead 2014). In 1657, Bento Maciel Parente came to the Tarumã area, located at what is today the western edge of the city, with the missionaries Francisco Veloso and Manuel Pires, five soldiers, and around 300 Indians (Benchimol 1947, Monteiro 1994[1948]). This

113 Though there are some who claim that Pedro da Costa Favela was the first (Monteiro 1994[1948]:11).
party was joined by another *tropa de regate* [rescue troop\(^{114}\)] in the following year
(Monteiro 1994[1948]). Due to its advantageous location at the juncture of the Negro and
Solimões Rivers, Parente’s small settlement became a key site by the end of the 1600s for
the trafficking in Indian slaves, a practice which continued through the 1700s although
officially prohibited in 1755 (Benchimol 1947). Indians were forced into slavery by the
government as well as private citizens, and native slavery became the preferred method
of solving the regional labor shortage, as the price of importing African slaves was
prohibitive (Garfield 2013, Whitehead 2014). Without widespread military presence in
the area, missionaries and their mission settlements, or *aldeias*, became key players in the
process of colonial expansion, through their control and administration of native peoples
(Whitehead 2014).

In 1669, Francisco da Mota Falcão was sent by the Portuguese colonial powers to
establish a fort at a strategic defensive location, as the Dutch and the Spanish were
gaining footholds in the region (Benchimol 1947). The location he chose, on which he
built a fort christened the “Casa Forte de São José de Rio Negro,”\(^{115}\) is the site of
Manaus today (Benchimol 1947). While the population of indigenous peoples had
diminished greatly since the entrance of the first Europeans to the area (Hemming 2008;
Whitehead 2014), the area was still inhabited by Indian groups, including the Baré, Passé,
Baniba, Merequena, Aroaqui, Júri, Caboriocena, Carahiahi, and the Manaó, the latter of
which would give its name to the city (Benchimol 1947:24-25). Population growth to the

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\(^{114}\) The *tropas de resgate*, or rescue troops, operated on the principle that they were
rescuing enslaved Indians, who then would work for them for a period of ten years to pay
off their debt of rescue. In reality they functioned as slaving squads, kidnapping Indians
and pressing them into involuntary service (Monteiro 1994[1948]).

\(^{115}\) “Stronghold of St. Joseph of the Black River.”
settlement was slow, and in the early days consisted mostly of local Indians, who missionaries sought to attract for religious education and as a free source of labor. Despres (1991:15) points out that while “Indians achieved some degree of protection under the ecclesiastical control of the Jesuits, in the aldeias their labor was made available for use by soldiers, colonists, merchants, and the Church to propel boats, construct buildings, supply food, and collect forest products for trade.” As Spanish-sponsored missionaries were settling in the upper reaches of the Amazon, Portuguese authorities encouraged their own missionaries to convert and control the native populations and their labor, lest the Spanish gain a foothold in Portuguese territory (Whitehead 2014).

By this time, the area began to be called colloquially the “Logar da Barra,” or “place at the entrance to the harbor” (Benchimol 1947:27). Construction of the town proceeded in an organic, largely unplanned fashion (Monteiro 1994[1948]). During this time, extraction and export of the forest resources known as the drogas do sertão, “an assortment of botanicals collected in the wild by indigenous peoples and prized by Europeans as condiments and curatives” connected Amazonians to global trade (Garfield 2013:15). In the 1700s, European investment into trading with indigenous peoples diminished as the sugarcane plantations of the northeast grew in productivity and profitability (Whitehead 2014). In increasing number, colonists began to settle the region, bringing with them both African slaves and epidemics of disease (Whitehead 2014). By 1743, native populations had either fallen prey to disease, allowed themselves to fall under colonial administration, or withdrawn from the riverbanks and retreated into the interior (Whitehead 2014). In the 1720s, attacks by Manaó Indians against colonists and
missionaries who entered their territory were frequent (Benchimol 1947). In 1750, the Treaty of Madrid established the official boundaries demarcating the Spanish and Portuguese territorial possessions in the Amazon region (Whitehead 2014). With the 1755 “Law of Liberty,” colonists’ clamor for Indian labor led to the removal of the protections of the Jesuits, who were no longer permitted to control and administer Indian populations (Whitehead 2014). In 1758 the government of the Marquis de Pombal and Mendonça Furtado issued an edict encouraged miscegenation between whites and Indians in the Amazon region, in order to incorporate indigenous peoples bodily into the colonial population (Benchimol 1947). “To marry an Indian woman meant an increased chance to get an office or a nobility distinction. In sharp contrast, a royal act declared infamous all of the whites who married Negro women or vice-versa. This applied only to Amazonia” (Benchimol 1947:17). This resulted in the growth of the sector of the population known as mestizos or Caboclos. The Jesuits were finally expelled from Brazil in 1767, as part of a series of edicts from the Marquis aimed at the incorporation of Indians into colonial society (Despres 1991). Whitehead (2014:101) sees a “kind of modernity” entering the Amazon valley at this time, marked by new kinds of racial/ethnic and social formations. Resistance by indigenous peoples grew and organized, leading to repeated and bloody clashes between colonists and autonomous Indian groups in the second half of the 18th century (Whitehead 2014).

In 1778, the first census was taken by one Francisco Xavier Ribeiro: “228 Indians, 34 Whites, and two slaves” (Benchimol 1947:26). In 1786, the population of the tiny settlement of Manaus was already showing clear internal divisions along racial and socioeconomic lines. The son of a Bahian merchant, naturalist Alexandre Rodrigues
Ferreira was sent by Queen Maria I of Portugal to explore the interior of the Brazilian colony, and traveled in the northern region from 1783-1792. Of Manaus (then the Fort of St. Joseph of the Rio Negro), he observed:

The Fort is constructed in front of a small village of Indians and of some white residents. It is divided into two bairros along the northern margin. In the first exist most of the inhabitants and it is divided into three streets…The Church is situated in the middle of the first street between the residences of the priest and of the comandante. The brancos (whites) own eight houses of which four are in the first street and four in the second. The better houses belong to the white residents…The Indians live in 36 houses of palha (straw) of which only a dozen are well preserved. [Despres 1991:24-25]

This spatial organization, in which rich and poor lived in close proximity although divided along class and race lines, would continue for the next century, when elites would begin to push the urban poor out of the city center and into the margins. Ferreira noted the population had grown slightly since the first census: there were 301 inhabitants, with 243 Indians, 47 whites, and 11 black slaves (Mesquita 1999:24). While colonists did little to pursue agriculture at this time, “the Indians in the neighborhood were engaged in raising manioc, tobacco, cocoa, cotton, coffee, and maize” (Benchimol 1947:27). In 1791, some improvements came to the settlement from Governor Lobo D’Almada: a palace for himself, an army barracks, a hospital, a jail, a bakery, a cotton mill, and factories for the production of pottery, hammocks, and wax candles (Benchimol 1947:28).
A new epoch began in the second decade of the 19th century. Breaking free from European rule, in 1822 Prince Pedro declared himself the emperor of an independent Brazil (Whitehead 2014). By this time, the population of Amazonia was largely mestizo, living a way of life essentially Portuguese, though strongly influenced by indigenous practices, especially in terms of methods of fishing, farming, and the extraction of forest products (Wagley 1976, Despres 1991). In the struggling town of Manaus, however, the situation was not much improved. Although it gained a new avenue and an additional church, Nossa Senhora dos Remedios, the 200 houses that made up the settlement were nearly all destroyed in the 1821 fire (Benchimol 1947). Father José Maria Coelho, visiting the town in 1823, noted that the fort was falling into ruins (Mesquita 1999:25). In 1830, “Logar da Barra” had 1,188 inhabitants; in 1832 it was declared a town, with the name changed to “Villa de Manáos” (Benchimol 1947:30). The newly incorporated town felt the effects of the bloody Cabanagem [War of the Cabanos] which raged throughout the lower Amazon region from 1835-1840 as a social revolt against the “old colonial elite and its inheritors in the newly independent Brazil” (Whitehead 2014:104) and claimed the lives of 30,000 people, some one-fifth of the population of Brazilian Amazonia at the time (Garfield 2013).

By 1847 the town had recovered from the fire and there were now 232 houses on eleven streets and one square built on uneven and broken ground (Benchimol 1947:31). In 1856, the Villa de Manáos was elevated to the status of a city, and only three years later, in 1859, we have the first recorded account of the boi-bumbá in the city and the

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116 It was called Cidade da Barra (Harbor City) in 1848, and in 1856 became Cidade de Manáos. Name changes of settlements was common in this area at the time (Benchimol 1947:32).
second accounting of the brincadeira do boi in Brazil. In the next section I will examine accounts of scientific explorers to shed light on the situation of the city at this time.

**Scientific Travelers and Manaus at the Arrival of the Boi-bumbá**

We have a very good record of the condition of Manaus at the time the boi-bumbá first appeared there, as the Amazon region in the mid-1800s was a favorite location for gentleman (and woman) explorers and naturalists, many of whom kept excellent notes and journals. Some such travelers, such as the youthful Henry Walter Bates and Alfred Russell Wallace, came hungry for adventure and trying to make their names and their fortunes. Others, like upper-class academics Louis Agassiz and his wife Elizabeth, came to see animals in the wild that they had only seen as laboratory specimens. Commander William Lewis Herndon came down the Amazon, leading a military expedition to explore the region. And German doctor Robert Christian Barthold Avé-Lallemant made a tour of the northern region, supported by the Brazil Emperor Dom Pedro. The frontrunners of the modern tourist, such explorers came largely from the smog-filled cities of industrializing Europe. While some came in search of an antidote to capitalist modernity, others arrived with an eye to the development possibilities of the region. Manaus, as the biggest population center in the interior of Amazonia, was of especial interest to travelers.

In 1848, the young English naturalists Henry Walter Bates and Alfred Russell Wallace, both of middle-class families, set out on an expedition down the Amazon. While their story is usually framed as having been led by Wallace’s driving desire to “solve the problem of the origin of species” they may have been more interested in a good time and

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117 From the writings of German doctor and explorer Robert Avé-Lallemant (as discussed in the previous chapter), we can see that the boi-bumbá existed in Manaus at least as early as 1859. Presumably it existed for some time prior to Avé-Lallemant’s visit to Manaus, as it seemed to be a well-developed and accepted phenomenon at his arrival.
making a living off collecting specimens than in any such high-minded scientific pursuit (Van Whye 2014:627). Manaus made a good first impression. Approaching by water, these genteel adventurers were favorably struck by the city’s natural surroundings. Wallace (1889:112) wrote:

On the 31st of December, 1849, we arrived at the city of Barra on the Rio Negro. On the evening of the 30th the sun had set on the yellow Amazon, but we continued rowing till late at night, when we reached some rocks at the mouth of the Rio Negro, and caught some fine fish in the shallows. In the morning we looked with surprise at the wonderful change in the water around us. We might have fancied ourselves on the river Styx, for it was black as ink in every direction, except where the white sand, seen at the depth of a few feet through its dusky wave, appeared of a golden hue.

In 1850, Manaus became capital of the newly created Province of Amazonas. Commander William Lewis Herndon of the United States Navy (whose daughter would later marry the future president Chester A. Arthur) led an exploratory mission from Peru to Belém in 1851. He indicated that there were “3,614 free person, 234 slaves; the number of marriages, one hundred and fifteen; births, two hundred and fifty; and deaths, twenty-five” (Benchimol 1947:32).

As steam-powered boats were introduced to the Amazonian river network in 1853, travel to Manaus became increasingly accessible to genteel travelers as well as rough-and-tumble adventurers. Before steam travel, boats could expect sixty days of travel upriver to reach Manaus from Belém, and thirty days downriver on the return; steamboats cut the upriver trip dramatically, to eleven days from Belém to Manaus
Brazilian and Portuguese interests founded the earliest steamboat companies to operate on the Amazon (1853 and 1867 respectively); they were joined in 1872 by the British “Amazon River Steam Navigation Company, Ltd.” which had a fleet of 21 ships by 1877 (Benchimol 1947:36). Amazon River ports were connected by steamship to Lisbon, Liverpool, and Hamburg by the end of the 1870s. The presence of steamships benefited rubber barons as well as small-scale collectors of forest products, who were able to send their goods directly to market by boat. This increased affluence led to a growing market for consumer luxury goods, even in the interior (Benchimol 1947:37).

German physician Robert Christian Barthold Avé-Lallemant came to Brazil after having received his medical degree in Lübeck, and became director of an institution treating yellow fever patients in Rio de Janeiro. Under support by the Emperor Dom Pedro II, he traveled through the south of the country in 1858 and the north in 1859. Impressed by Manaus’s exotic nature and beautiful geographic situation, Avé-Lallemant’s description of the town was kind, as he “perceived a cheerful contrast in the way the houses were located, as they were distributed both on the hill as well as on the riverbank, and also in the diversification of materials used in buildings,” both the solidly-built European style houses as well as the indigenous houses finished with mud (Mesquita 1999:35-36). While there were no great architectural works at this time, Avé-Lallemant commented on the town cathedral, whose construction had stopped and which was apparently going to be funded by a lottery; on the “Presidential Palace,” whose shabbiness mocked its fine name, and on a theater, which resembled a “monstrous
porcupine” (Mesquita 1999:36-37). As to Manaus society, Avé-Lallemant noted a lack of distinction between social classes, who all lived together in idleness.

In 1866, a decree was published opening navigation of the “Amazon River to the border of Brazil, of the Tocantins River up to Cametá, of the Tapajoz River up to Santarém, of the Madeira River up to Borba, and the Negro River up to Manáos” to merchant boats of all nations [Tavares Bastos 1866:xix]. The opening of the Amazonian ports was marked in 1867 by an obelisk erected in the St. Sebastian square, later replaced in 1899 by a more elaborate sculpture by Italian artist Domenico de Angelis, financed with rubber boom money (Mesquita 1999). Politician and firm proponent of the opening of the Amazon to international travel, Tavares Bastos describes the then province of Amazonas, with a population of only 40,433 in 1866,\(^{118}\) as a “desert without history, but as it contains the seed of the future, it is valuable,”\(^{119}\) but which provoked “a sensation of profound melancholy, which seizes the spirit”\(^{120}\) (Tavares Basto 1866:162-163).

Of that sparse population, the district of Manaus and its surrounding areas at this time had only 6,404 inhabitants, with 2,080 living in the city itself in 1866:

The city of Manáos (previously the Villa Da Barra Do Rio Negro) grows every day. In 1852, it was an insignificant village; the 1865 indicates 2,080 inhabitants. Of this total there are 157 slaves. It also distinguishes 844 whites, 700 Indians, 280 mestizos and 256 blacks. […] The number of commercial houses is not small, but its captains are not large. According to a table of income, that I have in my

\(^{118}\) Tavares Bastos (1866) indicates that the numbers are not entirely reliable, due to the uneven systems of recording populations, but we can take them as a rough estimate.

\(^{119}\) “Um deserto não tem historia; mas, como elle contém a semente do future, vale a pena…” (Tavares Bastos 1866:162).

\(^{120}\) “A sensação de profunda melancholia, que se apodera do espirito” (Tavares Bastos 1866:162).
possession, of the 73 commercial houses launched in this time period, 43 were Portuguese, and only 27 Brazilian; there were also 2 other foreigners.\footnote{Tavares Basto 1866:164-172}

Tavares Bastos indicates that of the inhabitants, 1912 were Brazilian, with the age breakdown was as follows: 502 between 1-10 years of age; 562 from 10-20; 876 from 20-40; 274 from 40-60; 54 from 60-70, and 12 were 70 and above. 1,084 were male, and 996 female; 1,673 single and 338 married; living in 303 houses. 1,923 were free, with 157 slaves. As to their professions, he lists 238 untrained assistants,\footnote{The meaning of “agregados,” which I have translated as “untrained assistants,” is not entirely clear. Benchimol (1947:34 note 24) notes, “The meaning of agregados is obscured. The author suspects it means a kind of status of obligatory dependence.”} 95 artisans, 147 apprentices, 76 merchants, 88 clerks, 126 public employees, 256 in active military service, and 344 domestic servants (Tavares Bastos 1866:171). By 1864, he noted, rubber was the highest grossing export product of the state.

The Swiss-born Louis Agassiz, head of Harvard University’s Lawrence Scientific School and founder of its Museum of Comparative Zoology, headed an expedition of fifteen people to Brazil from 1865 to 1866 to study Brazilian fishes. As they moved through the Amazon, Louis’s Boston Brahmin wife, American educator Elizabeth Cabot Cary Agassiz, co-founder and first president of Radcliffe College, wrote up the notes from their travels, including her own editorial comments. In spite of Tavares Bastos’s eloquent praises, she was not favorably impressed by the struggling little city of Manaus:

\footnote{\textquoteleft\textquoteright A cidade de Manáos (antiga villa da Barra do Rio-Negro) cresce todos os dias. Era em 1852 uma aldeia insignificante; o censo de 1865 lhe dá 2,080 habitantes. Neste total há 157 escravos. Distinguem-se ahi 844 brancos, 700 índios, 280 mestiços e 256 pretos. […] O numero de casa de commercio não é pequeno, mas os seus capitaes não são grandes. Segundo um mappa da mezá de rendas, que tenho presente, das 73 casas de commercio lançadas nessa repartição 43 eram portuguezes e apenas 27 brasileiras; havia mais 2 outras estrangeiras” (Tavares Bastos 1866:171-172).}
There is little to be said of the town of Manaos. It consists of a small collection of houses, half of which seem going to decay, and indeed one can hardly help smiling at the tumble-down edifices, dignified by the name of public buildings, the treasury, the legislative hall, the post-office, the custom-house, the President’s mansion, &c. [Agassiz & Agassiz, 1868:190]

Manaus in the mid-1800s was also subject to periodic food shortages, as little was produced around the city, the inhabitants preferring to import their food from elsewhere. In 1866, it was also reported that of the 71 “free Africans” who had entered the province, 14 had died and the other 57 were employed in public works, including the painfully slow construction of the cathedral, the city cemetery, and a pier on the river (Mesquita 1999:41).

One ongoing problem was that free labor was becoming increasingly difficult to come by. This was due to the fact that the Indians who had been kidnapped by slavers learned of their rights and “having got to know that the laws protected them against forced servitude, were rapidly withdrawing themselves from the place” (Bates 1921[1914:176]). The problem of attracting sufficient laborers was only resolved near the end of the 1800s, when the northeastern droughts brought hundreds of thousands of refugees to the region to work in the rubber industry.

The scientific explorers were not deterred by the unpromising situation of the little city of Barra on the Rio Negro, predicting great things for the city and the region, if only a little outside assistance were to be brought in. For US Navy Commander Herndon (1853:371), all that was lacking was “a manly policy” and some American technology and know-how:
I have no hesitation in saying that I believe in fifty years Rio de Janeiro, without losing a title to her wealth and greatness, will be but a village to Para, and Para will be what New Orleans would long ago have been but for the activity of New York and her own fatal climate, the greatest city of the New World. Santarem will be Saint Louis and Barra, Cincinnati.

Elizabeth Agassiz (1868:190-191) concurred that “insignificant as it looks at present, Manaos will no doubt be a great centre of commerce and navigation at some future time.” Wallace (1889:230) went so far as to offer some “half-a-dozen friends” to assist in the task of taming the region. Little did these travelers know that shortly after their visits, the region would indeed undergo a great change, which would disrupt the placid way of life in the Amazon and catapult tiny Barra to international fame. By the turn of the century, Manaus would have become “the Paris of the Jungle,” replete with electric lights, cinemas, evening promenades, and French perfume.

**Section II: The Rubber Boom: Modern Life Comes to Manaus**

The city of Manaus remained little more than a collection of unprepossessing straw-roofed huts squatting in the mud of the northern bank of the Rio Negro, until a fortuitous discovery by Charles Goodyear changed the nature of life in the Amazon. As discussed in Chapter 2, in 1839 Goodyear developed the vulcanization process, which through the application of heat and sulphur hardened wild latex rubber and stabilized its elasticity. Beginning in 1850, this discovery began to profoundly transform the region, as “the Amazon’s domination of raw rubber production deepened regional integration into the global economy” (Garfield 2013:16). While native peoples had long used natural rubber,

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123 Referring to Belém, today capital of Pará state.
since the mid-1700s Europeans began to make use of it as well, for the waterproofing of boots and the manufacture of rubber shoes (Dean 1987). By 1839, the city of Belém was manufacturing and exporting 450,000 pair of rubber shoes a year (Dean 1987:9). The vulcanization process put into action a set of events that proved the reality of what legions of explorers and colonists—and the governments that encouraged and backed them—had long felt to be true: that the Amazon that would yield untold riches if only the proper “political will, capital, [and] technology” were brought to bear on the problem (Despres 1991). With the resulting boom in the rubber extraction industry, the Amazon region for the first time entered into the world economy and “fulfilled its potential” (Nugent 1993).

Goodyear’s innovation allowed vulcanized rubber to be used much more widely in industrial manufacturing processes:

Rubber was soon the preferred material for the confection of gaskets for steam engines, so that this obscurely gotten raw material accompanied iron and steel wherever factory machinery, mining pumps, and railroads were installed. Rubber was also essential in machine belting and tubing, and in buffers between railway carriages. In 1830, Britain imported 211 kilograms of raw rubber; by 1857, it imported 10,000 kilograms; and by 1874, as rubber was coming to be applied to telegraph wiring, imports jumped to 58,710 kilograms. [Dean 1987:9]

Recognition of the varied industrial applications of vulcanized rubber led to a previously unseen investment of national and international capital in the region, and significantly changed the economic and cultural situation of Amazonia.
Valentin (2005) points to three factors that allowed the rubber boom to fully blossom:

Between 1850 and 1870 the central government, with an eye to strengthening the valley of the Amazon River, took steps that would definitively incorporate the region to the body of the [Brazilian] Empire. Among those, the chief were: the formal creation of a new administrative unit, the province of Amazonas, whose capital would be the city of Manaus; the opening of the principal rivers to vessels of any nationality; and, perhaps, the most important, the introduction of steamboats.\textsuperscript{124} [Valentin 2005:59]

Without the administrative incorporation of Amazonas and the resources that came to Manaus under its new status as provincial capital, and without international steamboat traffic on the Amazon and Negro rivers, it is possible that, lacking the necessary infrastructure, the vulcanization of rubber might have become an interesting but soon forgotten scientific invention.

The rubber boom, or \textit{ciclo da borracha}, began around 1850 and lasted until roughly 1912 (Despres 1991), with its peak years between 1900-1910 (Resor 1977). During the boom years of the ciclo da borracha, the cities of Manaus and Belém exploded in size, morphing from small jungle outposts to cities in their own right. The rapid influx of those thirsty for adventure and profit caused the population of the Amazon to increase from roughly 250,000 inhabitants in 1853 to almost one million by 1910, with the

\textsuperscript{124} \textquotedblleft Entre 1850 e 1870 o governo central, com o objetivo de fortalecer o vale do rio Amazonas, adotou medidas que viriam a incorporar definitivamente a região ao conjunto do Império. Entre elas, destacam-se: a criação formal de uma nova unidade administrativa, a Província do Amazonas, cuja capital seria a cidade de Manaus; a abertura dos principais rios a embarcações de qualquer nacionalidade; e, talvez, a mais importante, a introdução da navegação a vapor.	extquotedblright

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greatest years of growth being 1870-1910, when the number of Amazonians more than quadrupled, from 323,000 to 1,217,000 (Garfield 2013). The population for the entire Northern Region (which includes Amapá, Acre, Amazonas, Pará, Rondônia, and Roraima) from 1872-1900 increased from 332,847 to 695,122 individuals (Despres 1991). The population of the state of Amazonas was “57,610 in 1872; 147,915 in 1890; 249,576 in 1900; 363,166 in 1920; and finally 438,008 in 1940. This represents an eight-fold increase in less than seventy years” (Benchimol 1947:21). Some of the newcomers were foreigners: “Englishmen, Germans, Americans, Frenchmen, Syrians, and Portuguese concentrated in Manaos and Belem” (Benchimol 1947:21). The population of Manaos’s population increased from “3,000 in 1867 to 50,000 in 1900, [and it] became one of the first cities in Brazil to have electric lighting and telephone service” (Garfield 2013:17).

More commonly, however, they came from other parts of Brazil itself. From 1870-1910, the height of the boom, more than 500,000 migrants came to the Amazon region to work the rubber trails, mostly from the northeastern drought-stricken state of Ceará (Benchimol 1947). From “1877-1878 the migrants amounted to 19,910, and by 1900 they totaled 158,126” (Benchimol 1947:41). While most of these headed for rubber work in the interior:

- many remained in Manaos as small traders, craftsmen, stevedores, soldiers, clerks, and even beggars. Some – frustrated in their quest for wealth in the forests; others, more fortunate, moneyed by the spectacular rise in the price of rubber; still others, sick with malaria they contracted in the jungle – returned to settle in the city. These people, named “Cearenses” as a whole no matter their state of origin,
were racially and culturally different from the mestizo or *caboclo* of Manaos and of the interior. They were mainly cowboys and tillers of the soil – a rough human type accustomed to a hard life in a treacherous climate that periodically brought severe droughts. Their ancestry was predominantly Portuguese with some Indian and Dutch admixture. Characteristically they were alert, talkative, quick of action, ambitious, and venturesome. [Benchimol 1947:41]

Despres (1991:27) notes that not all Cearenses became rubber tappers: some “came to Manaus as seringalistas (proprietors of rubber holdings) and they were well established into the aviamento system.” Today in Manaus, “Ceará” or “Cearense” is a still a very common nickname for migrants and their descendants.

In addition to migrants from the northeast, the number of foreigners in the city of Manaus grew during the boom:

- Englishmen set up the tram lines, sanitary systems, subfluvial telegraph lines, telephone lines, and the floating docks. Americans built the waterworks. Germans and Englishmen settled as big exporters, Portuguese established themselves as “aviadores”, importers, and grocers. Syrians became mostly merchants, itinerant traders, peddlers, “*regatões*.” Italians specialized in the shoe business, but most [foreigners] were employed as unskilled workers, porters mainly. Greeks were contracted to work in the construction of the Madeira-Mamore railway at Porto Velho. Polish girls came to explore the prostitution business. [Benchimol 1947:42-43]

This influx of foreigners added to the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the city, where chatter in many tongues enlivened the commerce on Eduardo Ribeiro Avenue.
A new stratified class system was emerging in the urban context. The Portuguese and their descendants continued to hold the upper echelons of society in the region. Below them, however, a new configuration of layers had developed:

However, as the population of Manauaras (i.e., persons born and raised in Manaus) grew, native sons, many of whom were of mestizo origin, established themselves in businesses of their own and assumed a position of intermediate status. Below them was what must have been the majority of the mestizo population—clerks, artisans, dock workers, domestics, and the like. And at the bottom, living on the periphery of the city, as many do today, were the rural Caboclos and Indians who continued as cultivators, extractors, woodcutters, and fishermen. [Despres 1991:26]

It can be argued that this configuration of social classes persists in and around the city of Manaus to the present day.

Like the Californian gold rush, the rubber boom brought considerable wealth as well as population growth. While there were 76 commercial establishments in Manaus in 1867, by 1869 there were 212 (Benchimol 1947:44). By 1873, Manaus had gained “more than twenty streets, eleven alleys, three roads, and seven squares, in which were distributed 494 houses, of which 255 were covered with tiles and 239 with palm […] commerce was comprised of 49 establishments” (Mesquita 1999:45). Taxes levied from the rubber industry helped to build the infrastructure of Manaus, leaving today a legacy of beautifully designed and luxuriously appointed buildings. Soon, the Matriz
cathedral was renovated, as was the Presidential Palace which had been so mocked by Avé-Lallemant and Elizabeth Agassiz twenty years earlier. Construction on the magnificent Amazon Theater, symbol of Manaus, began in 1881. Bridges were built, city squares paved, river channels contained and rerouted, public buildings renovated, expanded, or replaced, and luxurious mansions constructed for the rubber barons and their families to live in European style.

**The Height of the Boom: Modernization of Manaus under Eduardo Ribeiro**

While previous administrations had discussed improvements to the city’s infrastructure, not until the rubber boom were monies available to enact these changes. During his time in office during the height of the boom, Eduardo Gonçalves Ribeiro, governor of Amazonas from 1892-1896, vigorously pursued a campaign of *embelezamento*, or beautification. Under his administration, the capital city finally began to resemble what Bates, Wallace, Agassiz, and Herndon had imagined.

As with the Amazon as a whole, Manaus as a city was seen as a potential site for progress: stagnant, but always with the latent promise of great things. Manaus began as a tiny fort at the intersection of two mighty rivers; from that first foothold, it became the focal point of innumerable fantasies of the conquest of the savages and the untamed jungle. If only the roads were paved, the electrical lines laid, the igarapés filled in, or the undesirables removed, then finally Manaus would become a beautiful, modern city. Beauty and modernity, however, seemed and still seem to always lurk over the next horizon, as there always remain more roads to pave, more electrical wires to lay, more igarapés to fill in, and more undesirables to remove. Progress required the removal of all
that was not deemed sufficiently modern, and its replacement with appropriately modern stand-ins:

Modernity in Manaus does not just substitute wood for iron, clay for bricks, palm thatching for roof tiles, the igarapé for the avenue, the wagon for the streetcars, gas lamps for electric lights, but also transforms the natural landscape, destroys old customs and traditions, civilizes Indians transforming them into urban workers, streamlines commerce, expands navigation, develops immigration.126

[Dias 1999:27]

In short, the rubber boom was not a superficial phenomenon, but substantially changed the way of life of the people of Manaus and its surroundings in a deep and abiding way.

Upon leaving office, Ribeiro declared, “I found Manaos a village and transformed it into a modern city” (Benchimol 1947:V). The desire to achieve “modernity” was a driving force behind government and society in Manaus at the time:

Progress and modernity seemed to be indissoluble factors and came to occupy a prominent place in the speeches and reports of the administrators. They tried to modernize the pattern of civilization and fretted after the most recent novelties produced by commerce and industry. They desired, thusly, to reach a stage of progress compatible with the notion of modernity.127 [Mesquita 1999:144]

126 “A modernidade em Manaus não só substitui a madeira pelo ferro, o barro pela alvenaria, a palha pela telha, o igarapé pela avenida, a carroça pelos bondes elétricos, a iluminação a gás pela luz elétrica, mas também transforma a paisagem natural, destroy antigos costumes e tradições, civiliza índios transformando-os em trabalhadores urbanos, dinamiza o comércio, expande a navegação, desenvolve a imigração” (Dias 1999:27).
127 “O progresso e a modernidade pareciam fatores indissolúveis e passavam a ocupar um lugar destacado nos discursos e relatórios dos administradores. Tentava-se atualizar o padrão de civilização e consumiam-se as ultimas novidades lançadas pelo comercio e
As Burns (1965) and Dias (2007) point out, Manaus was a very different city at the turn of the century than when Bates, Wallace, Avé-Lallemant, Herndon, and the Agassizes visited mid-century. Up until the rubber boom, all classes and colors of citizens had lived together in the city center; afterwards, the center was occupied by wealthy individuals, especially those of European extraction; the poor and those of color were increasingly pushed to the margins.

Santos Júnior (2007:2) identifies this period as one of “ostentation, grandiosity, monumentalities, but also of repression, control, vigilance,” which sought to restructure the city to fit European models of modernity. The city center and its luxurious squares, in particular, were reserved for the genteel enjoyment of the upper class; while those incompatible with such aims were forcibly removed and jailed (Santos Júnior 2007).

Especial vigor was given to the erasure of all that was reminiscent of life in the country:

The norms for personal relations transcended practices that were fully commonplace for most people. However, these were seen as an offense to others, an aggression against morals and causing discomfort to other social characters, among whom were members of socially entrenched groups, possessing the power to command and therefore the power to sanction. We must mention that such social groups in Manaus of the rubber epoch were also imbued with ideals, exercising their power of pressure under a set of reasons linked to the ideals in pela industria. Almejava-se, assim, atingir um estagio de progresso compatível com a noção de modernidade.”
question, aimed at containing habits considered primitive and rustic.\footnote{\"As normatizações nas relações de sociabilidade transcendiam práticas que eram plenamente corriqueiras para maioria da população. Porém, vistas como ofensa ao alheio, agressão à moral e causando desconforto a outros personagens sociais, que entre esses estavam membros de grupos socialmente encastelados, possuindo o poder de mando e portanto o poder de sanção. Há de se ressaltar que tais grupos sociais na Manaus da Borracha estavam também imbuídos de ideais, exercendo seu poder de pressão sob conjunto de razões ligadas aos ideais em questão, objetivando conter hábitos considerados primitivos e rústicos.\" [Santos Júnior 2007:6]}

Among the prohibited behaviors were drinking, fighting, cursing, and the performance of “spectacles” of all kinds, including “plays [and] pantomimes” (Santos Júnior 2007:7), a designation which surely included the performance of the boi-bumbá. These projects of beautification and modernization appealed to the outsider come to see the Paris of the Jungle: visitors found the city of Manaus much improved, cosmopolitan, bustling with life, and flowing with champagne at the end of the first decade of the 1900s (Mesquita 1999:154-155).

Eduardo Ribeiro Avenue, the “backbone” of the new modern city, was broad, straight, and spacious, in contrast to the other rough, winding streets. With wide sidewalks punctuated with benches and regal trees, the avenue was populated by hotels, spacious restaurants, and commercial houses displaying and selling fashionable clothing, art, and other luxury goods (Santos Júnior 2007). In the cooler evenings the tables were lined with tables where the upper crust ate, drank, saw, were seen, and frowned upon the working classes who used the avenue as a passage to the floating port.

The floating port was part of the grand new harbor, located at the foot of the grand avenue and built in 1903 by the British owned Manaus Harbor Company. This
included a “great floating dock and wharf” constructed to solve the ongoing problem created by the 30-foot difference between high and low water levels of the Rio Negro in Manaus (Benchimol 1947:38). “Wine warehouses with an area of 14,450 m² provided sufficient space to store the imported merchandise and to handle the exports” which flooded the market with the opening of the new harbor (Benchimol 1947:38). From 482 ships entering the port in 1902, by 1910 there were 1400 vessels (Benchimol 1947:38). This harbor, and the market next to it, grew to be a space of contention. On the one side, it was a space through which all that symbolized modernity arrived in the city (Santos Júnior 2007). On the other hand, the boats that brought goods also brought those people who were not considered appropriate for the civilized spaces of the city: fishermen, rubbertappers, Indians, Caboclos, and dockworkers. Still, the center of the city housed the well-to-do, while “beyond this, on the periphery, were constructed the ‘pensões de mulheres da vida’ (houses of prostitution) and the residences of the less well-to-do. As the city grew, the pattern of invasion followed this line of demarcation” (Despres 1991:25).

Ribeiro was known as the “Thinker” (“o Pensador”) because he had edited a journal of that name, but also because he was seen to be a man of great vision:

If the “Thinker” had wanted to, he would have transformed Manaus into a tropical Venice, with no lack of heavy boat traffic, piercing the backyards of homes, and covering the facades and gardens of the palaces. But the Governor Eduardo Ribeiro preferred to fill in the streams for the benefit of a functional urbanism,

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129 “Invasion” refers to the unplanned auto-construction of dwellings.
which fought against nature, even to the point of drying out small watercourses, now transformed into broad public roads.\footnote{Se o ‘Pensador’ quisesse teria transformado Manaus numa Veneza tropical, onde não faltaria o tráfego intenso de embarcações, varando os quintais das casas, abordando as fachadas e os jardins dos palacetes. Mas o Governador Eduardo Ribeiro preferiu aterrar os caudais em benefício de um urbanismo funcional, que lutou contra a natureza até fazer secar os pequenos cursos d’água, transformados agora, em amplas vias públicas.”} [Tocantins 2000:229]

Indeed, many of the smaller igarapés were filled in with dirt and made into streets, including the Igarapé Espírito Santo, which became the Avenida Eduardo Ribeiro, today forming the central commercial corridor of the downtown area. The larger seasonal river channels, including the Igarapé of Educandos, had bridges built over them, inspired by the European engineering of the time.

Many of the projects completed under Ribeiro’s regime had long been under discussion, but became possible only with the money of the rubber barons. These coronéis de barranco, who profited the most from the rubber trade, had seringais [rubber plantations], in far-flung areas of Amazonas, but maintained sumptuous houses in the capital, and their taxes went into Ribeiro’s coffers (Mesquita 1999). Manaus, like a true nouveau riche, did not hesitate to deck itself in finery gained in the rubber trade. Electric lights illuminated the wares of shops that lined the new wide avenues of the city, the display windows stocked with the latest goods from Europe: “olive oil and wines from Portugal and Spain; butter and cheese from Holland; liquor, champagne, jewelry and millinery from France; clothes from England; paintings from Italy” (Benchimol 1947:45).

The Amazon Theater became the focus of an elite social life focused on the arts, and social clubs, such as the Clube Ideal and the Rio Negro Clube, which persist to this day, were founded in Manaus during this time. Hospitals, a cathedral, and a school system that
included a university were constructed as well (Despres 1991). During its belle époque, Manaus was often referred to as the “Paris da Selva” [Paris of the Jungle] (Valentin 2005). Eduardo Ribeiro informed the Congress of Amazonas: “the revenue sources of this State are inexhaustible” (Benchimol 1947:48).

To call Manaus the “Paris of the Jungle” may have overreached a more complicated reality. The writer Euclides da Cunha visited Manaus shortly after the turn of the century, during the apogee of the rubber boom and found:

Manaus extravagant in wide and long avenues by the audacity of the Thinker\textsuperscript{131} […] it is a great city, strictly commercial, of crafty aviadores, giddy idlers, and Englishmen with white shoes. […] The abrupt growth elevated it suddenly, causing it to bring with it, here, and there, as it skipped along, in addition to its civilized apparel, the remains of the shredded loincloths of the tapuias.\textsuperscript{132} A city half country bumpkin, half European, where the tapujar\textsuperscript{133} flattens itself next to palaces and exaggerated cosmopolitanism places the high-grown yankee and the coarse rubber tapper side by side, the impression that the city instills in us is of an Indian village transformed into Gand.\textsuperscript{134}135 [da Cunha 1976:312]

\textsuperscript{131} “O Pensador,” Eduardo Ribeiro, as discussed above.
\textsuperscript{132} Taylor (1958) defines “tapuia” as: “a term formerly considered practically synonymous with Ge, but now simply a blanket term used to designate any non-Tupi Indian, or a mestizo with straight black hair” (600-601).
\textsuperscript{133} I have not been able to translate “tapujar,” but from the context it may mean some kind of Indian dwelling.
\textsuperscript{134} “Manaus rasgada em avenidas largas e longas pelas audácias do Pensador […] é uma grande cidade, estritamente comercial, de aviadores solertes, zangões vertiginosos e ingleses de sapatos brancos. […] O crescimento abrupto levantou-se de chofre, fazendo que trouxesse, aqui, ali, salteadamente, entre as roupagens civilizadas, os restos das tangas esfiapadas dos tapuias. Cidade meio caipira, meio européia, onde o tapujar se achata ao lado de palácios e o cosmopolitismo exagerado põe ao lado do yankee
The Thinker’s modern city, then, still bore traces of its humble origins. In spite of the money pouring into the region, it remained difficult to find laborers to actually complete the works dreamed of by Ribeiro (Mesquita 1999:129-132). In fact, labor remained an ongoing problem in the region. Forcing the Indian population into slavery, though it continued to happen, had been outlawed by the government, and the practice was dying out, as noted above by Bates. Importation of African slaves to the Amazon was prohibitively expensive, and in 1888 slavery was proscribed throughout the country. Although while some drought migrants from the Northeast remained in Manaus and worked on Ribeiro’s project, the majority moved on to rubber tapping in the interior of the state, and unfortunately, into a kind of servitude to the city’s rubber barons.

As discussed in Chapter 2, while the system of aviamento existed before the rubber boom, it reached its highest form of elaboration during this time. As Wagley (1976:91) explains:

The commercial system by which rubber collecting is organized is controlled at the top by the exporter-importer companies of Belém and Manaus (aviadores). These large companies send out merchandise on credit to local traders (seringalistas), and they purchase rubber and other products in return. These supply houses and exporters are owners of the riverboats which regularly ply the mainstream and tributaries, providing, in many cases, the only means of communication between trading stations and the towns and cities of the region. In turn, the local trader supplies necessities to his customers, the rubber collectors,

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135 Gand is Ghent, the Belgian commercial port city.
and he purchased from them the results of their collecting. Each is in debt to the other—the collector to the trader, and the trader to the import-export firm. Each advances merchandise to the other on credit. And, needless to say, in such an uncertain business the large exporters of Manaus and Belém are in debt to banks and rubber importers in Rio de Janeiro, London, and New York.

This hierarchical system, in which everyone was linked through debt relationships to those higher up the chain, depended on the existence of a large number of impoverished workers on the bottom and very few astronomically rich individuals on the top.

This led to the development of a split society, divided into what Despres (1991) calls the “Caboclo Cultural Formation” and the “Urban Cultural Formation.” Caboclos lived in rural areas, depending upon extraction and subsistence farming, tied into debting relationships with patrons. Urban areas and the cultural formations associated with them had developed specifically to administer rural production. Similarly, Garfield notes:

Observers spoke of two classes in the Amazon. An urban elite of largely Portuguese, Middle Eastern, and Sephardic Jewish descent possessed trade goods, ships, docks, warehouses, and processing mills; in the countryside, (absentee) landlords claimed the most accessible territories along the rivers in vast, uncultivated holdings that extended far beyond legal property lines. The other class consisted of peasants, whose fight with the forest environment was “very direct and very severe.” Tied by debt to landlords and merchants, they relied on subsistence and the extraction of scattered natural resources to acquired commercial goods under highly unfavorable terms of exchange. This class also
included small farmers relegated to far-off, meandering channels (igarapés) and burdened by usurious terms of credit, punitive taxes, and lack of formal land title.

Garfield notes the presence of the urban poor as well:

In the Amazon’s urban centers, the underclass aggregated throngs of domestic servants, stevedores, washerwomen, prostitutes, vendors, beggars, and jacks-of-all-trades. The poor were largely nonwhite, made up of caboclos of indigenous and mestizo origin, and northeastern migrants and their descendants. [Garfield 2013:12]

As noted above, when these undesirable elements entered the capital city of Manaus they were purposefully excluded from the public areas that were considered to be for upper class, genteel consumption only.

The End of the Boom

The beginning of the end of the Brazilian rubber industry lay in events that occurred in and around 1876, when youthful British explorer, amateur naturalist, and plant collector Alexander Henry Wickham transported a reported 70,000 rubber seeds to England.136 This was not the first attempt to bring the valuable rubber seeds to Europe; interest in the potential of the rumored rubber tree had spread throughout the scientific community in England, France, and Rio de Janeiro, and all were anxious to get their hands on a viable specimen (Dean 1987). Various collectors had brought back specimens of the mysterious tree, but only in 1865 were they fully described in a scientific monograph (Dean 1987).

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136 Without the increased ability to travel through the Amazon region noted above by Valentin (2005), it is doubtful that Wickham would have visited the Amazon region and have been able to so efficiently steal the fateful rubber seeds. Thus, the same infrastructure developments that allowed the rubber industry to flourish also led to its eventual demise.
Thus “the rubber tree had received a stable scientific designation and future collectors would know more or less what they were looking for” (Dean 1987:10). In 1873 rubber seeds appeared in the market in London and were bought by Joseph D. Hooker, director of the royal Kew Gardens (Dean 1987). These 2000 seeds were sown at Kew, but only twelve germinated; half were sent on to India but eventually all died (Dean 1987).

Wickham, a young man with experience in rubber gathering in the tropics, was contracted by Kew Gardens to retrieve additional seeds. Here the story becomes murky. Wickham has been accused of exaggerating his exploits, painting himself as a cunning thief, although it appears that the export of rubber seeds was not prohibited (Dean 1987). What we do know is that Wickham did eventually collect a number of seeds, and those seeds arrived in London at Kew Gardens on June 15, 1876 (Dean 1987:24). Some were planted at Kew, though only a small number germinated (Dean 1987).

These seeds were then sent to British holdings in Ceylon and Singapore, and suffered numerous bureaucratic mishaps: freight charges were not paid; plants were left to languish on docks. Eventually some seeds did get through to government planters, who had significant problems with propagating seedlings, instead waiting for mature trees to bear seeds (Dean 1987). In the 1890s trees were successfully being grown in Ceylon, but these were not tapped, but only used to produce seed; in 1898, 434 kilograms were exported for sale (Dean 1987). Plantations were finally successfully established in Malaya:

Shipments of plantation-grown rubber reached 1,000 tons by 1907. By then it had become a feverish speculation, and the area planted to rubber expanded enormously. Between 1907 and 1910, it multiplied ten times in Malaya, to 400,000
hectares; by the latter date there were almost 100,000 hectares planted in Sumatra and Java. It is likely that there was more *Hevea brasiliensis* growing on Far Eastern plantations than growing wild in the Brazilian Amazon! By 1913, 47,618 tons of plantation rubber were sold in the world market, more than all the rubber gathered in Brazil. [Dean 1987:34-35]

Plantations were also attempted in Brazil, but failed due to comparatively poor soil conditions and diseases that destroyed seedlings planted close together in Brazil (Dean 1987; Resor 1977).

**Section III: Post-Boom Hiatus**

By 1912 the rubber boom was over. When the market crashed, rubber workers left the properties they worked and into urban areas (Garfield 2013). Benchimol (1947:42) notes that “after the depression of 1914, which bankrupted the Amazon economy, most of the people deserted the jungle and came downstream to Manaos. Full of diseases, mainly beri-beri and malaria, they contributed to the high index of mortality in the city, becoming at times a burden to the community.” With no work, the rubber workers:

- drifted into Manaos when they could not return to their homelands. They lived in poor thatched-houses built by themselves on the outskirts of the town under pretty low living conditions. In the majority of cases their poverty was aggravated by the large number of children per family. [Benchimol 1947:52]

The crash did not only affect the little people, as prominent businessmen in Manaus went bankrupt. The inability of the city’s aviadores to send supplies to those in the remote rubber collection areas led to reports of deaths of starvation among rubber tappers who were stranded in the field (Benchimol 1947:52).
Ways of life in the Amazon quickly returned to close to pre-boom standards, with many of the great works falling into disrepair (Despres 1991; Nugent 1993; Slater 1994; Wagley 1976). People continued to work in the extraction of forest goods as they had before the boom; rubber production continued, and the Amazonian economy suffered through a series of smaller booms and busts. The foreigners who had flocked to the city during the boom slowly moved away:

In 1920 foreigners number 16,936 in the State and 8,848 in the city. The depression of the 1920’s and 1930’s obliged most of them to emigrate to their homelands or to move to more prosperous cities of Brazil or other countries. The 1940 Census reported only 6,796 foreigners in the State and 3,971 in Manaos. [Benchimol 1947:43]

The census also indicates a higher number of men than women living in the city, springing from the large number of males who came to work the rubber fields during the boom. While the elites struggled to maintain the way of life they had established during the rubber boom, the city’s lower working class population grew as people continued to stream in from the countryside. As markets for forest products shrank, the Caboclos who were dependent on this trade began to leave the interior, and “in search of whatever employment they could obtain, they migrated to urban centers, first to the smaller cidades [cities] and then to Manaus and Belém. Because of this influx, between 1900 and 1940, the populations of Manaus and Belém more than doubled” (Despres 1991:29).

Traces of the old debt and patronage system remained. Writing in 1947, Benchimol indicated that the system of aviamento was still in force, with shipments of foodstuffs and supplies leaving Manaus monthly, especially during the highwater months,
when food was scarce. The boats would return to Manaus carrying “piassava¹, balata¹, rubber, and other forest products” (Benchimol 1947:5). Charles Wagley (1976), too, found the aviamento system relatively intact in the small farming community of Gurupá. There was also a shift away from forest extraction, and though some in the region specialized in the collection of forest products, by 1950, the number of people in Amazonas involved solely in extraction had dropped significantly, with the number of those practicing food production on the rise:

By 1950, almost half the Caboclo population of Amazonas was involved in some form of food production and the percentage was even higher for Acre (73.5), a major source of rubber in the Upper Amazon. Still, in both the Upper and Lower Amazon regions, farming and the collecting of forest products remained the two principal activities and individuals moved in and out of these seasonally and in response to favorable export markets. [Despres 1991:18]

In spite of this, the city of Manaus was unable to create an agricultural system to support its population, at least in part to the unsuitability of its soils, and in 1948 Benchimol reported that residents relied heavily on products brought in from other parts of the region and country (Benchimol 1947).

Section IV: Zona Franca de Manaus [The Manaus Free Trade Zone]

In 1947, during a time many have described as “stagnant” for the state capital, Samuel Benchimol, prominent Manaus businessman and scholar, concluded his Master’s thesis at Miami University with the following hopeful prediction about the city’s future:

The last step will be toward industrialization. For a long time small manufacturers have been operating in Manaus. However, the huge potentialities of the Amazon
Valley afford a good basis for predicting that the city is likely to be industrialized on a larger scale, mainly along the lines of rubber and lumber. Perhaps it will be a long and slow process, which of course involves nation-wide and worldwide consideration. But it seems to be a sure prospect. [Benchimol 1947:128]

Twenty years later, the city of Manaus, fallen from grace and international renown after the collapse of the rubber boom in the early twentieth century, was catapulted once more into the global scene not due to the rubber or lumber industries, but with the establishment of the Manaus Free Trade Zone (ZFM).

The roots of the ZFM lay in President Getúlio Vargas’s dictatorial Estado Novo regime (1937-1945), which opened the door for several decades of regional development projects, including the production of rubber for the Second World War, as related in Chapter 2. Garfield (2013:10) points to a confluence of factors that led to the Amazon as a specific target of resource development during this period, among them a global demand for rubber that brought the Amazon back into the game, “Industrialists in southern Brazil favored access to cheap raw materials, tariffs, and subsidies, while Amazonian producers and traders clamored for higher prices for forest commodities.” These renewed efforts to stimulate the Brazilian rubber industry, however, failed to produce any lasting change in the region.

Getúlio Vargas came to lead the country again beginning in 1951, this time as a democratically elected president. In 1953, a more concerted effort to develop the Amazon Valley began with the founding of the Superintendency for the Economic Valorization of Amazonia (SPVEA), a project that had been under discussion since 1946 (Dean 1987).
Although Vargas committed suicide in 1954, the project continued, with SPVEA submitting a plan to Congress in 1955:

SPVEA embarked on an ambitious program of infrastructural development, the major monument to which is the Belém-Brasília highway, a road that plunged through 2,000 kilometers of virgin forest, linking Amazonia’s major port to the then new federal capital in the center of Goiás. Although SPVEA sought to encourage private enterprise in the region, without sufficient Congressional support it had no funds with which to stimulate investment. Subsequently, however, SPVEA became a funnel for limited federal funds but their allocation was largely determined by local authorities in the region. [Despres 1991:29]

One in a series of governmental projects intended to bring more people and industry to the interior of the country, the Zona Franca de Manaus (Manaus Free Trade Zone) was originally created in 1957 as the Free Port of Manaus. Filling only one waterfront warehouse, this first project languished, failing to launch as a feasible and significant project (Bonfim and Botelho 2009).

The next significant development for the region was the advent of the military regime beginning in 1964, which focused attention on the economic and strategic potential of the region. President Castelo Branco, who took over the presidency in 1964, was especially familiar with the situation of the Amazon region, as he had been stationed in Belém as the military Commander of the Amazon (Despres 1991). The military government reformulated its policies for the region and created a new program, Operation Amazonia, in 1966. Under Operation Amazonia, SPVEA was replaced by the Superintendency for the Development of Amazonia (SUDAM), which was responsible
for coordinating federal action for the economic valorization of a newly defined “legal Amazon” region (Despres 1991).

Under the umbrella of Operation Amazonia, in 1967, President Castelo Branco signed Decree Law 228, creating the Manaus Free Trade Zone in its current form, occupying 10,000 square kilometers (Despres 1991). Later in the same year SUFRAMA, the Superintendency of the Zona Franca of Manaus, was formed to administer the project (Despres 1991). Despres (1991:32) notes:

The intent of this law was to create through fiscal incentives an industrial, commercial, and agricultural center in Manaus that would serve as the “development pole” for the western Amazon. […] firms locating in the ZFM were to be exempt from import and export duties and from the federal manufacturer’s sales tax [IPI]. Goods important from the ZFM to domestic markets were also exempted from the IPI and those exported with a foreign import content were subject to duties at a rate reduced in proportion to the value added in the ZFM. As an additional stimulus, SUFRAMA undertook and completed in 1973 the construction of an industrial park (Distrito Industrial), located five kilometers from the center of Manaus. Accessed by paved roads and served by all the necessary public utilities, the park includes hotel facilities […].

The state of Amazonas was already urbanizing, but the ZFM contributed to that process, as workers from the countryside came to seek employment in the industrial district. As mentioned before, only 35.5% of residents of Amazonas lived in urban areas in 1960. After the ZFM’s 1967 establishment, the population had risen to 42.6% in 1970, and by 1980 the state was slightly more than half urban in its residence patterns. In 1991 it was
57.8%, in 2000 it was 69.8%. In 2010, the state of Amazonas had a population of 3,483,985 inhabitants, with a full 79% living in urban areas; 51.7% in Manaus (IBGE 2010).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>29,334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>38,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>50,300</td>
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<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>75,704</td>
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<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>106,399</td>
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<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>139,620</td>
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<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>175,343</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>314,197</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>642,492</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1,010,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1,403,796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1,802,014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6.** Population of Manaus from 1872-2010 (*Source: IBGE 2010*)

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<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>481,556</td>
<td>551,656</td>
<td>580,115</td>
<td>601,094</td>
<td>708,795</td>
<td>728,495</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Urban | 239,659 | 409,278 | 869,020 | 1,501,807 | 2,104,290 | 2,755,490 |

**Figure 7.** Rural vs. Urban Population of Amazonas, 1960-2010 (*Source: IBGE 2010*)

Manaus, and the neighborhood at the center of my research, Educandos, was deeply affected by the implantation of the ZFM. Manaus journalist and historian Cláudio Amazonas commented:

> The implementation of the ZFM in 1967 had a major impact across Manaus and consequently stimulated, in the middle term, the emptying of the rural small-town by those seeking a better life. This caused the swelling of the city [of Manaus] with the creation of neighborhoods without adequate infrastructure and the violence that we see today. On the one hand, it created satisfactory economic conditions in a state that suffered from the 1912 rubber debacle and other events such as the 1929 New York Stock Exchange crash, which shook the world economy. The ZFM and the industrialization that resulted were the solution to the isolation of a landlocked state stuck in middle of the rainforest, far from major centers. As for Educandos, the change happened at a natural pace, as the bars and dives that existed on the Leopold Péres Avenue were replaced by banks and shops. Also, due to the initiative of Mayor Colonel Jorge Teixeira de Oliveira,
who with his prestige as a military man during the military regime promoted the removal of the slum that was located in the area which is now called the Amarelinho [pedestrian district] and also widened and paved the neighborhood’s streets, which before had been clay and mud. Although there may have resulted all sorts of negative consequences, the ZFM is the great mainstay of our economy until they find or develop an economic model that is able to replace the incentives it provided for in regards to the deployment of the instruments of the expansion of capital.\(^\text{137}\) [Amazonas 2015, personal communication with the author]

Thus, while Educandos, like other parts of Manaus, staggered somewhat under the weight of the sudden influx of migrants unaccompanied as it was by a government investment in housing and other infrastructural needs, the implementation of the ZFM was experienced on the whole as a positive development.

\(^{137}\) “A implantação da zona franca em 1967 teve um grande impacto em toda Manaus e consequentemente estimulou, a meio prazo, o esvaziamento do interioriano buscando uma vida melhor, o que causou o inchamento da cidade com a criação de bairros sem infra-estrutura adequada e a violência que hoje se registra. Se por um lado criou condições econômicas satisfatórias para um Estado que sofria com a débacle da borracha a partir de 1912 e outros eventos como o crack da bolsa de Nova York em 1929, que abalou a economia mundial, a zona franca e a industrialização que dela resultou, foram a solução para o isolamento de um estado continental encravado no meio da floresta e distante dos grandes centros. Quanto ao Educandos, foi natural a mudança que se registrou, como a substituição de bares e inferninhos que existiam na avenida Leopoldo Péres por bancos e lojas comerciais e a iniciativa de um prefeito como o coronel Jorge Teixeira de Oliveira que, com seu prestígio como militar num regime militar, promoveu a extinção da favela que existia no que hoje se chama Amarelinho e providenciou o alargamento e o asfalto de todas as ruas antes tomada pelo barro e a lama. Com todo tipo de consequência negativas que possam nesse contexto resultar, a zona franca é o grande sustentáculo de nossa economia até que se decubra ou se desenvolva um modelo econômico capaz de substituir os incentivos por ela proporcionados para a implantação de instrumentos de expansão do capital” (Amazonas, personal communication with the author, 01/10/2015).
The new ZFM did not follow the social relations of the old debt patronage system of aviamento, but relied on new relationships that were “invariably bureaucratic, political, legalistic, and contractual” (Despres 1991:36). The ZFM also created a new social class in Manaus:

For the most part, this class is not of local origin. It is comprised mainly of bureaucrats, technocrats, and functionaries on assignment in Manaus. These are university-trained individuals who have been drawn into the vortex of the development industry as well as the newly developed industries. They come mainly from metropolitan centers like Brasília, São Paulo, Rio, Campinas, Belo Horizonte, Recife, Porto Alegre, or Belém, or abroad. To the extent that such individuals engage in patron-client-like relationships, they do so in a political arena formed by the bureaucracies in which they work. Except as agencies of the state of Amazonas may be involved, the major centers of decision within these bureaucracies are not generally located in Manuas or the interior of the Western Amazon. [Despres 1991:37]

This analysis still holds true today, in 2014. Managers of ZFM multinational companies generally come from the southeast of the country, while factory laborers are locals of working-class and mestizo background. I have noted that a new class of low-level managers, clerks, secretaries, and accountants is emerging from the increasingly educated population of Manauaras, in part due to the proliferation of relatively cheap private institutions of higher learning.

Rather than returning to its status as the “Paris of the Jungle,” it has instead been dubbed “Brazil’s China” (Cooke 2006), due to its status as the country’s largest industrial
production and assembly center, whose products include cellphones, computers, watches, motorcycles, toys, glasses, chemical products, and jet skis. The sudden and rapid growth brought by the Zona Franca caused growth in other sectors as well:

The Free Trade Zone stimulated a rapid influx of commercial and industrial enterprises, consulting firms, research institutes, public officers, entrepreneurs seeking investment opportunities, tourists seeking free trade bargains, and migrants seeking jobs, education, or health services. Moreover, all these firms, institutions, and people begin to arrive at a time when Manaus existed in a virtual state of urban decay. For more than fifty years after the collapse of the rubber economy the city stagnated. During this period, the city’s streets deteriorated. The uncompleted sanitation system went to rot. The port facilities and many public buildings fell into disrepair. Medical facilities became grossly obsolete. The water and electrical plants aged to the point of almost complete breakdown. Because of the deficiency of electrical power, the city’s relatively clean system of public transportation, based on the use of electric cars, was replaced by an inadequate fleet of malodorous gasoline and diesel buses. In short, by 1960, Manaus was quite unprepared to cope with the growth that had fallen upon it. [Despres 1991:192]

Manaus struggled to update its infrastructure. The lack of suitable housing led to an increase in the 1970s and 1980s in auto-constructed housing, much of which intruded in “invasions” into the surrounding forest.

Population increased so rapidly that the city was unable to keep pace with it. This resulted in unplanned, sprawling growth, widespread lack of services and basic
infrastructure, and the favelization\textsuperscript{138} of the city. Some neighborhoods, such as Compensa, located in the west of the city, were favelas before the establishment of the Zona Franca (Despres 1991). Gentrification of the city center also resulted in the eviction of residents:

The process of favelization was not simply due to the influx of new migrants seeking opportunities. It also resulted from the displacement of population from old neighborhoods by the renovation of the port, the construction of new public facilities, and from the spread of commercial and industrial enterprises, particularly along the margins of the river where land values skyrocketed.

[Despres 1991:193]

Today, favelas in Manaus are often parts of neighborhoods rather than entire neighborhoods in and of themselves. These “pocket slums” are often adjacent to areas with greater infrastructure Despres (1991:193). Many favelas are located on the edges of the seasonal water channels known as igarapés, and are currently in the process of removal by the government under the PROSAMIM project, discussed below.

Before the 1970s, population of the city was concentrated in the southern and western parts of the city. However, with the sudden influx of population, migrants to the city began to auto-construct new neighborhoods, expanding the northern and eastern parts of the city (Oliveira and Costa 2007). These neighborhoods grew in an unplanned and organic fashion, and still in many places lack paved roads, running water, and sanitation. The situation in the rapidly growing East Zone is the most severe, with only 45.84% of

\textsuperscript{138}“Favelization” is derived from the Portuguese word \textit{favela}. A favela is a poor area, slum, or “shanty town,” generally characterized by autoconstruction and lack of services and infrastructure.
inhabitants living in domiciles with bathrooms and running in 1990; in 2000 the number dropped to a shocking 43.81%, as opposed to 85.57% in the South Zone (where the city center and Educandos are located) (Oliveira and Costa 2007). Elites still occupy the southern and western parts of the city, and insulated enclaves with armed guards (condomínios) are becoming the norm for the growing middle class as well.

Figure 8. Map of Manaus. (Source: google.com/maps)

Unfortunately, Despres’s 1991 analysis of the city (based on his research in 1984), is still largely true today, more than twenty years later:

In short, the Zona Franca has served to transform a stagnating economy based primarily on the small-scale extraction of rubber and the collection of forest products into a dynamic economy precariously based on government subsidies, assemblage industries, and external markets. In the process of this transformation,
Manaus has acquired most of the characteristics and problems associated with urban-industrial growth throughout much of Brazil and Latin America. In almost every area affecting the quality of life, the growth in population has dramatically outpaced the provision of human needs. Wages are low, the cost of living is high, public housing and services are inadequate, and because large segments of the working-class live at poverty’s edge, favelization is widespread. At the same time, most of the city’s cultural institutions are extensively commercialized and, thus, class based. [Despres 1991:201]

Today, good housing is scarce and expensive, as I personally experienced when I tried to find an apartment to rent near the city center. Wages are still low and costs of living are still high, with prices for basic foodstuffs constantly on the rise. Public and private clinics and hospitals lack resources and specialists and require extensive waiting periods for patients to be attended. Children in public schools receive four hours of schooling a day, and due to a lack of schools and teachers, are taught in two or more shifts daily. The schooling that is available in the public school system is deplorable, and good private schools are costly and only available to upper-middle class and upper class families. While the city and state governments are constantly announcing improvements in schools, hospitals, and public transportation, there is an ongoing deficit in all of these areas. To be fair, these problems are not restricted only to Manaus: the demonstrations that spread throughout the entire country in June and July of 2013 demanded lower rates for public transportation, and improvements in the areas of education and healthcare.

**Part II: Educandos**

*The History of Educandos: A “Traditional Neighborhood”*
This study focuses on the neighborhood (bairro\textsuperscript{139}) of Educandos, located directly east of Manaus’s downtown business district, across a wide river channel, the Igarapé de Educandos.\textsuperscript{140} Educandos, the first area to be developed after the city center, gained its name from the Estabelecimento dos Educandos Artífices (Establishment of Student Craftsmen), the first provincial school, which was founded in Manaus on August 21, 1856 in what had previously been the Olaria Provincial, the provincial brick factory (Amazonas 1996:65). As mentioned above, finding laborers to maintain the city’s infrastructure and man its industries was an ongoing problem in and around Manaus (Mesquita 1999:129-132). As free Indian labor was disappearing around the mid-1800s, the city administrators of Manaus decided that a school dedicated to creating a system of apprenticeship was necessary.

The school would serve two purposes: it would contribute to the civilization and incorporation of indigenous peoples into Brazilian society, and provide skilled laborers for the needs of the city (Amazonas 2010). Amazonas (2010:14) notes the deeper importance of the school as a project for modernization as well:

\textsuperscript{139}“Bairro” refers to a section of a city. Sometimes these are very large and contain many neighborhoods within them. I use “bairro” and “neighborhood” interchangeably when I speak about Educandos, as it is a small bairro and its residents generally identify very strongly as being Educandense. Smaller, organic divisions within Educandos do exist, generally on the level of the street. This is in part due to such events as the very popular and very competitive Educandos indoor soccer championship, in which streets play against each other for the coveted title.

\textsuperscript{140}Manaus journalist, historian, and Educandos native, Claudio Amazonas (1995, 2010) refers to the igarapé as the “Igarapé de Cachoerinha.” On my current Manaus city map, it is referred to as the “Igarapé dos Educandos,” which after it passes Manaus splits into two, the western branch apparently continuing under that name, with the eastern branch taking on the name “Igarapé do Quarenta.” Somewhat arbitrarily, I have chosen to use the denomination from the city map.
The creation of this institution, imposed by the winds of Enlightenment and Republican ideals, which came from Europe and spread throughout the world the realization that freedom lay in knowledge, was not just a mere reference to the island which some years later would become one of the trendiest neighborhoods in the city of Manaus. The Establishment of Student Craftsmen represented much more than you can imagine, not just lending the nickname to the future working-class community, but also as the very important landmark for events in the Amazon capital, whether by its serving as a pioneer in public education, or as a renovating pole from which irradiated the education and culture of the capital city of Manaus, beginning in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.141

A band comprised of the school’s students soon became a hallmark of the city’s finest fetes. The school’s students were comprised of poor mestizos and detribalized Indians,142 and their flawless mastery of European musical traditions enchanted Manaus’s upper classes while it symbolized once again the triumph of European modernity over the unruly Amazon. Amazonas (2010) notes that many of the school’s student musicians went on to become the basis of what would be Manaus’s musical scene as professional

141 “A criação dessa instituição, imposta pelos ventos do ideal iluminista e republicano que, a partir da Europa, espalharam pelo mundo a consciência de que a liberdade repousava no saber, não significou apenas um mero referencial para a ilha que, pouco anos depois, se tornaria um dos mais badalados bairros da cidade de Manaus. O Estabelecimento dos Educandos Artífices representou muito mais do que se pode imaginar, não apenas emprestando o apelido à futura comunidade operária, mas sendo o marco de acontecimentos importantíssimos para a capital amazonense, quer pelo seu priorism na instrução pública, quer como um renovador polo de irradiação da educação e cultura da capital manauense, a partir da última quadra do século XVIII” (Amazonas 2010:14).

142 Elizabeth Agassiz, during her 1856 stay in Manaus, paid a visit to the school. She asserted that Indian children were removed forcibly from their families and imprisoned in the school (Agassiz 1868).
artists. In 1870, the school had 78 students. It underwent a variety of modifications over the next decades, in 1897 was used as a shelter for immigrants (Amazonas 1995). In 1929 it was moved to a new location in the neighborhood of Cachoeirinha, and in 1942 became the state Technical School (Amazonas 2010:16).

Before the establishment of the school, this unoccupied and largely undeveloped hill area was called the “Barreira de Baixo,” or the “Lower Barrier,” in contrast with the “Barreira de Cima,” the “Upper Barrier,” which today is the neighborhood of São Raimundo (Amazonas 1996, 2010). The city center of Manaus is located in a low area, framed by these two hills. The Rio Negro flows from west to east as it passes Manaus on its way to join the Amazon River in its rush to the Atlantic Ocean, so São Raimundo is then “upper” and Educandos “lower.” The area that became Educandos was a seasonal island: on its south border was the Rio Negro; on its western and northern sides lay the Igarapé de Educandos, and on its eastern edge a smaller igarapé. During the highwater season the Rio Negro rises thirty feet over its lowest point, filling the igarapés. During the lowest point of the low water season, the level of the Igarapé de Educandos is so low that small makeshift wooden bridges are built to allow passage by foot. Bridging the wide Igarapé de Educandos was a large project requiring sophisticated engineering and would only be accomplished in 1929. Until then, visitors to what became known as the “lugar dos Educandos” [the place of the apprentices] would cross the Igarapé by a system of small ferryboats, or catraias.

The hill where the school was built originally had one path, leading up from the ferryboat port. The hill was covered by forest and brush, swamped with mud in the rainy season, and choking with dust in the dry season. This area was first settled by two
families. The first, the Turiby or Turíbios family, were West Indians from Barbados (Amazonas 2010). The second was the Encarnação family, led by Manuel Urbano da Encarnação, a pioneer and *sertanista* [a kind of backwoods scout] who settled his family on the hill in 1860 and then left in 1861 to lead an exploratory mission up the Rio Purús for the provincial government (2010). The houses of these families were joined by two stonework villas built in 1891. The area remained largely unchanged until the turn of the century, though gradually more families—mostly Indians and mestizos from the interior—settled in the hilly area, living in simple houses with dirt floors and palm leaf roofs that were lit by fish oil lamps, and sustaining themselves though fishing, hunting, and gardening (Amazonas 2010:18). A chapel to St. Anthony was built in 1902 by a captain in the National Guard, on what would become the neighborhood’s first road, the Boulevard Sá Peixoto. The arrival of this elegant family, of Anízio Antônio Brandão, began to raise the level of social life in the growing neighborhood (Amazonas 2010:18-19).

In 1901 life on the hill began to change as an area encompassing 130,693 square meters was delimited for urbanization by the city superintendent (Amazonas 1996, 2010). At this time, many fine houses were built in a Portuguese style, and were known as chalets; some of these were occupied by important upper class families and rubber barons (Amazonas 2010:24). In 1904 and 1905, a portion of the neighborhood of Educandos served as a camp for soldiers destined to fight upriver in Acre against the Bolivian forces (Amazonas 2010). When the soldiers moved out, they left hundreds of makeshift barracks with palm-frond roofs; these abandoned buildings were then occupied by newcomers to the area (Amazonas 2010:19). In 1907 the neighborhood was given the official name of
Constantinópolis, in homage to Dr. Antônio Constantino Nery, governor of Amazonas from 1904-1907. The neighborhood continued to be widely called by the name that references its original purpose: Educandos, and legally renamed as such in 1979 (Amazonas 1996, 2010).

From its simple beginning, the neighborhood of Constantinópolis continued to grow, attracting newcomers to the region. Street after street was carved out from the jungle, dirt, and mud, houses were built, merchants opened small shops to sell their wares. Several breakthroughs for Constantinópolis came in 1929, with the arrival of electric lighting, a police post, and folklore groups (Amazonas 2010:37). Perhaps more important still was the construction of the Ephigênio de Salles Bridge. Inhabitants had long been agitating for a bridge connecting the neighborhood to the mainland, and finally a deal was made between the city government and people of Constantinópolis, with the former paying for the construction of the bridge, the latter in turn cutting a wide path through the jungle and creating a main street 2000 meters long (Avenida Constantinópolis, today Avenida Leopoldo Péres) to connect the bridge to the growing area of houses and shops on the top of the hill (Amazonas 1996). From this point, the neighborhood rapidly took shape, with the new connection allowing the easy transportation of materials, goods, and people.

By the end of the 1920s, the neighborhood gained a privately owned cinema, and had nearly 4000 inhabitants with its central area known as the Alto da Bela Vista [Beautiful View Heights] (Amazonas 2010:25). Many of these inhabitants worked at the newly built Manacapuru Sawmill, located across the igarapé in the city center, or in the Pereira Sawmill in Constantinópolis (Amazonas 2010:25, 30). A new chapel, the Church
of our Lady of Perpetual Socorro, was financed by local businesses (Amazonas 2010: 29-30). In 1933, mayor Alexandre Carvalho Leal ordered the construction of a 16-mile-long roadway, connecting Educandos with other communities (Amazonas 2010:37-38). In 1938, a factory was built for the processing of rubber (Amazonas 2010:41). Educandos continued to develop, by 1939 having 6,009 inhabitants, a post office, a police station, a new church, and elementary schools. One of these, the Machado de Assis School, was located in the building that had housed the provincial brick factory and the Educandos Artífices (Amazonas 2010). In 1941, Pan American subsidiary Panair do Brasil built an airport at the southeastern corner of the neighborhood, where a small igarapé meets the Rio Negro (Despres 1991:206). Perhaps even more significantly, Panair constructed a road connecting the airport (and the eastern part of the neighborhood) with the city center. Today where the airport once was located now stand a collection of tin-roofed buildings that house the neighborhood’s outdoor market (feira), including the Panair fish market, perhaps the best in the city.

During the rubber campaigns of the Second World War, as outlined in Chapter 2, around 50,000 workers, a large part from the drought-stricken northeastern state of Ceará, were contracted to work in the rubber fields of the Amazon. Upon returning from their contracted time working in rubber extraction, around 30,000 were housed at the edge of Constantinópolis (Amazonas 2010:49-50). Many of these northeasters, or arigós, began to make themselves at home in the neighborhood, starting small businesses around the rubberworkers camp. This led to growing tensions in the neighborhood, as established residents considered the newcomers to be “toughs and troublemakers” (Amazonas 2010:50).
By 1957, the neighborhood had a fine public square in front of the Catholic Church, with a hospital on one of its sides. The neighborhood’s island geography and proximity to the city center made it a desirable location for industrial development, with the sawmills, the rubber mill, and now a Brazil nut processing plant (Despres 1991:206). This brought an influx of families to the neighborhood, and the growth of a large working class, among which were the newly arrived rubber soldiers who had opted to stay in the Amazon. The arrival of such a large number of workers led to the construction of numerous bars and nightclubs along the principal avenue, and the neighborhood developed a bad reputation due to the violence and prostitution (and later, the drugs) that these establishments brought with them. Another violent diversion, the boi-bumbá, was also very popular at the time:

In the 50s boi-bumbá was a major amusement Manaus, especially during the June festivities. Notwithstanding the color that it lent to the city, this diversion existed with a certain sophistication of violence and wickedness, in the rivalry that existed between neighborhoods. The feud between Cachoerinha and Constantinópolis was between Corre-Campo and Veludinho, of Leonidas Almeida and his brother, Gonçalo dos Santos, known as Marreteiro. Once, the two bumbás met on the Benjamin Constant Bridge: "It is iron, it is steel, I look for you but I do not find you...". It was their war cry. The cock crowed and that night Chiquinho the boatman alone, who was a rapaz for Veludinho, knifed 179 people

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143 While the mills have closed, the nut processing plant remains.
in the back. This was a record in the history of these struggles in Manaus.  

[Amazon 2010: 64-65]

Such violent encounters between rival folklore groups were common in Manaus in the mid-twentieth century.

The 1950s brought the beginning of a new era of growth to the neighborhood on the hill, especially from 1955-1970 (Amazonas 1996). Educandos was dramatically changed through the filling, leveling, and widening of its streets, and scores of new buildings filled out the environs. The establishment of the Zona Franca gave a new impulse to growth, as the neighborhood lies upon one of the direct routes from the center to the industrial district, and many people who work in the plants there live in Educandos even today. With the establishment of the Zona Franca, many of the neighborhood’s houses of ill repute became instead “supermarkets, restaurants, gas stations, shoe stores, 24-hour banks, [and] stores selling a variety of articles, absorbing a great number of workers” (Amazonas 2010:51-52).

Greater integration with the city center occurred in 1975, when a second bridge, named after Padre Antônio Plácido de Souza, was constructed by the city to connect the

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144 “Ainda nos anos 50 a brincadeira de boi-bumbá era uma das principais diversões de Manaus, notadamente na época dos festejos juninos. Não obstante o colorido que emprestava à cidade, essa brincadeira existia com um certo requinte de violência e perversidade, pela rivalidade que existia entre os bairros. A rixa entre Cachoerinha e Constantinópolis se fazia através do Corre-Campo e do Veludinho, de Leônidas Almeida e seu cunhado, Gonçalo dos Santos, o Marreteiro. Certa feita, os dois bumbás encontraram-se na ponte Benjamin Constant: “É ferro, é aço, eu te procuro e não te acho...”. Era o canto de Guerra. O pau cantou e nessa noite só o catraieiro Chiquinho, que era rapaz do Veludinho, furou à faca 179 traseiros. Foi o recorde da história desses embates em Manaus” (Amazonas 2010:64-65).

145 “supermercado, restaurants, posto de gasoline, sapatarias, postos bancários 24 horas, lojas de artigos as mais variadas, absorvendo um número expressivo de mão-de-obra” (Amazonas 2010:51-52).
southwestern edge of the neighborhood (the Alto, location of the oldest buildings) to the city center. The original building of the Estabelecimento dos Educandos Artífices still exists, housing the Machado de Assis primary school. The neighborhood today has an elementary school and a high school, numerous churches of various denominations, a public health clinic, a large supermarket, banks, department stores, and numerous businesses, large and small. Despres (1991:207) indicated the Educandos in 1978 had “more than 4,400 domiciles and a population in excess of 25,000.” This figure has descreased somewhat today, and it is difficult to imagine an additional nearly 10,000 people living in the neighborhood. As of 2010, there were 15,857 inhabitants in Educandos, living in 4,266 domiciles, with one of the highest population densities in the city, at 19,144.03 inhabitants per square kilometer (IBGE 2010).

Programa Social e Ambiental dos Igarapés de Manaus: PROSAMIM

The poorest inhabitants of the neighborhood of Manaus have historically been housed (and to a certain extent, remain so today) in precariously constructed stilt houses located on the edges of the igarapés that surrounded the neighborhood. The greatest current area of favelization in Educandos is located on the banks of the Igarapé de Educandos in the Igapó and Bodozal favelas. Previously, an extensively favelized area was located at the eastern border of the neighborhood, where it meets the Colônia Oliveira Machado. While still a favela, the extent of the favelization of the Colônia was drastically reduced with the

146 The first bridge connected northwestern Constantinópolis to what today is the neighborhood of Cachoerinha, the neighborhood east of the city center. Presumably this location was chosen for the bridge as it was the narrowest point of crossing available. However, this connected the least populated area of the neighborhood to roadways, leaving the more populated southern part of Constantinópolis reliant on boat traffic. The Antônio Plácido de Souza Bridge, which today connects southern Educandos to the city center, crosses the widest part of the igarapé.
advent of the Programa Social e Ambiental dos Igarapés de Manaus, or PROSAMIM, beginning in 2006.

PROSAMIM was funded by monies from the Banco Interamericano de Desenvolvimento [Interamerican Development Bank] and the government of the state of Amazonas (PROSAMIM 2012a). One of the primary issues of settling and modernizing Manaus, since its early days, has been the 148 seasonal river channels, or igarapés, that cut through the city. The basic premise of PROSAMIM, according to their official literature, is “to help to solve the environmental, city planning, and social problems that affect the city of Manaus and its inhabitants, specifically those who live below the 30 meter flood line, the reference point being the level of the Rio Negro at the Port of Manaus” (PROSAMIM 2012b). The PROSAMIM project profoundly changed Educandos. The banks of the igarapé on which Educandos is located had been settled by houseboats and stilt houses since the 1920s. These precarious dwellings were the result of a lack of urban planning: as migrants came to the city, first fleeing from the failed rubber projects and later hoping for jobs in the Manaus Free Trade Zone, there was simply no place for them to live. When PROSAMIM arrived in 2006, Educandos had long been infamous for its malaria- and drug-ridden slum areas. In the first phase of the program, thousands of families were removed from those areas and their houses torn down. Some relocated to PROSAMIM apartment complexes nearby, but many took the government buyout money they received for their property, and seized the opportunity to buy property in distant neighborhoods, frequently the northern zone of the city, where land and houses

147 “...ajudar na solução dos problemas ambientais, urbanísticos e sociais que afetam a cidade de Manaus e seus habitantes, especificamente aqueles que vivem abaixo da cota 30m de inundação, tomado como referência o nível do Rio Negro, no Porto de Manaus.”
could be had at much lower prices. Many of these people, however, were members of the
neighborhood’s Boi-bumbá Garanhão, and in leaving the area the majority left the
folklore association as well. Ivo Morais, Garanhão’s president, lamented: “Some time
back, the [Boi-bumbá Garanhão] had a sudden drop in membership because we lost our
people. From the [Colônia Oliveira Machado], over there, for example, everyone left
when PROSAMIM came in. They took out [the favela]…everyone went to the East
Zone.” Even today, Garanhão is still recovering from this loss.

However, few people I spoke with suggested that the PROSAMIM project was a
negative development for the neighborhood. The favelized areas located on the margins
of the igarapés were health hazards with subpar living conditions, sewage draining
directly into the waterways, little or no running water or electricity, and were breeding
grounds for mosquitoes that infected the residents with malaria and dengue fever. More
significantly, having a dwelling titled in one’s own name was a potent indicator of
middle-class status, especially for those moving from precarious housing. While visiting
Manaus in the summer of 2007 to conduct preliminary research, I lived in an apartment
building that housed (at the government’s expense) families that had been removed from
their houses by PROSAMIM and who were waiting to move into the new apartment
complexes. In general, my neighbors were very pleased about being able to leave their
previous residences and relocate to the PROSAMIM complexes. The reclaimed areas
around the igarapés were turned into public parks, with trails for walking, running, and
bicycling, as well as playgrounds and areas for soccer, volleyball, and skateboarding. The

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148 “Algum tempo atrás o boi deu uma queda de publico porque nós perdemos nosso
pessoal. Da Colônia, ali, por exemplo, foi embora tudo mundo quando entrou o
PROSAMIM ai. Tirou...foi tudo mundo para a Zona Leste.”
theme of the largest recreation area, Senator Jefferson Peres Park, is rubber boom themed, with images of grand buildings and iron silhouettes of promenading figures.

_Educandos Today_

The neighborhoods in Manaus, as in all cities, are varied: some are known for having lovely parks, others for a lack of basic sewer-and-electricity infrastructure, still others for their past history or current drug problems. Educandos is a mixed bag. Those who are from there generally feel a deep loyalty to their patch of the city, or a fierce desire to leave. Or, just as often, inhabitants feel a deep ambivalence about life in a neighborhood that is so full of community spirit and colorful history and at the same time that suffers from unrelenting drug-related violence that claims the lives of all too many boys and young men. It is a place both blessed in natural splendor and cursed by man’s poor stewardship of its resources, a place at once beautiful and hauntingly ugly. From the Indian school that gave it its name, the fabulous rubber boom and its ensuing collapse, the government’s varied colonization efforts, the WW II rubber campaign, to the establishment of the ZFM and the shift of population from rural zones to the city, Educandos has become home to a series of migrants in search of a place in the capital.
The 130,693 square meters of Educandos are wrapped over a hill bordered by the Rio Negro on the south side and the Igarapé\textsuperscript{149} of Educandos on the west. The Igarapé of Educandos is a deep gash separating the neighborhood from the city center, a broad seasonal river channel that at its high river grandeur in June is nearly or completely filled to the level of the roadways that run on its margins. At its fullest, it is animated by the brisk coming-and-going of boats of all kinds, from big passenger riverboats, fishing boats, and barges, to hand-paddled canoes and small outboard launches. At low river in October\textsuperscript{150} it is nearly empty, at its bottom only a pungent and sewage-contaminated stream cutting through a valley wasteland strewn with the consumer residue that it has accumulated throughout the year: mountains of two-liter pop bottles, plastic bags, old flip-flops, broken bicycles, used disposable razers, aluminum takeout containers, plastic

\textsuperscript{149} Benchimol (1947) explains: “Igarapé is an Indian name for a small river or creek, and means literally ‘canoe-path’ (igara + pe)” (note 7, p. 67). In and around Manaus it is used specifically to refer to small and large side-channels of the Negro and Amazon rivers, the level of which rises and falls with the rivers themselves.

\textsuperscript{150} The river’s lowest point may occur any time from October to December, but it remains about equally low for those three months, beginning to rise again around the New Year.
spoons. The igarapé continues to the north, splitting into two at the border of Educandos. The western branch continues under the same name, while the eastern branch takes on the name of Igarapé do Quarenta.

![Figure 10. View of the neighborhood of Educandos from the city center, across the Igarapé de Educandos, at high river.](image)

The Igarapé is an offshoot of the great Rio Negro, which a few kilometers further on joins the muddy Solimões at the Meeting of the Waters, where the dark and light waters run side by side for some distance, kissing and swirling together until the two mix to form the mighty Amazon River, the *Rio-Mar*, or River-Sea. As it passes Educandos on its way to this meeting the Negro is wide but not by any means at its widest point; the other side of the river is easily visible, a low line of trees in the distance. The river at this point is often called “the lake” by Manauaras, and it appears to be just that: the wide,
smooth, inky expanse of water that so enchanted Wallace and the other explorers above. Slicing across its center is the proud new Rio Negro suspension bridge, which sparkles golden in the sunlight and is illuminated with multicolored lights at night. Educandos, along with São Raimundo in the west, is on one of the two high points of the city that bracket the city center. As most people who arrive in Manaus by boat do so coming up the Amazon, from the east, Educandos is a high bluff that appears just before the tall buildings of downtown. It considers itself to be where the city begins, and indeed on the wall of that bluff, inscribed in white cement letters against an overgrown tangle of green weeds appears “BEM-VINDO A MANAUS.” Welcome to Manaus.

Educandos is attached to the center by two bridges. Driving from the Manaus Modern market zone of the city center, one crosses over the Igarapé de Educandos on the Antônio Plácido de Souza Bridge close to the Rio Negro. Continuing, one winds up the hill, past the big blue Nossa Senhora de Perpétuo Socorro Catholic church on the left, the health clinic on the right, the corral of Boi-bumbá Garanhão, curving to the left to parallel the Rio Negro at the Amarelinho pedestrian district. Still following the main road, one curves again to the left, past the brazil nut processing center, the gas station, the Constantinópolis Baptist church, the shops and stores of Leopoldo Péres Avenue, finally curving to the left one more time at the DB Supermarket, which takes one past the Banco do Brasil and the Banco do Bradesco, the post office, and finally over the Ephigênio de Salles Bridge (built 1929), to the neighborhood of Cachoeirinha. Proliferating from this winding central avenue not like neat spokes but as thorns in a thicket are an impossible maze of streets, alleys, sub-alleys, and dead-ends which turn into concrete staircase passageways down into the more precarious areas of the neighborhood, auto-constructed
houses and shacks that perch and lean impossibly, clinging to each other and the hill that
goes down to the Igarapé. The most notorious of these areas is that which contains the
Igapó and Bodozal favelas, together comprising a center of poverty and drug trafficking.
In severe bad weather, sections of housing have been known to slide down into the water
as the rain erodes the mud they are built upon. The lowest level of houses are *casas
palafitas*, stilt houses with removable floorboards that can be raised with the level of the
river, the lowest rooms becoming progressively more cramped as the water comes closer,
until residents must stoop as they walk inside. Even with this ingenious movable-floor
system, those who live in the casa palafitas often suffer the loss of their possessions when
the river rises too high or too quickly for such actions.

And yet Educandos is not unpleasing to look at. What delights the passing eye is
the variation of color and form: stately residences of middle-class families rub shoulders
with one-room wooden shacks. And so is Educandos: a neighborhood in which the rich
and the poor are constantly in contact. On my street, the Boulevard Sá Peixoto,¹⁵¹ which
runs along the margin of the Igarapé, from the Rio Negro to the Antônio Plácido de
Souza Bridge, there are millionaires, beggars, merchants, prostitutes, and many working-
class families. There are foundries, butcher shops, vegetable stands, river navigation
companies, glass installers, outboard motor repair shops, a scrapyard, restaurants, shops
that sell food and dry goods, hairdressers, ice cream shops, as well as houses, apartments,
a convent, casas palafitas and lavish residences, a semi-defunct water processing plant,
and many more businesses. This is a street that is only two and a half blocks long; to

¹⁵¹ One of the neighborhood’s first streets, the Boulevard Sá Peixoto was given that name in 1908, after senator Antonio Gonçalves Pereira de Sá Peixoto.
walk from the bottom to the top can easily be managed in five minutes, and could be done more quickly in reverse, as it is on a hill.

Running along the southern side of the grounds of the water processing plant—which has become a place for drug users and street people to frequent, and which residents have long been agitating to have closed—is a short spur of a street, which leads perhaps twenty meters down to what appears to be a bus stop. During low water, it serves only as a resting place for the workers who weld barges together on the dry slopes of the igarapé. During high water, however, it serves as the Porto das Catraias, a catraia being a small boat used to ferry people from the isolated island of Educandos to other destinations. Before the construction of the bridge, it was common to take a catraia to work and school and to shop in the city center, and families specialized in the work of being catraieros. Today, the catraieros still continue their trade, though catraia traffic is much reduced.

While in popular memory and imagination Educandos is an island, it both is and it is not. Historically, Educandos was quite isolated, and surrounded by water (or, at low river, the dry beds of igarapés) on all four sides. On the south side runs the Rio Negro, on the west side the wide Igarapé of Educandos, with lesser igarapés connecting the other sides. Today, the smaller igarapés still exist, but are trapped in manmade concrete channels or sealed into culverts, where they pass unobtrusively under roads and disappear into the urban environment.

The neighborhood is divided, not officially, but organically. The stretch of Inácio Guimarães Road from the Nossa Senhora do Perpétuo Socorro Catholic church is called
the Baixa da Égua,\textsuperscript{152,153} and is well known as a center of drug traffic in the neighborhood. The high area including the church and the Amarelinho pedestrian zone is generally known today as the “Alto,” which as Amazonas (1995, 2010) indicates was originally the “Alto da Bela Vista,”\textsuperscript{154} or “Beautiful View Heights,” so named as it provides a view over both the Igarapé de Educandos to the city center and the Rio Negro. These and other areas of the neighborhood are commemorated in the images and the song lyrics of Boibumbá Garanhão.

Educandos has a checkered past and an unfortunately checkered present. While it has long been known for the variety and beauty of its folkloric manifestations, the neighborhood is also remembered for the above-mentioned bordellos and sleazy bars that comprised one of the city’s most notorious red light districts until the mid-twentieth century. Manaus of the 1950s was a world in which competing folklore gangs engaged in knife fights on the streets, in which Venezuelan crooners sang mournful Spanish ballads from the stages of shady brothels to audiences of drunken laborers, in which Educandos was still an island, connected to the city by one bridge, with a brisk boat traffic ferrying people to the city center. Today, Educandos, while still known for its dedication to

\textsuperscript{152} The Baixa da Égua includes the Igapó and Bodozal favela area mentioned above.

\textsuperscript{153} As in English high-lying neighborhoods are often described as “heights,” in Portuguese low-lying neighborhoods are described as “lows.” Claudio Amazonas (1996) points out that the Baixa da Égua is also known as the Baixa da Eva; I suspect that the latter is the original given name, while the former is the name it was humorously given afterwards. “Égua,” which means “mare,” also is a slang term for prostitute (Taylor 1958:238), and is used in Portuguese similarly to the English derogatory slang use of “bitch.” Thus the English “son of a bitch” in Portuguese is “filho de uma égua.” A popular Educandos Carnaval band is the “Bhanda da Bhaixa da Hégua,” whose symbol is a provocatively dressed female horse.

\textsuperscript{154} Amazonas (1996:132) indicates as well that the “Alto” area was also called the “Alto da Igreja,” in reference to the Nossa Senhora do Perpétuo Socorro (Our Lady of Perpetual Help) Catholic church located there.
folklore, especially in the case of the Boi-bumbá Garanhão, has fortunately lost its *inferninhos*, or “little hells,” as the houses of ill repute were known, swept away in the 1960s and 1970s as the neighborhood prospered with the implantation of the ZFM in 1967.

Unfortunately, a different sort of hell has come to Educandos, in the form of drug-related violence of the saddest kind. As underage lawbreakers are not held responsible for their misdeeds, it is the youth and teenagers who act as the public face of the drug trade, and they who kill and are killed. At times, it feels like the Catholic church’s viewing room is perpetually occupied by grieving families assembled around their sons’ coffins. Drug use and the related violence is a problem throughout the city, and in Educandos it is ever present. It is not an easy neighborhood to grow up in, or to watch one’s children grow up in. As the city grows and with it the gap between the richest and the poorest, a better life through honest means seems impossible to many children, especially young boys, who all too often are lured into a life of crime by the promise of easy money. This has intensified, residents say, with the increasing penetration of consumer goods that signal middle-class status and the growing desire to achieve such a status. For this reason, the dry season’s June and July school holidays are seen as a time of especial danger for children, good weather and idle young hands being the devil’s play things. For this reason, the festivities of the Festa Junina, which are hectically pursued throughout the city and underwritten by city and state monies, are strongly promoted in Educandos by churches, schools, and neighborhood groups, especially Boi-bumbá Garanhão.

As the Amazon region, so is Manaus, too, a social product created by the symbolic and material investments made by a multitude of explorers, naturalists, rubber
migrants and barons, politicians, and others. Those who have come to the region from the outside have often come seeking a blank slate upon which to inscribe modernity.

Explorers, rubber tappers, the Zona Franca, PROSAMIM: all of these are elements of shared memory that have been incorporated into boi-bumbá performances. In the next chapter I will turn to a specific performance of the Boi-bumbá Garanhão.
CHAPTER 5
Time and the Boi-bumbá

Time in Manaus

Although the Amazon region is often seen by those outside of it either as a timeless and static “El Dorado, Second Eden, [or] Green Hell,” (Hecht and Cockburn 1989; Godfrey 1993), time does move forward there in a predictable fashion—though perhaps not according to the linear expectations of the northern hemisphere. In Manaus the year begins all in white for Reveillon, the rains fall, the Rio Negro rises, the bawdy Carnaval season comes and goes, and then everyone gets back to work. “The year,” people frequently comment, “only begins after Carnaval.” The transition to the relative rainlessness of the dry season comes with the fairs and folklore of the June Festival, and then the river begins to fall in July. June is warm, and July and August more so, but when you complain about the heat everyone shakes their head and reminds you to “just wait for September,” when the dry, hot season hits its peak. When it begins to rain again just in time for Christmas, the river is low and the people are ready to spend the cooler holiday season in their hammocks and beds, listening to the rain dashing against the corrugated tin roofs and metal window shutters. Rain swamps the streets making travel difficult, drips ping-ping-ping into strategically placed pots and buckets, and becomes a favored excuse for not leaving the house. December and January are months of being indoors, of family, of rest, punctuated with midnight holiday festivities. People rest, and wait for Carnaval.

This is not to give the impression, though, that time in the state capital is only cyclical, marked by the rise and fall of the river, the rains and the dry spells. For most Manauaras, the steady beat of clock time ties together their days, as they wait for the
company buses that bring them to and from work in the ZFM’s Industrial District, meet with family for meals, deliver children to school and pick them up, stand in endless lines for doctor’s appointments, and hear the church bells calling the faithful to mass.

**Figure 11.** Painting of lone Caboclo fishing in an advertisement for a shrimp seller, Manaus market.

Time is cumulative as well, and there is an uneasy underlying awareness of moving farther and farther away from one way of life and towards another. Like the January rain, seeping into everything is a deep urban nostalgia for a simpler, rural past in which everyone had more time and fewer things, and days were spent fishing, listening to the radio, hiding in hammocks from malaria-carrying *carapanã*, and sharing stories about the legendary *boto*, the river dolphin who enchants and impregnates riverbank women. The walls of the buildings of Manaus sport murals of rural scenes, generally depicting a
single male figure, a Caboclo fishing on a serene and solitary lake. Alone, peaceful, and unencumbered by bureaucracy, congested traffic, or an overbearing boss, to the city dweller he represents a simpler and often better world. Remembering and paying homage to “traditional” ways of life may help to give meaning and restore order to a life in the city, which is often plagued with crime, drug-related violence, discrimination, a lack of services, police brutality, and government corruption on both a petty and grand scale.

Figure 12. Lone Caboclo fishing, mural on wall of business, Manaus city center.
In Manaus, history is also inscribed in the landscape by cycles of local elections, marked by promises leading to government works that are often forgotten, half-finished, after the voting booths close: the continuing PROSAMIM project which dredged the igerapés, removed thousands of families (felicitously or not) from their riverside homes, and built beautiful new parks; the historic downtown Adolfo Lisboa market, under renovation since 2007 and still unfinished; the newly completed Rio Negro bridge, which finally connected the two banks of the river; the hastily completed preparations for the 2014 World Cup.

![Figure 13. Lone Caboclo in a canoe, stenciled wall decoration at free public urgent care clinic, São Raimundo, Manaus.](image)

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155 The PROSAMIM project, the Programa Social e Ambiental dos Igarapés de Manaus, had a profound effect on the neighborhood of Educandos and its Boi Garanhão, and is discussed in the previous chapter.

156 Manaus lies on the north bank of the river. Before completion of the Rio Negro Bridge in 2011 it was necessary to take a ferry to reach the communities located on the south bank and in the interior south of the river.
The history of Manaus is visible everywhere in the urban landscape. Although in 2012, the World Cup 2014 planners considered (and unfortunately discarded) a plan to construct a light rail system in Manaus, the tracks of the old *bonde*\textsuperscript{157} or streetcar system are still visible in the asphalt of many downtown streets. The city center is filled with splendid buildings from the rubber boom period, from the famous Amazon Theater to the Palace of Justice and the Rio Negro Palace. The new PROSAMIM Senador Jefferson Pêres Park that replaced a favela built over a polluted igarapé is deliberately nostalgic, populated with large iron silhouettes of the bonde, of carriages, and of phantom colonial men and women promenading. Other historical events, such as changes in nomenclature of streets and neighborhoods, are invisible to the newcomer but stubbornly persist in the minds of the Manauara, leading to endless confusion for visitors to the city.\textsuperscript{158} For example, while today it boasts the name Avenida Umberto Caldeiraro, it is the rare citizen who calls that main one-way artery anything but its previous denomination, Avenida Paraíba; the same holds for its opposite-direction twin, Rua Recife (today officially Avenida Mario Ypiranga Monteiro). Similarly, on my map of Manaus, one

\begin{quotation}
\textsuperscript{157} According to Taylor (1958:110), the word *bonde* “is derived from the English word “bonds” (securities), sold to finance the first construction of street-car lines in Brazil.” The Manaus bonde first opened to passenger transport in 1899, and were shut down in 1957 (with an interruption of service from 1950-1956, due to problems with electricity production).

\textsuperscript{158} I have dubbed this the “Hotel Amazonas” phenomenon, after a well-known landmark in the city center that for some time has ceased to be a hotel, and bears no signage indicating its previous incarnation. Countless Manauaras have given me instructions based on the “Hotel Amazonas,” e.g. “You can get the bus at the stop across from the Hotel Amazonas.” Only after several years in Manaus did I understand that my problem in following directions was due to the fact that many landmarks indicated (such as the famous Hotel Amazonas), while vivid in the collective memory of Manauras, no longer existed in the physical realm.
\end{quotation}
neighborhood is labeled “Amazonino Mendes (Previously Mutirão),” and is referred to colloquially by either name.

Figure 14. Iron silhouettes of a couple promenading, Senador Jéfferson Péres Park, Manaus. The neighborhood of Educandos can be seen in the background, across the Igarapé de Educandos.

The neighborhood of Educandos occupies a peninsula located to the east of the city center, and is bordered by igarapés on the east and west sides and the Rio Negro on
the south. The first area to be settled after the city center, Educandos has a long and varied history as an educational center, a red light district, a rough-and-tumble sawmill neighborhood, and today is home to many who work in the Zona Franca de Manaus. An old and popular toada, “Boi Peralta,” of Boi-bumbá Garanhão celebrates a number of visible and invisible landmarks of the neighborhood of Educandos:

The month of June is the month of bonfires
This is a celebration that I can’t miss
Garanhão the Bull will dance to the beating of the drums
My bull is cheeky, from the high city, and he will be exalted
Garanhão is cheeky, from the high city, and he will be exalted
Mother of Perpetual Help, the holy miracle worker
She is the patron saint of my boi-bumbá
Bless my bull of popular culture
My bull is cheeky, from the high city, and he will be exalted
Garanhão is cheeky, from the high city, and he will be exalted
Panair, White Point, the Great Wall
The Amarelinho, popular with the barges

In the cauxí, the pelada will play
My bull is cheeky, from the high city, and he will be exalted
Garanhão is cheeky, from the high city, and he will be exalted

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159 The Amarelinho is a popular place for large transport barges to dock, as there are security guards who can be paid to watch over boats there.
160 Cauxí, which means “scab,” is an sandy area that appears between the Amarelinho pedestrian district and the Panair fish market, when the river is at low stage. It is a popular location for informal soccer games.
161 Pelada indicates an informal, pick-up game of soccer.
The igarapé dried up, revealing the beaches
And I will cross in a *catraia*.\(^{162}\)
I’ll go get a *morena*\(^ {163}\) to play boi-bumbá
My bull is cheeky, from the high city, and he will be exalted
Garanhão is cheeky, from the high city, and he will be exalted.\(^ {164}\)

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\(^{162}\) *Catraia* is another word for a canoe or small boat. As mentioned above, catraias functioned (and to a small extent, still do) as an informal ferry system, taking people from the island of Educandos to the main downtown area.

\(^{163}\) *Morena*/*Moreno* is a Brazilian phenotype descriptor, from an original meaning of “moorish.” Its exact meaning varies from one part of the country to the next. In the southeast, which has a much greater population of largely European (light-skinned and fair-haired) heritage, *moreno* can mean a person with dark hair. In Manaus, it is used for people of dark hair and skin, most often for people of primarily Afro-Brazilian heritage, but also at times for people of primarily indigenous heritage. In the Parintins and Manaus boi-bumbá, the idea of the *morena*, the dark-haired, non-white woman, usually of mostly indigenous phenotype, is extolled as the most authentic and most beautiful Amazonian woman. Here it refers to the type of a woman with long, dark, straight hair, brown skin, and features that show some indigenous heritage. Women with lighter colored or wavy hair who want to have a career dancing in the boi-bumbá often dye their hair black and straighten it to conform to this ideal.

\(^{164}\) “O mês de junho é o mês de fogueira
Essa brincadeira eu não posso faltar
Do rufar do tambor Boi Garanhão vai dançar
O meu boi é peralta, cidade alta, ele vai exaltar
Garanhão é peralta, cidade alta, ele vai exaltar
Mãe do Perpetuó Socorro, santa milagreirã
Ela é a padroeira do meu boi-bumbá
Abençõe o meu boi do folclore popular
O meu boi é peralta, cidade alta, ele vai exaltar
Garanhão é peralta, cidade alta, ele vai exaltar
Panair, Ponta Branca, Paredão
O Amarelinho popular do batelão
No cauxí a pelada ia jogar
O meu boi é peralta, cidade alta, ele vai exaltar
Garanhão é peralta, cidade alta, ele vai exaltar
O igarapé secou, tem ponta de praia
E de catraia eu vou atravessar
Vou buscar a morena pra brincar de boi-bumbá
O meu boi é peralta, cidade alta, ele vai exaltar
Garanhão é peralta, cidade alta, ele vai exaltar.”
Educandos is known as the “cidade alta,” or the “high city,” as it is located on one of the two hills that flank the city center. “Mãe do Perpétuo Socorro,” refers to the Catholic church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help; “Panair,” is the fish market that is housed in what used to be the Panair do Brasil airport; “Ponta Branca” is a white-sand beach that is revealed at the confluence of the Educandos Igarapê and the Rio Negro, when the river falls, and the “cauxi” is another similar sandy area; these landmarks are all visible—though they take some decoding. The “Paredão,” however, was a long, high factory wall that ran along Avenida Presidente Kennedy and exists today only in photographs and memories. Finally, the Amarelinho, the “Little Yellow Place,” is the (previously yellow-painted) pedestrian zone that overlooks the Rio Negro.

In his writings on Parintins, Assayag (1995:34) calls the auto do boi “reference, memory, relic.” The boi-bumbá is a kind of sponge of history and reminiscence; it soaks up geographical references, occurrences from the close and distant past, dreams, legends, and memories, and recombines them anew every year. In particular, the boi-bumbá has long been seen as a repository for the racial history of Brazil, interpreting the intertwined connections between indigenous peoples, those of African descent, and Europeans. In this chapter I will examine the 2011 performance of Manaus Boi-bumbá Garanhão and the various times and kinds of people portrayed therein, through Bakhtin’s concept of the chronotope.

[My transcription and translation, with much help from Yan Brener dos Santos Pinto. Original lyrics by Ivo Morais.]

165 The airport was built in 1941 by Panair do Brasil S/A, a subsidiary of the Pan American Airways System (Benchimol 1947:85).
Historical Consciousness and Chronotopes

In his essay “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel,” Mikhail Bakhtin proposed a method of analyzing historical periods as presented in literature. He borrowed from Einstein’s Theory of Relativity the concept of space-time, employing it metaphorically as a tool to deconstruct the “intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature” (Bakhtin 1981:84). For Bakhtin, chronotopes were referenced locations in space and time, each time-space populated by people of a particular social configuration. Through the use of the chronotope, “spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history” (Bakhtin 1981:84).

Although he implied that his theory of chronotopes could be used for “other areas of culture,” Bakhtin limited his analysis to various literary chronotopes. For each of these he defined a set of characteristics. For example, the “adventure time” chronotope of Greek romances is peopled by a boy and a girl who love each other with a never-changing devotion, are separated by circumstances, and after many zany adventures (which do not actually take up any chronological time, as the protagonists do not age during the many ocean and land voyages, battles, kidnappings, and mistaken identity shenanigans), they are reunited, and live happily ever after.

The case of literary chronotopes is fairly straightforward; the case of non-literary chronotopes may be slightly more difficult to imagine. However, Asif Agha’s (2007) observation that there are two important aspects to every chronotope, literary and
otherwise, may give us a toehold from which to begin. First, a “chronotopic representation […] links representations of time to those of locale and personhood.” Second, “it is experienced within a participation framework” (Agha 2007:321). For Bakhtin’s literary chronotopes, the participation framework is that of a printed book, with a reader or readers, and perhaps listeners, in whatever social configuration, space, and time they occupy. As Agha points out, the participation framework itself is a chronotope; and so chronotopes can fit like Russian dolls inside other chronotopes, ad infinitum. Through such nested chronotopic representations, as I will show, the boi-bumbá of Manaus cultivates the development of a distinctive type of historical consciousness in the present, as each representation is linked to the present-day participation framework chronotope.

Various attempts at an anthropological analysis of chronotopes in “other areas of culture” have been put forth. Sabina Perrino (2007) demonstrates how a Senegalese storyteller connected the chronotope of the narrative he was telling to the participation framework chronotope, creating a “cross-chronotope alignment.” Diane Riskedahl (2007) illustrates the way in which people make connections between the Lebanese civil war (1975-1989) and their present-day life. Officially, West Germany and East Germany have been reunified into simply “Germany,” but Deanna Davidson (2007) uses chronotopic analysis to show how former East Germans continue to comment on the their previous ways of life and the current political, interpersonal, and economic systems in which they find themselves. Douglas Glick (2007) breaks down the performance of British comedian Eddie Izzard, who criticizes colonial attitudes through the enactment of humorously imagined, many-voiced encounters. Additionally, Kristina Wirtz (2007) points to the case
of time-traveling Santería practitioners in Cuba, whose use of marked speech registers while in trances evokes different historical periods in Cuban history, thereby linking them to the present day.

In her 2014 book *Performing Afro-Cuba: Image, Voice, Spectacle in the Making of Race and History*, Kristina Wirtz (2014:146-147) further develops her analysis of how “the poetics of historical imagination” is expressed through contrastive chronotopic registers evoking “particular spatiotemporal frames and categories of persons and relationships.” Also building on Bakhtin, Wirtz (2014:149) argues that “subjectivities—our sense of self in encounter with the world—are, first of all, necessarily constituted in and through configurations of space-time,” and are dialogical; that is, they become evident “at the boundaries between self and other.” Wirtz (2014:149) explores how juxtaposing chronotopic representations of “particular locations and historical moments” make apparent different subjectivities, or the types of people who are associated with the sociocultural configurations of individual chronotopes. Wirtz is specifically interested in the imagination of Blackness represented in Afro-Cuban folk religious rituals, but her observations are relatable to the ways that Africans, Europeans, Indians, and Caboclos are imagined in the boi-bumbá of Manaus.

Chronotopes in the boi-bumbá make explicit imagined racial differences not through spoken language, as in Wirtz’s work, but through the body. Physical posture, movement through space, facial expressions, and bodily adornment differentiate groups. While those of the “Indian” category are the most numerous performers in the boi-bumbá, they are (with a few exceptions) not individuals, but a mass of identically clad forms moving in unison. Indians are imagined in the boi-bumbá as interchangeable and
inscrutable: with expressionless faces, they perform their stiff and even jerky marching dances as one. Their bodies are adorned with stripes of paint on their faces, long “grass” skirts, and for the woman, bikini tops, often made of natural materials such as gourds. In the more expressive dances representing Indian figures – that of the Pajé and Cunhã-Poranga in particular – they move with sinuous, undulating movements and acrobatic leaps, and are frequently adorned with jaguar teeth and spectacular feathers. Although no Indian figures speak, the music that is played during these dances often emphasizes names of Brazilian Indian tribes and is peppered with words borrowed from indigenous languages. Further emphasizes the pre-modern, animalistic, otherness of the Indian in the boi-bumbá is the double-time driving beat of the drums that accompanies dances in chronotopic representations of the Indian.

In the one chronotope in which Indian, African, and European individuals are portrayed (during the auto do boi, to be discussed further below), these differences remain. Indians are stiff, feathered, and maintain impenetrable facial expressions. The European figures or plantation owners, in contrast, are gaily dressed in colonial hats, lacy hoopdresses, and parasols, with elaborately coiffed hair for the women and embellished suits for the men. Upright, smiling, and interactive, the European figures represent civilization. A third group that is represented in this chronotope is the African, in the form of slaves or poor sharecroppers. These figures are grotesquely clad in a hideous mimicry of the European figures: the women’s dresses are gaudy, too colorful, too short, too revealing, the men’s are ragged and full of patches. The faces of the African figures are painted completely black, and their bodies are augmented in a carnivalesque riot of prosthetic noses, lumpy buttocks, and obscenely overstuffed breasts. In their bodily
movements, they show their difference as well: stumbling, skipping, and exhibiting openly sexual gestures and bodily movements, the African figures are grotesque, an inversion of the portrayed refinement and beauty of the European figures. While the Indians, then, are shown to be irrevocably other, the African figures are demonstrated to be lesser beings who can strive for civilization but are trapped in hideous mimesis instead. While the Indians in all representations seem to exist in a timeless or achronistic space, the European and African figures are distinctly portrayals of colonial social types.

A fourth racial group portrayed in the boi-bumbá, that of the Caboclo, is shown in a time and space that while idealized, exists in the modern day or the recent past. With hair, dress, and bodily ways of moving which read as “normal” or perhaps “rural” (“humble” or “simple” are words often used to describe Cabocos in the boi-bumbá), surrounded by props (trees, simple churches, stilthouses, rivers) indicating a peaceful and bucolic setting, Cabocos in the boi-bumbá dance in couples, sleep in hammocks, plant and harvest manioc, fish, and make baskets. Laughing, barefoot, and clad in gingham dresses or short white fisherman’s pants, the boi-bumbá’s Amazonian Cabocos—which in Brazilian racial calculations are seen to be formed through the mixing of the African, European, and Indian—are the only relatable figures in the boi-bumbá.

Wirtz (2014:146) points out how those who are conversant with Afro-Cuban folk religion are better able to distinguish the contrastive registers of Blackness and the kinds of people who are represented by each, while those who are less familiar may merely read an “undifferentiated […] ‘Africanized’ voice” in the performances. Similarly, those unfamiliar with the particularities of the Manaus boi-bumbá may gather that it represents
and celebrates a generalized “Amazonian” identity, misunderstanding the complex interplay of representations of African, European, Indian, and Caboclo figures.

In Manaus Boi-bumbá Garanhão’s performances, action shifts between these chronotopes, depicting one moment the procession of São Pedro in modern day Educandos, the next a colonial plantation, and finally an encounter in the spirit world as an indigenous healer conducts a ritual to raise the bull from the dead. Such cross-chronotopic alignment or referencing can be implemented strategically to link the time-space of the present-day performance to historical, literary, or imagined chronotopes (Lempert and Perrino 2007), and has “immediate consequences for how social actors in the public sphere are mobilized to think, feel and act” (Agha 2007). Performances draw inspiration from, evoke, and comment upon past and future performances and events (Bakhtin 1968; Bauman & Briggs 1990), and creators of the Manaus boi-bumbá are expert bricoleurs. Recontextualizing found elements of literature, social science, art, and current and historical events, they create views of Caboclo identity that are profoundly dialogical in nature.

Returning to Agha’s (2007) observation that all chronotopic representations are experienced within participation frameworks, I identify two contrastive participation framework chronotopes for Boi-bumbá Garanhão. Depending on when we are observing the boi-bumbá, it may be either “rehearsal time-space” (in the months leading up to the folklore festival), or “festival time-space.” What constitutes rehearsal time-space, then? Rehearsals, or ensaios, of Boi-bumbá Garanhão begin after Carnaval ends, generally in March or April, and are held at the Centro Social Zulândio Pinheiro, known colloquially

166 There are many other participation framework chronotopes as well, such as “tourist-show time space” and “TV program time-space.”
as the *Curral* (Corral) of Boi Garanhão, or simply the Curral. The Curral, measuring approximately 100’ x 110’, is a fenced-in concrete plaza with a raised, roofed stage at one end. It is bordered by a school on one side, by an indoor school gymnasium on another, with the other two sides bordering on streets. It is across from the riverside Amarelinho pedestrian area of Educandos, and in the evenings the breeze from the Rio Negro ruffles the decorative strings of flags that are hung up for the Festa Junina. When the Boi-bumbá Garanhão is not practicing in the space, it is used by other folklore groups, by the neighborhood soccer players at their annual party, by Evangelical preachers, for neighborhood festivities, or for forró¹⁶⁷ concerts.

**Figure 15.** The Centro Social Zulândio Pinheiro (Curral) during a Festa Junina celebration for schoolchildren.

¹⁶⁷ Forró is a kind of Brazilian pop music originally from the country’s Northeast that is very popular in Manaus.
One primary purpose of these gatherings is for the *batucada*, the percussion corps, to practice past years’ songs and the new songs for the year, in conjunction with the *harmonia*, the band, and the *Levantador de Toadas*, the official singer. In addition, it provides a space for members of the group to reconnect and socialize, for information about upcoming events to be propagated, and for the neighborhood to come together and relax and enjoy free, open-air entertainment. During rehearsals, various performing groups who make up the more than 1000 person performing ensemble that is Boi Garanhão practice their dances, at first at the back of the concrete plaza, and later in the rehearsal season, in the center of the square. As the season progresses, rehearsals become more deliberately produced performances, with various performing elements in elaborate costume. The general feeling and intention of the rehearsal season is to slowly crank up the intensity of emotion, until in the final days before the festival competition, the square is packed with spectators and performers, whipped into a fever pitch of anticipation.

The other notable participation framework is festival time-space, which can be divided into spectacle\(^{168}\) time-space and competition time-space. At times, Boi-bumbá Garanhão finds itself in a situation in which an unjudged spectacle is required. This was the case in 2011, when rather than the usual single, judged performance at the Bola de SUFRAMA, a “spectacle” at the Bola was requested, to be part of the 55\(^{th}\) Folklore Festival of Amazonas, with the judged competition performance to be held at the

\(^{168}\) My use of “spectacle” is based on the use of the word *espetáculo* by members of the board of directors of Boi-bumbá Garanhão to describe this mode of performance, rather than on my own analytical assessment. My use contrasts with that of MacAlloon (1984), who uses “spectacle” to describe events of great scale and public impact, or Rockefeller (1999) who uses the term to indicate a situation in which there is a sharp division between performers and audience, contrasting with the term *fiesta*. 
Sambódromo, as part of the 1\textsuperscript{st} Folklore Festival of Manaus.\textsuperscript{169} Spectacle time-space is principally differentiated from competition time-space by the lack of “competition ambiance,” for lack of a better phrase. The fans do not turn out in force at a spectacle performance; the time pressure so present at a competition is missing, there are generally no movable floats (\textit{alegorias}) present, and in general the performance is truncated, lacks urgency, and is quick and snappy rather than long, dramatic, and expansive. Most importantly, there is no story told during a spectacle performance, no unifying theme that ties the disparate pieces of the boi-bumbá into one coherent, flowing whole. In the 2011 spectacle the auto do boi characters were present, but only performed an abbreviated version of the drama, spending the majority of their time on clowning and buffoonish hijinks. The spectacle was an unjudged performance, and in general was viewed as a kind of dress rehearsal for the competition in the Sambódromo. The costumes worn by the performers were also differentiated from competition attire, being simpler and less involved.

\textsuperscript{169} It appears that in 2012 the two festivals (the 56\textsuperscript{th} Folklore Festival of Amazonas and the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Folklore Festival of Manaus) ran concurrently, at the same location. I was unaware until after the festivities were over that the Folklore Festival of Manaus was taking place.
Figure 16. Simplified costumes worn by “Indian tribes” for Boi-bumbá Garanhão’s spectacle performance, 2011.

The competition is ruled by the regulations, which are re-formulated every year and ratified by the three competing Boi-bumbá groups in the “Special Bumbá”\textsuperscript{170} category, the Bois-bumbás Garanhão, Corre Campo, and Brilhante. The regulations specify the required length of the performance (at least two hours, no longer than two and a half), the details of the sixteen required items for judging,\textsuperscript{171} the composition of the

\textsuperscript{170} This was the classification as of 2013. However, the 2012 Regulamento refers to “Super Bumbá,” while a schedule for the festival in 2011 shows the three bois-bumbás as being in a “Master” category.

timekeeping commission, the movable allegorical floats, the judge-selecting commission, the judges themselves, what happens in the case of torrential rain, and other important details. One of the most important aspects of competition time-space are the fans, or as a group the *galera*, which is bussed in by the folklore groups and supplied with balloons, flags, and pompons in the colors of each group: green and white for Garanhão, red and white for Corre Campo, and blue and white for Brilhante. Additionally, each competition performance is arranged around a central theme that unifies the otherwise somewhat disparate elements of the performance. The theme, the required items, the fans, the floats, the elaborate costumes, the time pressure: these are all crucial elements of the competition time-space. What is the same for both the competition chronotope and the spectacle chronotope in the bois-bumbás of Manaus, however, is a focus on Amazonia, both in the overarching theme each team chooses each year, and in the materials used for the costumes and props.

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are listed in the regulamento, which appears in the Appendix.
As the spectacle time-space is free from the constraints of competition pressure and especially from the need to present an intelligible narrative flow running through the performance, the audience experience is very different. A spectacle is intended to showcase the most eye-catching elements of the performance, and so focuses on the dramatic entrances and presentations of the principal dancers. Spectators in spectacle-time space remain just that: it is a performance that is to be watched and admired, and so remains largely an external experience for the audience. During a competition performance, however, every second is carefully planned, flowing from one scene to the next, with the intention of creating a rising dramatic tension that will peak at the ritual, finally breaking with the appearance of the pajé. A spectator located in the participation framework of a boi-bumbá competition, then, is drawn into the action through the
overarching theme that unites the various segments of the performance, traveling from one chronotope to the next.

The boi-bumbá in both Manaus and Parintins is sharply distinguished from Carnaval, with its focus on *brilho* [glitter] or all things shiny, sparkly, brilliant, and reflective. Boi-bumbá artists and costume-makers by and large use natural materials, such as rough jute fabric, feathers (real or artificial), and beads made from forest seeds. Some boi-bumbá artists, such as Natalício (who worked for years in Parintins for Boi Caprichoso and now has been designer of alegorias for Boi Garanhão for more than a decade), go to great lengths to discover and develop new natural materials:

The difference is that Carnaval is a lot of luxury, a lot of glitter, it’s something more luxurious…You don’t have that idea, like in the boi. In the boi, you’re working here, you’re thinking inside the jungle. Maybe I’ll need that kind of jungle plant, or I’ll need that palm…or maybe even, heck, could it be that I’ll

172 This is not to say that there are no shiny materials used in the boi-bumbá, as they do make an appearance. However, while Carnaval *demands* glitter and brilliance, the boi-bumbá does not; instead, it requires a focus on natural materials. If audiences or festival juries decide that a boi-bumbá performance has too much sparkle, it will be judged to be inauthentic and criticized.

173 A note on names: Brazilians have a variety of naming practices. Most people have two first names, which carry equal weight and either which can be used at a given moment (when people learn that my first and middle names are “Margaret Kathleen,” they often try to call me “Kathleen,” which leads to general confusion, since I remain oblivious to the fact that they are talking to me. My husband’s name is Yan Brener, and approximately equal numbers of people call him by each of those names). Often people do not use their full names except for official documents. This situation becomes especially interesting during elections, when candidates are allowed to call themselves by any name they please (including several “Barack Obamas” in the last election cycle). I offered study participants the possibility to choose (or have me choose) a pseudonym or else use their own names, and only two study participants selected the first option. Of the remainder I requested that they provide me with the name by which they wanted to be referred. Names, then, are in the exact format provided to me by study participants, whether they be complete names, first names only, last names only, or nicknames.
need that kind of rock clay? […] Now there is another thing: natural materials within preservation. We have limits, too. You can’t just show up there, cut down this…no.  

When not working on boi-bumbá-related activities, Natalício travels throughout Amazonia, holding workshops on drawing, painting, and making handicrafts with local materials. After working in the city of Codajás at the Festival of Açai, he became so impassioned with the possibilities for the use of materials from the açaí palm that the following year, he used a kind of açaí paste to form the river banks in the alegorias for Garanhão, a technique which was then adopted and used widely in Parintins. As opposed to the glitter of Carnaval, in the time-space of the boi-bumbá, humble, local materials such as rough jute fabric, beads made from seeds of jungle fruits, or Nataliço’s açaí paste are highly prized, indexing as they do the intensely regional nature of the festival.

Additionally, while alegorias, or movable, wheeled floats, play a large part in both the samba school parades of Carnaval where they originated and now in the modern boi-bumbá of Manaus and Parintins, they serve very different functions. The samba school parades are exactly that, parades, and so the alegorias function as beautiful, mobile tableaus that quickly pass by the viewer, serving as platforms on which esquisitely

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175 As well as in other cities in the region that have created competitive folklore festivals after the model of Parintins, as discussed in Chapter 7.
costumed, bespangled people can pose and dance in place. In the Manaus/Parintins boi-bumbá, however, the format is not that of a procession, but rather of a musical theater production with multiple set changes. For each “act” of the performance, the old alegorias are wheeled out and new alegorias are wheeled in and arranged as a theater set depicting a particular scene. The alegorias function as raised stages as well as simply providing background color, and come in a wide variety of sizes, shapes, and functions. Some can be fifty foot tall figures, with glowing red eyes and moving arms, torso, and head; some are wide, flat, low stages that might portray a village scene; others are so

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176 Since the floats are moving, dancers generally just sway back and forth in place while grasping handholds, since greater movement could put them at physical risk, especially of falling or tumbling off the float.
small that they are designed only to fit one person, who is generally concealed within and then springs out dramatically.\textsuperscript{177}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure19.png}
\caption{Boi-bumbá Garanhão’s opening alegorias for the 2011 performance; from left to right, they portray a river boat, the Amarelinho district, Manaus’s Amazon Theater, and the Nossa Senhora de Perpétuo Socorro church in Educandos.}
\end{figure}

**Summary and Chronotopic Analysis of 2011 Performance**

We now turn to how Boi-bumbá Garanhão of Manaus deploys chronotopic representations in its performances. Here I first summarize the 2011 performance with

\textsuperscript{177} In the Parintins Bumbódromo, and in the 2011 performance in the Manaus Sambódromo, the arenas provided one small space for the alegorias both to enter and to exit, necessitating pauses between acts as all the alegorias were emptied out of the arenas, and then the new set of alegorias was brought in. In performances in Manaus at the Bola de Suframa (in 2012 and most commonly currently), however, the arena has openings at both sides, so alegorias are generally brought in from one side, and then are removed from the other, which allows for a smoother transition between scenes. The difference in alegoria movement changes somewhat the strategy for the management of dramatic flow from one scene to the next.
the theme “A Arte de Folcrear,” and then present an analysis of the chronotopes present in this performance.

July 15, 2011: A Arte de Folcrear

The theme of the 2011 performance, “A Arte de Folcrear,” can be translated roughly as “The Art of Folkloring,” as folclore (folklore) is a noun that here has been turned into a verb (folcrear). Boi Garanhão’s official “Synopsis” (material which is handed to the judges to aid in their understanding, interpretation, and judging of the event) begins with these introductory words, arranged as free verse:

The legends, the parties, decorations, and dances,
the songs and rhythms, the customary costumes,
the games, the popular manifestations
of all kinds: handicrafts, Boi-Bumbá
all this is folklore.\footnote{178}

Boi-bumbá is part of the Festa Junina, the most usual time for the practice and performance of folklore in the Amazon region, where “folclore” is most often used to refer to folkloric dances. This is followed by the following summary statement:

Folklore is passed from parents to children, generation after generation. The lullabies, the nursery rhymes, the games and also the myths and legends that we learn as children are part of the folklore that they teach us at home or at school.

Folklore is the means a people has to understand the world. Using their

\footnote{178}{“As Lendas, as festas, enfeites e danças, as músicas e ritmos, os trajes típicos, as brincadeiras, as manifestações populares de forma geral: artesanatos, Boi-Bumbá tudo isso é folclore.”}
imagination, a people tries to resolve the mysteries of nature and understand the
difficulties of life and their own fears.\textsuperscript{179}

For this year’s performance, then, Garanhão intended to show the importance of folklore,
not just for its entertainment value during the Festa Junina, but also for its primordial
force as a tool for members of a community collectively to understand, organize, and
tame the social and physical world in which they live.

The 2011 Synopsis indicates that the performance was designed in three acts: the
first being “Folkloric” (\textit{Folclórico}), the second “Tribal,” and the third the “Climax”
\textit{(Apoteótico)}. I have found it useful to demarcate, in addition to these four acts, a segment
entitled “Introduction” at the beginning and one called “Farewell” at the end. What
follows is my ethnographic summary of the 2011 competition performance, which took
place in the Sambódromo, as part of the 1\textsuperscript{st} Folklore Festival of Manaus.\textsuperscript{180}

\textbf{Introduction}

As Boi-bumbá Garanhão is announced and the large digital timing clock looming over
the arena begins its count, the instruments for the group’s band (the Harmonia) are set up
on a small stage, and a wheeled alegoria of a typical Amazonian riverboat is already
present in the middle of the arena. The jurors are seated in an elevated glassed-in box

\textsuperscript{179} “O folclore é passado de pais para filhos, geração após geração. As canções de ninar,
as cantigas de roda, as brincadeiras e também os mitos e lendas que aprendemos quando
criança são parte do folclore que nos ensinam em casa ou na escola. O folclore é o meio
que o povo tem para compreender o mundo. Utilizando a sua imaginação, o povo procura
resolver os mistérios da natureza e entender as dificuldades da vida e seus próprios
temores.”

\textsuperscript{180} This summary uses material from my fieldnotes and photographs taken in the arena
during the performance by Yan Brenner dos Santos Pinto, as well as the official Garanhão
“Roteiro,” or “script,” which lays out the movements of the various players in the
over the stage. Across the widest part of the arena are three large alegorias representing the Amarelinho pedestrian zone of Educandos, the Amazon Theater, which is the symbol of Manaus, and the Catholic church of Educandos, Nossa Senhora do Perpétuo Socorro. Into this space steps the Animador [the Animator] Marcelo Buiu, hand-in-hand with his small son, greets the fans (the galera), and summons the official Apresentador, Klinger Araújo. Buiu (as he is popularly known) is clad relatively simply, in white pants and a white, ribbon-festooned jacket with a matching feathered hat. Klinger, who was hidden inside the boat, now appears on top of it, and the boat proceeds (i.e., is pushed by a team of assistants) to the front of the arena.

Klinger descends from the boat. His arms spread wide, he welcomes the jurors and the galera, presents the year’s theme, explains the structure of the performance, and summons the batucada, or percussion corps, which is led by Conductor Jackson Moraes and accompanied by Kelly Cristina, Queen of the Batucada. Compared to Buiu’s simple outfit, Klinger’s is a wild multicolored confection with long blue and green

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181 The part of the Sambódromo that was sectioned off to create an arena for the 1st Folklore Festival of Manaus was in the form of a horseshoe, with the jurors and the stage in the middle of the curved section; the Educandos alegoria stretched across the open part of the horseshoe, and so was directly in front of the jurors, forming the background of a kind of stage. At the beginning of the performance, the boat was in the middle ground of the space.

182 Buiu is one of the principal singers and composers of Garanhão, though unfortunately in 2012 he stepped down from an active role due to voice problems. He is very talented and universally liked, and hopefully will be able to return in the future. The role of the Animador is to prepare the audience for the presentation, to animate the galera and ensure that the proper feeling of excitement is present.

183 Kelly Christina is also wife of president Ivo Moraes; Jackson Moraes, conductor of the batucada, is Ivo’s brother. The Moraes family is one of the most important and influential in Boi-bumbá Garanhão, and many family members were present at the founding of the folklore group.
Figure 20. Stagehands positioning an alegoria in the form of a riverboat in the arena; an alegoria of Educandos’s Nossa Senhora de Perpétuo Socorro church in the background.

streamers, flowers, and a straw boater with green, orange, and yellow feathers. He appears barefoot. The batucada is dressed in costumes that are meant to evoke the Festa Junina: shirts of various colors and patterns of plaid and checks, decorated with multicolored ribbons, accompanied by straw hats that are covered with plaid fabric, multicolored ribbon streamers, and crowned with a small representation of the head of Boi Garanhão. Jackson is similarly adorned. Kelly Cristina is wearing a costume consisting of a bikini top, short skirt, hat, and arm and leg decorations, all made of a riot of colorful plaids, checks, ribbons, feathers, and flowers.
In addition to the main boat alegoria, there are also smaller boats; the collection of boats is meant to represent the yearly procession of St. Peter, patron of fishermen. Every year on the 29th of June, the image of St. Peter is decorated and carried through Educandos to a ferry boat, which, filled with participants leads a procession of hundreds.
of boats, big and small, down the river to the edge of town and back to the Panair fish market, where the saint is removed from the boat and carried to the Curral of Garanhão, where an open-air mass is held.

Figure 22. Boats on the Rio Negro in the St. Peter’s day procession, with the neighborhood of Educandos in the background.

As the batucada marches in, luging their heavy bass drums, snares, and metal rattles, Klinger summons Renato Freitas, the Levantador de Toadas, or the official singer (literally, the “Raiser of Melodies”), who now appears on top of the boat alegoria. Renato leaves the boat and sings a song celebrating the arrival of Garanhão the bull. Renato’s costume is similar to Klinger’s, only much more so: more feathers, more streamers, more colors, more impressive hat. He seems to have a kind of cascading bank of ferns

184 The song was “Chegada do meu boi,” and the text appears later in this chapter.
sprouting out of his back. Now, on top of the church alegoria, a figure of Our Lady of Perpetual Help appears on the right tower, and the Amo do Boi, John Carlos, appears on the left tower. He descends from the church, is retrieved by the boat, and in front of the jurors, sings a song of welcome. Now the door of the church opens, and Areta Melo, the Rainha do Folclore (Queen of Folklore) climbs onto a bridge structure over the Amarelinho, and dances, accompanied by fireworks. She is wearing a headdress, small skirt, and arm and leg decorations similar to the Queen of the Batucada, heavily embellished with brightly colored flowers, plants, and feathers. She joins John Carlos on the boat, before descending into the arena, where she receives a massive backpiece\textsuperscript{185} decorated with more feathers and multi-colored St. John’s lanterns.\textsuperscript{186}

\textsuperscript{185} The backpiece – “costas” or “costeira” – is a standard costume element for Boi-bumbá performers. They are generally roughly circular, composed of fabric-covered cardboard and an amazing number of feathers (both real and artificial), and mounted on a metal framework with two pieces that the arms fit through, much like the straps of a backpack. Since these costume elements are generally very large and unwieldy, and the main performers often appear in surprising ways from nooks in which they are hidden, the backpieces are usually held in the arena, and placed on the performer when he or she arrives, in the case of the Rainha do Folclore, the Cunhã-Poranga, the Porta-Estandarte, and the Pajé. The large Indian tribes also generally wear backpieces, but they attach them before their entrance into the arena, and they enter marching in lines, rather than in a surprise entrance.

\textsuperscript{186} St. John’s lanterns are multi-colored, diamond-shaped lanterns that are customarily used as decorations during the Festa Junina. They are a very common design element in the boi-bumbá.
As Areta dances, Renato Freitas sings the theme song for this year, “A Arte de Folclorear”:

Come to the party, my Caboclo
Because my bull is going to arrive
Put on green and white clothes
And invite a morena to dance
In the measures of this song
I’ll pour out my tradition
I’ll bring my bull from pasture
To play, o my St. John
Come, my Boi Garanhão, courageous young bull
Expression of the popular culture
Balloons, streamers, and much joy, the party will start

There is firewood on the bonfire that heats my courtyard

With Pai Francisco, Mãe Catirina, Guiomar\textsuperscript{187} and Cazumbá

In the trot of the cowboy, in the beating of my drum

I will play

I will play at boi-bumbá to the sound of the batucada

In this moonlit night Garanhão will play

It’s a Caboclo party, it’s the art of folkloring

Hey, hey, hey bull

It’s the art of folkloring

Hey hey hey bull

Garanhão.\textsuperscript{188}

\textsuperscript{187}“Guiomar” is an alternate spelling for “Guiomã,” the female companion of Cazumbá.

\textsuperscript{188}“Vem pra festa meu caboclo
Que o meu boi já vai chegar
Se veste de verde e branco
É chama a morena pra dançar
No compasso da toada
Vou decantar minha tradição
Vou trazer meu touro do pasto
Pra brincar, o meu São João
Vem o meu Boi Garanhão garrote aguerrido
Expressão da cultura popular
Balões, bandeirolas e muita alegria a festa vai começar
Tem lenha na fogueira que aquece meu terreiro
Com Pai Francisco, Mãe Catirina, Guiomar e Cazumbá
No trote do vaqueiro no rufar do meu tambor
Eu vou brincar
Eu vou brincar de boi ao som da batucada
Nessa noite enluarada o Garanhão vai brincar
É festa de caboclo é a Arte de Folclorear
É ê ê Boi
É Arte de Folclorear
This song is then followed by the theme song of the Rainha de Folclore:

Make an arrival light and coquettish, beauty without equal
Stars shine, adorning your altar
Green and White are the colors
Of my boi-bumbá
His pavilion glows with the full moon
Intense and catching fire
And makes my people sing
Her movements free and loose in the air
You are the queen of my bumbá
You have the gift of conquering
Your hair loose in the air
Black locks that the moon illuminates
A thousand enchantments, beautiful mermaid
My queen dances and dances in the courtyard
Makes the whole world folklorize
I am a child in this dance
I don’t tire of saying
That I was born to love you
In green I am happy

Ê ê ê Boi
Garanhão.”
[My translation, original lyrics by Guto Kawakami.]
I am *raça*\textsuperscript{189} and roots

Tradition of this place

*Morena*, I was born to love you.\textsuperscript{190}

The purpose of the introduction is to present to the audience and the jurors the folkloric group Boi-bumbá Garanhão, to create a festive and expectant atmosphere, and to introduce Garanhão the bull as an object of emotion, devotion, and fanatical love. In meetings preparing for this year’s performance, vice-president and head of the Art

\textsuperscript{189} While “*raça*” means “race” or “breed,” in the context of competition (be it boi-bumbá, sports, Carnaval, politics) it also is used to mean something akin to “ambition,” “zeal,” “heart,” or “desire to win.” In the boi-bumbá “*raça*” is often used with an intentional double meaning, as in the phrase, “o Garanhão e a mais bela pura *raça*” (found below in the song “Touro Negro”), meaning “Garanhão the bull is the most beautiful purebred,” while also including the idea that Garanhão (the bull and the folklore group both) is full of zeal to win the competition. Thanks to Yan Brener dos Santos Pinto for providing this explanation.

\textsuperscript{190} “Vem chegando leve e faceira beleza sem par
Estrelas brilham adornando seu altar
Verde e Branco são as cores
Do meu boi-bumbá
Seu pavilhão reluz na lua cheia
Intenso e incendeia
E faz o meu povo cantar
Traços soltos pelo ar
És a rainha do meu bumbá
Tens o dom de conquistar
Cabelos soltos pelo ar
Negros que a lua clareia
Encantos mil linda sereia
Minha rainha dança e baila no terreiro
Faz o mundo inteiro folclorear
Eu sou criança nessa dança
E não me canso de dizer
Que eu nasci pra te amar
De verde eu sou feliz
Eu sou *raça* e raiz
Tradição do lugar
Morena eu nasci pra te amar.”

[My translation, original lyrics by Marcelo Dourado and Claudir Texeira.]
Committee Nonato Torres explained that he wanted the effect to be “very colorful,” evoking the joy of the Festa Junina and the celebration of St. John. Because of this, the performance focused around certain key thematic and design elements: 1) the bonfires that are lit on St. John’s Day (June 24th), and enlarging on this, fire in various forms; 2) Festa Junina costumes, which feature plaid and checked patterns, and straw hats; 3) St. John’s lanterns and multicolored ribbons and streamers. These motifs run throughout the performance and unite it into one colorful, festive whole.

**Folkloric Act**

The focus of the Folkloric Act\(^{191}\) is the presentation of the auto do boi. The act opens with the arrival of Karen Mota, the Sinhazinha da Fazenda, who appears at the doors of the Amazon Theater, symbol of Manaus. She descends from the alegoria by means of a ramp, and is joined by several “Sinhazinha Mirins,”\(^{192}\) or “Junior Sinhazinhas,” young girls who appear together with the Sinhazinha. Karen is dressed in an elaborately ruffled and embellished white and silver hoop dress, carrying a white lace parasol, and wearing a white hat with white feathers,\(^ {193}\) and her performance consists of a few elements: she spins in circles like a top; she sways back and forth, making her large hoop skirt swing too and fro; she falls to her knees on the ground, her skirts spreading out around her in a

\(^{191}\) The division of the performance into acts is explained in the official 2011 Synopsis. These acts are not separated by pauses or intermissions, but rather represent thematic shifts. As this division represents the intentions of the folkloric group, I have decided to keep these designations, rather than impose my own. It is important to note that these designations are, as far as I can tell, a conceit solely for the planning and organization of the performance; I have never heard anyone using them in conversation or discussions of performances.

\(^{192}\) The smallest of the Sinhazinhas is the daughter of Nicolle Santos, the Cunhã-Poranga.

\(^{193}\) Karen’s dress was created by costume artists Werner Botelho. In the 2011 Synopsis, this description is given: “In a dress called Moon Crystal, with her traditional hat, many kinds of fabric, satin ribbon ties, feathers, flowers, and many crystals and regional embellishments.”
circle, in an endearing pose, chin on her hands; and when the bull is in the arena, she plays with him, hugs him, kisses his nose, etc., and feeds him grass and salt.

Figure 24. 2011 Sinhazinha Karen Cristina Mota Souza embraces Boi Garanhão as Apresentador Klinger Araújo narrates; members of the batucada surround them.

Six Sinhazinha Mirins follow her and mimic her actions and her dance, to the best of their abilities. Their hoop dresses are equally lavish. With the arrival of the Sinhazinha, Renato Freitas sings her theme song, “A Dona do Meu Bov” [The Mistress of my Bull]:

Lovely little miss

Beautiful little miss

With your lace-trimmed dress

And your silk parasol
Unique beauty
Lovely little miss
Beautiful little miss
The purity of a wildflower
You are the mistress of Garanhão the bull
Daughter of the master of my bull
Crystal of the light of the moon
Girl of the plantation
Enchantment and magic
Come play with your bull
Dance and love
Come play with Garanhão the bull
Dance little mistress of my bull
Demonstrating the art of folkloring
With your lace-trimmed dress
Dance little miss
Dance little miss.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ “Sinhazinha linda
Sinhazinha bela
Com seu vestido rendado
E a sombrinha de sêda
Beleza singela
Sinhazinha linda
Sinhazinha bela
A pureza da flor do campo
És dona do boi Garanhão
Filha do amo do meu boi
Cristal de lua luar
The Sinhazinha is a symbol of the white plantation culture, and represents elegance, joy, civilized charm, innocence, and freedom from care.

Klinger announces that the group will now perform the auto do boi, which is a kind of short drama. Renato sings a song naming the various characters of the auto, and they enter the arena, skipping and dancing, with the exception of Dr. Cachaça, who enters

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Menina da fazenda  
Encanto e magia  
Vem brincar com o teu boi  
Dançar e amar  
Vem brincar com o Boi Garanhão  
Dança sinhazinha do meu boi  
Mostrando a arte de folclorear  
Com seu vestido rendado  
Dança sinhá  
Dança sinhá.”

[My translation, original lyrics by Renato Freitas and Débora Freitas.]
stumbling, to indicate his drunkeness. A spotlight goes to the cupola of the theater, which 
suddenly breaks open like an egg, and Boi Garanhão, the black bull himself, appears to 
fountains of sparks shooting up from the cupola and cheers from the galera. Renato now 
sings the theme song of the bull, “Touro Negro” [Black Bull]:

You are my passion, you are pure emotion

Black bull, beloved bull

Garanhão, black champion bull

Black bull, beloved bull

Light that shines, illumines

Brightness that incandesces, breaking the darkness

To the eyes of the morena, Garanhão is the most beautiful purebred

Passion from childhood to see it in motion

Black bull, beloved bull, masterwork of creation

Live the emotion of magic

For Garanhão the bull to play

To the sound of the emerald batucada

Poetry that emanates in the air

The peoples of the forest dance with the beautiful cunhãs

Galloping, the cowboys bring the celebration

Tribes, legends, and rituals

The passion is as great

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195 A cunhã is a beautiful woman; a word of Tupi origin, of frequent use in the boi-bumbá 
but also sometimes appears conversationally in Manaus (and elsewhere; on January 3rd 
2013 I heard this used on the popular soap opera Salve Jorge).
As the great *rio-mar*\(^{196}\)

Lighting the bonfire of St. John

It is Garanhão in the arena, a figure that glows in the darkness.\(^{197}\)

The bull is played by a man who is called the *tripa* [guts] or *miolo* [insides, core, stuffing]. The bull costume is made of Styrofoam, soft foam rubber, light metal wire, cloth, and paint. The actor who plays the bull assumes a bent-forward stance, and carries the costume on his shoulders, leaving only his legs visible, as a cloth hangs down from the bull’s body, to cover the actor as much as possible. Inside the costume are mechanisms that the actor uses to make the ears and sometimes the jaw move, to provide a more lifelike appearance to the bull’s movements. A good tripa is able to provide a

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\(^{196}\) The Amazon river carries the nickname *rio-mar*, the river-sea, due to its immense size.

\(^{197}\) “És minha paixão, és pura emoção
Touro negro, touro amado
Garanhão, touro negro campeão
Touro negro
Touro amado
Luz que brilha ilumina
Claridade que encandeia rompendo a escuridão
Para os olhos da morena o Garanhão e a mais bela pura raça
Paixão dos tempos de criança ao ver a sua evolução
Touro negro touro amado obra prima da criação
Viver a emoção da magia
Para o boi garanhão brincar
Ao som da batucada esmeralda
Poesia que emana no ar
Com as belas cunhãs dançam os povos da floresta
Galopando a vaqueirada faz festa
Tribos lendas e rituais
É grande a paixão
Como o grande *rio-mar*
Acendendo a fogueira de São João
É o Garanhão na arena forma que reluz na escuridão.”

[My translation. Original lyrics by Mauro de Souza, Ronaldo Bazi, and Wenderson Figueiredo.]
surprisingly convincing portrayal of a bull, allowing viewers to forget for a moment the artifices employed. Often, two actors trade off during the two and a half hour performance, to share the burden of the role, which is both very vigorous and very demanding on the actor’s back, though nowhere near as demanding as it was in the old days, when the bull was made of wood, with an actual bull’s skull for the head.

Figure 26. Boi Garanhão himself, on the alegoria representing the Amazon Theater, symbol of Manaus.

Garanhão the bull descends and joins the figures of the auto do boi, who include: Mãe Catirina, Pai Francisco, Cazumbá, the Sinhazinha da Fazenda, the Amo do Boi, Dr. Cachaça, Dr. da Vida, the Padre, 20 rapazes [boys\textsuperscript{198}], 20 vaqueiros [cowboys], 20

\textsuperscript{198} Although they are called “boys,” and were customarily played by such, today the “rapazes” are played by girls as well.
burrinhos [burros], and the “traditional tribe.” The bull moves in front of the jurors and performs his maneuvers, tossing his head back and forth, waggling his ears, bucking and prancing in a way that is strangely magical; when well done it is a complete union of man and costume, not necessarily evocative of a real, living, bull, but rather of a kind of enchanted, fairytale bull suddenly come to life.

Figure 27. From left: Member of tribo tradicional; Pai Francisco; Boi Garanhão; Doutor da Vida; Doutor Cachaça; Mãe Catirina.

Garanhão the bull returns to the elevated stage that protrudes from the front of the church, where the drama of the auto do boi is performed. The previously forceful drumbeats of the batucada fade to a gentle background bum…bum…bum, and Klinger

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199 In the Boi-bumbá Garanhão folkloric group, the “traditional tribe” is made up of older women who are part of the “Terceira Idade,” or “Third Age,” project of the Church of Nossa Senhora do Perpétuo Socorro, which is led by Adelacy Gomes.
sings the lines narrating the story. Catirina, Francisco, Cazumbá, and Mãe Maria appear in blackface, clad in ragtag outfits of brightly colored calico (Francisco is wearing in addition some kind of psychedelic glowing blue glasses). They enter along with the doctors, the priest, and some unnamed extras join Garanhão on the stage, and enact the story. Catirina is pregnant and has a craving; Francisco kills the bull; the deed is discovered, Francisco flees to the forest. Here, the “traditional tribe,” which is comprised of the older women of the church’s “Terceira Idade” program, appears on the scene to drag Francisco out of the forest and back to the Amo for judgment. The members of the “traditional tribe” are engulfed in their immense, feathered costumes, each of a different color: red, yellow, green, blue, orange, white, and they carry matching lances in their hands. After Francisco is delivered to the Amo, they retreat to the side, as the padre, doctors, and folk healers are called to resuscitate the bull. Garanhão is finally brought back to life, and there is much rejoicing as he descends from the church and dances around the arena.

Again, there is clearly something strange going on down at the ranch. Mãe Maria, who is the mother of the white, blonde, Sinhazinha, and the wife of the wealthy Amo do Boi, appears in blackface, dressed in calico and performing sexual slapstick with Catirina, Francisco, and Cazumbá. I suspect, as I stated before, that this character should really be called Mãe Guiomã, who is the consort of Cazumbá, rather than Mãe Maria, wife of the Amo, but that some wires have gotten crossed at some point in the passing down of the auto do boi story.
While Pai Francisco celebrates the death of the bull, the vaqueirada dances in the foreground.

As the bull dances, additional rapazes and vaqueiros and burrinhos come in, each of the latter carrying an apparatus known as a lança, or lance. The burrinhos are people, usually boys and girls (though also adults), who are wearing a kind of horse costume that one steps into, with kinds of suspenders over each shoulder to hold them up. The legs of the horse, then, are the legs of the performer. The burrinhos wear checked and plaid shirts, much like those of the batucada, with straw hats and white pants and shoes. The horses are also decorated with colorful material, and the pieces of cloth that hang down to hide the performers’ legs are also checked and plaid. The lances are two-meter-high poles, ending in a platform, topped by a colorful St. John’s lantern, and decorated with multicolored iridescent streamers so long that they must surely have impeded the performers’ lines of vision. As the burrinhos enter the arena, they lift the lances up and
down, making the streamers wave festively. The vaqueiros, rapazes, and burrinhos walk in patterns around the arena, the burrinhos brandishing their lances, the rapazes and vaqueiros progressing in a rapid, zigzagging two-steps-to-the-right, two-steps-to-the-left movement. The members of the auto do boi gambol about the arena, boisterously perpetrating high jinks. Catirina bends over and waggles her black-stockinged buttocks (surely her backside is not naturally so large and lumpy; her tights must be stuffed, one imagines, with crumpled paper) for the audience, and then bear hugs and humps a camera tech; Pai Francisco brandishes his rifle at the audience, a crazed look in his eyes; Dr. Cachaça falls to the ground and waves his feet in the air impotently. As the music ends, they skip out of the arena, waving jauntily to the jurors. Thus ends the Folkloric Act.

Figure 29. Mãe Catirina hugs an unwitting camera tech.
**Tribal Act**

As the story is told in Manaus, the tribal act represents the celebration of the local Indian tribes, who all come together with the people of the plantation to celebrate the rebirth of the bull. At the same time, according to the 2011 Synopsis, the Indian tribes are dancing to celebrate the arrival of fire in their village, the story of which will be told in this act. The added theme of fire is part of the boi-bumbá only for the 2011 performance; the following year it will be replaced with different thematic elements.

Now the time and space shifts from the plantation to the ritual, historic, and religious world of the indigenous peoples of the region. As the members of the auto do boi leave the arena, in come four tribes, marching in lines, brandishing poles (again, “lances”) topped with shield-like standards with various symbols.\(^{201}\) The tribes wear color-coordinated bathing suits (bikinis for the women, the men wear sunga-type\(^{202}\) bottoms) under feathered neck decorations, brief feathered skirt/loincloth type items, arm and ankle decorations, and headdresses. Each tribe is a different color combination: green and black, red and blue, red and yellow, black and white.

The music shifts from light and celebratory to deeper, more serious, with a driving double-time beat from the batucada. The 2011 Synopsis explains the purpose of this act as follows:

It represents the native groups of Amazonia, such as the indigenous tribe SATERÉ MAUÉ, cultivators of guaraná, the DESSANA tribe that inhabited the

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\(^{201}\) The lances carried by the tribes were an innovation this year, and were intended to replace the bulky and awkward backpieces that tribe members usually wear. The following year, however, the tribes reverted to the customary large backpieces. 

\(^{202}\) Sunga refers to a tight-fitting bathing suit, with a lower-cut opening for the leg than a bikini bottom.
region of the Uaupés River in the northwest of the Amazon, the PARINTINTIN tribe, that lived in the Parintintins ridge up to the Rio Madeira, the WAI-WAI tribe, which inhabited the region of Mt. Alegre in the state of Pará, the TAPAJÓS tribe that lives on the right and left banks of the Amazon River, the TARUMÃ tribe, the YURIMÁGUA tribe that lived on the right bank of the Solimões River, the AISUARI tribe that inhabited the left bank of the Solimões River, the XICRIN tribe that lived in the north of the state of Pará, the KANAMARI tribe, that inhabited the southwest region of Amazonas, excelling in their synchrony, adornment, faithfulness to their roots, visual effect, different forms of dance, and original movements.203

It is interesting to note that this information about the tribes is presented in the past tense, in spite of the fact that some of these groups still occupy the areas indicated. This is not accidental. It underlines the fact that the “Indians” of the boi-bumbá are decidedly not contemporary indigenous groups, but rather imaginations of intact tribal groups that exist in a space out of time.

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203 “Representa o agrupamento nativo da Amazônia, tais como a Tribo indígena SATERÉ MAUÉ, cultivadores do guaraná, tribo DESSANA que habitava a região do rio Uaupés, no noroeste amazonense, tribo PARINTINTIN, que habitava a serra Parintintins, até o rio Madeira, tribo WAI-WAI, que habitavam a região de Monte Alegre no Pará, tribo TAPAJÓS que habitavam nas margens direita e esquerda do Rio Amazonas, tribo TARUMÃ, tribo YURIMÁGUA que habitavam a margem direita do Rio Solimões, tribo AISUARI que habitavam as margem esquerda do Rio Solimões, tribo XICRIN que habitavam o norte do estado do Pará, tribo KANAMARI, que habitavam a região sudoeste do Amazonas, primando pela sincronia, indumentária, fidelidade às raízes, efeito visual, diferentes formas de dançar e movimentos originais.”
The four Indian Tribes perform fairly simple choreography, as the board of directors of Garanhão, led by president Ivo Morais, decided that simple movements were more pleasing than more involved choreography when performed en masse. The performers marched in place, waved their lances back and forth, and ran in choreographed patterns\textsuperscript{204} to the song “Celebration of Tribal Communion”:

\begin{quote}
The song of tribal peoples resounded
In defense of life and liberty
The Javari Valley, Anavilhanas, and the Aracá Heights
The Matis with the leopard faces (oh, oh, oh)
The Tikuna are fish and otters
The Ashaninka transform into egrets
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{204} Unfortunately one performer, namely the author, was holding her lance backwards for much of the dance. Thanks to Débora Freitas for gently correcting me.
On moonlit nights

The Baniwa are Victoria water lilies

The Desana are blue parrots

And the Tukano are enchanted birds

*Auê, anauê, yurupari*

*Auê, anauê, yurupari*

Let the tribes come!

Tikuna, Matis, Ashaninka, Kulina, Matsé

Baniwa, Wanana, Tukano, Desana, and Baré

It’s a celebration of the forest

In praise of the sacred mother earth

A ritual of communion of the peoples of Amazonia

Peoples of the Rio Negro (*hei, hei, hei*)

Peoples of the Solimões (*heira, heira*).205
After the Indian tribes dance together as a group, there is an interlude while John Carlos, the Amo do Boi, returns to the center of the arena to sing a few verses in praise of Boi-bumbá Garanhão.

When the Amo is finished, the dance group Wãnkô Kaçauré are already in the arena, ready to depict a legend through dance, a required part of the performance. From the 2011 Synopsis, here is the legend that was chosen for this year. It is a Kaingang\textsuperscript{206} legend entitled: “The Origin of Fire.”

The legend tells that only the Kaingang Indian named Minarã possessed fire. There was only one hearth in the whole world known to the Kaingangs. Light and heat only came from the sun. They had no way to protect themselves from cold and food was eaten raw. Minarã, an Indian of a strange race, selfishly kept the secrets of fire to himself. His hut was constantly guarded, and it was his daughter, Iaravi, who kept the fire always burning. The Kaingangs, however, didn’t give up on trying to get fire also. They needed fire for their survival and didn’t accept Minarã’s selfish attitude. So it was that Fiietó, an intelligent and astute youth of...

\textit{Ritual da comunhão dos povos da Amazônia}
\textit{Povos do Rio Negro (hei, hei, hei)}
\textit{Povos Solimões (heira, heira)}”

\textsuperscript{206} The Kaingang are not an Amazonian tribe, but rather are located in the south of Brazil, in the states of São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul. Of course, the boi-bumbá did not originate in the Amazon region, so the Indians in the earlier brincadeira do boi versions were certainly not Amazonian Indians. In spite of this, it is interesting to note that Boi-bumbá Garanhão of Manaus, which is so focused on the valorization of Amazonians and Amazonian identity chose an indigenous group so far afield. I believe this points to the fact that the focus of the Manaus and Parintins boisbumbás is not on contemporary indigenous peoples, but rather on an imaginary of the Indian, and a pan-Indian aesthetic sensibility. This particular legend was chosen because it fit with the theme of the performance (fire), rather than because it related directly to Amazonia.
the tribe, decided to get the secret of fire from Minarã. He transformed himself into a white jackdaw – Xakxó – and flying to place where Minarã’s hut was located, he saw Iaravi bathing in the waters of the Gôio-Xopin, a wide, translucent river. Fiietó plunged into the river and, disguised as a jackdaw, let the current carry him. The young Indian girl did what Fiietó had predicted. She retrieved the jackdaw and took him into the hut and placed him near the hearth. When his feathers were dry, the jackdaw took a coal and fled. Minarã, hearing what had happened, chased the jackdaw, which slipped in a hiding place in a little notch between some rocks. Minarã struck against the notch until he saw that his stick became stained with blood. Thinking that he had killed Xakxó, he went happily back to his hut. In fact, the stick had become stained with blood because clever Fiietó had punched himself in the nose to fool the selfish Indian. Leaving his hiding place, the jackdaw flew to a pine tree. There, he relit the almost-dead coal, and with it, he set fire to a dry pine branch, and carried it, too, in his beak. But the wind caused the branch to flame up more and more, and, heavy, it fell from Xakxó’s beak. As it fell, it reached a field and spread to the brush and the distant forests. The night came, and everything was still as light as day. That is how it was for days and days. From all over came Indians who had never seen a spectacle of that size, and each one took coals and torches for their houses.

207 “Conta a Lenda que só o índio Kaingang chamado Minarã possuía o fogo. Só havia uma lareira em toda a terra conhecida pelos Kaiakangs. A luz e o calor vinham só do sol. Não havia recurso contra o frio e os alimentos eram comidos crus. Minarã, índio de raça estranha, egoísta, guardava só para si os segredos do fogo. Sua cabana era constantemente vigiada e sua filha, Iaravi, era quem mantinha o fogo sempre aceso. Os Kainkangs, porém, não desistiam de possuir do fogo também. Necessitavam do fogo para sua sobrevivência e não se conformavam com a atitude egoísta de Minarã. Foi assim
As mentioned above, the idea to base the legend on the origin of fire came from a brainstorming process around folklore and the Festa Junina. On St. John’s Day, the 24th of June, and the center of the Festa Junina, it is customary to light bonfires. Customarily, people dance around the bonfires and jump over them; jumping over a bonfire with another person symbolizes the making or strengthening of a promise or a bond (Wagley 1976:153-4). For example, couples will wed during the Festa Junina, and jump over the bonfire together, business partners will do the same, parents and their compadres and comadres will do the same, all to strengthen and bring fortune to these bonds. Thus came the focus on fire, which is repeated through the remainder of the 2011 performance.

que Fiiétó, inteligente e astuto jovem da tribo, decidiu tirar de Minarã o segredo do fogo. Transformado em gralha branca – Xakkó – partiu voando para o local da cabana e viu que laravi banhava-se na águas do Gôio-Xopin, rio largo e translúcido. Fiiétó lançou-se no rio e deixou-se levar pela correnteza disfarçado de gralha. A jovem índia fez o que Fiiétó previa. Pegou a gralha e levou-a para dentro da cabana e colocou-a junto à lareira. Quando secou suas penas, a gralha pegou uma brasa e fugiu. Minarã, sabendo do ocorrido, perseguiu a gralha que se escondeu numa toca entre as pedras. Minarã chocou a toca até que viu a vara ficar manchada de sangue. Pensando que havia matado Xakkó, regressou contente à sua cabana. De fato, a vara ficou manchada de sangue porque Fiiétó, esperto, esmurrara seu próprio nariz para enganar o índio egoísta. Saindo de seu esconderijo, a gralha voou até um pinheiro. Ali reacendeu a brasa quase extinta e com ela incendiou um ramo de sapé levando-o também no bico. Mas com o vento, o ramo incendiou-se cada vez mais e, pesado, caiu do bico de Xakkó. Ao cair atingiu o campo e propagou-se para as matas e florestas distantes. Veio à noite e tudo continuou claro como o dia. Foi assim dias e dias. De todas as partes vieram índios que nunca tinham visto tamanho espetáculo e cada um levou brasas e tições para suas casas.”
Figure 31. Vanessa Alfaia, 2011 Porta-Estandarte, dances in front of a bonfire stage prop.

For ease in performing their acrobatic movements, the dancers are wearing abbreviated versions of the costumes of the Indian tribe dancers: black bikini bathing suits, with arm and leg decorations, a short loincloth-like item, and a small headdress. Several small alegorias and one large one have been moved out into the arena. There is one large figure who is bent forward flat, with outstretched arms. This is a common strategy, to bring in a large bent over figure, which will stand upright at the correct dramatic movement, and move its arms and legs. The figure is flanked by smaller decorative alegorias that appear to be perhaps representations of pieces of bamboo, painted with geometric designs. In the middle, in front of the reclining figure, are two small alegorias, one of an Indian maloca, or small hut, and one with a bonfire.
The alegoria of the bonfire falls open, and Vanessa Alfaia, the Porta-Estandarte, springs out and performs her dance, to her theme song, “Deus Menina”

[Girl Goddess]:

The beauty of the forest is arriving
All the beings come to see you dance
Adorned with feathers, come dance to the sound of the drum
Come…Porta-Estandarte
Bring in your gaze the beauty and the enchantment
That causes my bull to fall in love
Beautiful morena, creation of nature
Your body is as perfect as the waves of the river-sea
Girl goddess, bring the green of the forest
Surrounded by magic and beauty
Reflect the culture and the celebrations
Of my Amazonas
Reveal your oh-so-fascinating dance
Like the ballet of the fireflies
Let loose the joy in your beautiful countenance
Make my galera go crazy
Come waving your standard in the arena

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Vanessa is the wife of Klinger Araújo, the Apresentador.
It appears that the Porta-Estandarte (standard bearer) of the boi-bumbá was inspired by the Porta-Bandeira (flag bearer) of the Rio de Janeiro Carnaval samba school parades.
Galera, which means “gang,” in the context of the boi-bumbá means the assembled group of fans or supporters of a particular boi-bumbá.
With Garanhão my bull, come and summon
All the tribes of Amazonas to see you dance
Come
Porta-Estandarte, muse of my dreams
Girl goddess, come dance.

The Porta-Estandarte is wearing an elaborate outfit, with a backpiece of layers and layers of brown, black, tan, and cream-colored feathers. Her other costume elements are made of natural materials with orange accents, and they are trimmed with jaguar teeth. She dances a high-stepping dance that showcases the standard, or flag, of the folklore association. Of all the female roles, hers is perhaps the physically most demanding, as in addition to the cumbersome costume that she wears, she must also constantly display and

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“Está chegando a beleza da floresta
Todos os entes vem te ver bailar
Adornada de penas ao som do tambor vem dançar
Vem...Porta estandarte
Traz no olhar a beleza e o encanto
Que apaixona o meu boi
Linda morena, criação da natureza
Seu corpo é tão perfeito como as ondas do rio-mar
Deusa menina traz o verde da floresta
Contornada de magia e beleza
Reflete a cultura e os folguedos
Do meu Amazonas
Revela tua dança tão fascinante
Como o balé dos vaga-lumes
Dispara a alegria em teu lindo semblante
Faz minha galera delirar
Vem tremulando seu estandarte na arena
Com meu boi Garanhão vem chamar
Todas as tribos do Amazonas pra te ver dançar
Vem
Porta-Estandarte musa dos sonhos
Deusa menina vem dançar.”
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[My translation. Original lyrics by Guto Kawakami.]
maneuver the flag. Porta-Estandarte performers often wear kneepads in practice, as a common move is to jump from standing into a kneeling position, to dramatically present the flag, and I have seen the Porta-Estandarte of Boi-bumbá Brilhante with her knees wrapped in bandages the day after the performance. As Vanessa descends from the stage to dance in the arena for the judges, the alegoria of the reclining figure stands upright. It portrays an Indian with glowing eyes, arms stretched wide, and geometric patterns painted on his chest. As the Porta-Estandarte dances, the figure moves back and forth, regarding the audience with his fiery gaze.

Now, as the alegorias of the legend are removed from the arena, four additional tribes enter the arena, and perform simple, choreographed movements in unison. The next category to be judged is that of the batucada, and so they perform a rousing rendition of “A Chegada do meu Boi” [The Arrival of my Bull], dancing in time with the beat of the drums:

The batucada announces the arrival of my bull
The beat of the drum makes the sound of this place
The people are in celebration to declare
That the battle in the arena will begin
The colors green and white radiant with emotion
Raise your arms my galera
Garanhão the Bull has arrived…
I come to decorate, I come to decorate
I come to decorate the arena in green and white
They will dominate, they will dominate
The green and white of my boi-bumbá

It will prevail, it will prevail

The yell of the galera that really enchants

We will applaud

We will applaud Garanhão the Bull

They are overjoyed, overjoyed, overjoyed, overjoyed

The people announcing the arrival of my bull.

As the tribes dance to the beat of the batucada, Garanhão the bull suddenly appears in the stands, among the fans from Educandos, and dances there. When the batucada is finished, a new Indian tribe, the Tribo Originalidade [Originality Tribe] enters and performs a choreographed dance. After this, the Amo do Boi sings, and then another Indian tribe

\[212\] “Delira” here refers to the people announcing the arrival of the bull, and means “to rave” or “to rant,” or “to be overjoyed”. I translated this as “overjoyed,” but it could equally be “going crazy,” or “mad with joy,” or something along those lines. The feeling is of a galera beside itself with emotion.

\[213\] “A batucada anuncia a chegada do meu boi
A batida do tambor faz o som desse lugar
O povo está em festa para declarar
Que batalha na arena vai começar
As cores verde e branco radiante de emoção
Levanta os braços minha galera
Chegou o Boi Garanhão...
Veio colorir veio colorir
Veio colorir a arena de verde e branco
Vai predominar vai predominar
As cores verde e branco do meu boi bumbá
Vai prevalecer vai prevalecer
O grito da galera que encanta pra valer
Vamos aplaudir
Vamos aplaudir o Boi Garanhão
Delira delira delira delira
O povo anunciando a chegada do meu boi.”

[My translation. Original lyrics by Mauro de Souza, Wenderson Figueiredo, and Ronaldo Bazi.]
enters and dances a choreographed routine. Finally, all the tribes come together and
dance in formation, while the alegorias for the Ritual, the final act, are arranged.

**Climactic Act**

Accompanied by flutes and drumming, the Wãnkô Kaçauré dance group re-enters the
arena. This scene set is comprised of several smaller alegorias, including the decorative
bamboo alegorias, and two that represent tucandeira gloves, the woven mitts that boys in
the Sateré-Mawé initiation ritual wear over their hands. Between these two, there is what
appears to be a mountain with a central opening, representing a fire ant nest. A small
alegoria depicting a *lagarta-de-fogo*[^214] is pushed into the center of the arena, and Nicole
Santos, the Cunhã-Poranga,[^215] who has been hidden, springs out, receives her elaborate
backpiece, and begins to dance for the judges. She wears a costume of green, black, and
white, decorated with jaguar teeth. Her theme song, “*Fogo e Desejo*” [Fire and Desire]
plays:

Your body is a work of art
It is fire, desire to love
It is the most beautiful Indian woman
Of Garanhão
She moves like the curves of the river

[^214]: A “fire caterpillar,” the lagarta-de-fogo is the poisonous young of the flannel moth.
Here, and in the Cunhã-Poranga’s song “Fire and Desire,” we see further continuation of
the “fire” theme.

[^215]: The Cunhã-Poranga, Manaus and Parintins boi-bumbá participants say, is a Tupi
phrase that means “the most beautiful woman.” The word “cunhã” is used at times in
Manaus in the vernacular to refer to a woman, especially a beautiful one or one of Indian
or Caboclo heritage or appearance. Similarly used are *cunhatã* for “girl,” and *curumim,*
for “boy.” Interestingly, there is no Tupi word in common use that indicates “man.” This
could be due to the very common feminizing and infantilizing views of indigenous
peoples in Brazil. Commonly used is “caboc(l)o” to refer to a man.
Dancing on this earth
Candles are stars
That dance in the air
And she seduces the moon
In the spell of the Cunhã
Under the light of the stars
At dawn
Jasmine of the mornings
Dance, Cunhã Poranga, in the arena
Your body is fire and desire
The water is a kiss
On the lips to love you
It’s the Cunhã Poranga of boi Garanhão
The beauty of the land and the fire
In the purity of the water and the air.

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216 “O seu corpo é arte
É fogo desejo de amar
É a índia mais bela
Do Garanhão
Evolui como a curva dos rios
Dançando neste chão
Candeias são estrelas
Que bailam no ar
É seduz a Lua
No feitiço da Cunhã
Sob a luz das estrelas
Ao amanhecer
Jasmim das manhãs
Dança cunhã-poranga na arena
Seu corpo é fogo e desejo
As the Cunhã-Poranga’s dance ends, the drums of the batucada take on a low, menacing, driving double-time rhythm, and the Wãnkõ Kaçaueré dance group returns to the arena.

Additional alegorias have been brought into the arena during Nicolle’s dance, the most imposing of which is a towering female figurine, which represents an ant goddess. Klinger narrates the Tucandeira ritual as the group dances to illustrate the story. Here

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A água é um beijo  
Na boca pra te amar  
É a cunhã-poranga do boi Garanhão  
A beleza da terra e do fogo  
Na pureza da água e do ar.”

[My translation. Original lyrics by Ronaldo Bazi, Wenderson Figueiredo, and Mauro de Souza.]

217 “Tucandeira” is the term used in Manaus and Parintins for what elsewhere are also called “tocandira,” “cabo-verde,” “24 horas,” or in English, “bullet” ants (Haddad Junior...
again, the theme is fire: the boy’s coming of age ritual of the Sateré-Mawé, in which
initiates must endure the terrible burning bites of the enormous ants that are sewn into
woven mitts placed on their hands. The theme music for this drama is “Ritual das
Tucandeiras” [Ritual of the Tucandeiras]:

Alarido,\textsuperscript{218} song and dance in the Saterê-mawé\textsuperscript{219} rite of initiation

To the sound of the taquara,\textsuperscript{220} inhãa-bê,\textsuperscript{221} the seed rattles

The dance precedes the ceremony

Of liberation for the life of the village

In the ritual of the fire ants

A rite of courage in which the Saterê boy

Is brought to the great chief of the Mawé nation

Thrust his hands in the ritual glove

Gigantic ants

\textsuperscript{218} According to Wenderson Figueiredo, “Alaridos are native songs of the Indian in the jungle to communicate with each other, like an Indian beating on his mouth and singing, “huhuhuhu,” or other types of sounds that they make to communicate, echoing through the forest.” (Private conversation with author via Facebook chat, 10/29/2012. My translation.)

\textsuperscript{219} “Sateré-Mawé,” “Sateré-Maué” and “Saterê-Mawé” are variants on the same tribal name. I have chosen to use the first variation, but have preserved the spelling found in the lyrics for this song, which is taken from the Garanhão 2011 Synopsis.

\textsuperscript{220} Songwriter Wenderson Figueiredo told me that “taquara” is a kind of bamboo, of which flutes are made. Thus, “to the sound of the taquara” means, “to the sound of the flute made of taquara bamboo.” (Private conversation with author via Facebook chat, 10/29/2012. My translation.)

\textsuperscript{221} Wenderson explains that “inhãa-bê are rattles tied to the legs of a tribal member, made of seeds, heaped together to form an instrument, that are made for the dance at the moment of the ritual, and resound with the steps of the wearer, they step forcefully and the inhãa-bê resound.” (Private conversation with author via Facebook chat, 10/29/2012. My translation.)
Test of strength
The stinger hurts
The spur gives death
Which feeds the body
And purifies the soul
In tears the tribe celebrates the new Indian warrior
Saterê-mawé song and dance
Powerful healer
Feared sorcerer
Drinking his caxiri
Saterê-mawé body and spirit
In the middle of the courtyard
Tarubá, guaraná çapó
In the Fire Ant ritual.

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222 “Caxiri” is “a fermented beverage customarily made by a woman, with leaves of herbs, tree bark, fruits (it varies from tribe to tribe), many are even hallucinogenic.” (Private conversation with author via Facebook chat, 10/29/2012. My translation.)
223 According to Taylor (1958:602) “tarubá” is “a fermented drink made from beijú dissolved in water.” “Beijú” is a kind of sweet made from tapioca flour from the manioc plant. Wenderson Figueiredo, author of the song, adds that tarubá “is a kind of drink, being toxic, a kind of firewater, extracted from manioc. Depending on the region, it is made with various roots. It is their cachaça.” (Private conversation with author via Facebook chat, 10/29/2012. My translation.)
224 “Gurana” is a jungle with a fruit that resembles a human eye. The seed of the fruit is ground and used in beverages as a stimulant. Today it is the base of a popular rootbeer-like soft drink, also simply called guaraná. Wenderson Figueiredo explained that “Gurana çapó is a kind of guaraná that the saterê mawé generally cultivate, it serves along with food to revigorate, and to give endurance and strength.” (Private conversation with author via Facebook chat, 10/29/2012. My translation.)
225 “Alarido, canto e dança no rito de iniciação Saterê-Mawé
Ao som da taquara, inhãa-bê
The dancers contort in simulated agony and then stand in triumph as the ritual comes to a close. As a finale, Fabiano Alencar, the pajé, bursts forth from the mountain-like alegoria, and moves around the arena while fountains of sparks shoot up from around the arena.

Fabiano is lifted up in the air by means of a crane, and flies over the arena, grasping tucandeira mitts in either hand, before landing. He is athletic, graceful, and his grass skirt spins as he executes jumps, twirls, and deep-knee-bending leaps that would challenge the most accomplished Cossack dancer. This is the long-awaited moment of climax. The arena explodes with performers as the tribes, vaqueiros, rapazes, and burrinhas re-enter and all dance in celebration.

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A dança antecede o cerimonial
da libertação pra vida na aldeia
No ritual das tucandeiras de fogo
Um rito de coragem em que o menino Saterê
Trazido pelo o grande chefe da nação Mawé
Finca as mãos na luva saripé
Formigas gigantes
Prova de força
O ferrão da dor
O esporão da morte
Que alimenta o corpo
E purifica alma
Em lágrimas celebram o novo índio guerreiro
A tribo
Canto e dança Saterê-Mawé
Poderoso curandeiro
Temido feiticeiro
Tomando seu o caxirí
Corpo e espírito Saterê-Mawé
No meio do terreiro
Tarubá, guaraná çapó
No ritual das Tucandeiras de Fogo.”

[My translation. Original lyrics by Wenderson Figueiredo.]
Farewell

Garanhão the bull makes a final dramatic entrance on a kind of lift, which sweeps him around the arena to dance in front of the elevated platform where the judges sit. He descends to the arena and cavorts about joyfully. Finally, the Amo do Boi returns to the arena and sings a few final verses praising Boi Garanhão, bidding farewell to the jurors, the galera, and the audience. Meanwhile, the stagehands hustle to push the alegorias out of the arena. Before the clock reaches 2:30:00, all performers have left the arena, leaving only fallen feathers, glitter, and streamers behind them. The race against the clock is over. The team’s organizers breathe a sigh of relief, while the performers crack open

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226 To stay longer than the allotted two and a half hours causes a penalty in the form of the deduction of points from a team’s final score.
celebratory cans of cold beer as they peel off their costumes and return to their street clothes.

Figure 34. Garanhão the bull on a lift, charming the judges.

**Chronotopic Analysis**

In my analysis, the 2011 Garanhão performance, “A Arte de Folclorear,” consists of one frame chronotope, with four other chronotopes that nest within it. Two of these four chronotopes, the “Auto do Boi” and the “Boi de rua Nostalgic,” occur simultaneously, as I will discuss below. The frame chronotope, which I call the Narrative Chronotope of the boi-bumbá, interweaves within each act as well, and ties the entire performance into one coherent whole. Of course, these five chronotopes exist within one additional chronotope, the participation framework of the Festival Competition Chronotope. These chronotopes nest thusly:
Of course, this diagram is of necessity an oversimplified representation of the structure, as the outer frame chronotopes interpenetrate each other as well as with the four central chronotopes.

**The Festival Competition Chronotope**

The Festival Competition chronotope, which is the participation framework chronotope, is the real-life situation in which the 2011 performance of Boi-bumbá Garanhão took place. This year was quite a bit different than the previous and following years, because it was held in the horseshoe-shaped area at the Sambódromo, rather than at the Bola de SUFRAMA, as was usual in the years shortly before and also after. The Festival Competition chronotope consists of several elements. First is the fact that every aspect of the presentation is determined by the regulations, including the items required, the large digital clock which counts the seconds of every performance, and the jurors who were carefully selected by committee well before the festival began, and who are prominently placed in the arena, and announced by name and qualifications (interestingly, many are anthropologists). Another important element is the attendance of spectators; these may be the galera, fans who root for their team and dress in its colors, waving flags, pompons,
and singing and dancing; or these may be members of the rival groups, attending the
performance out of solidarity and enjoyment of the art form though with an eye as well to
check out the competition. A third prominent ingredient in the Festival Competition
chronotope is the presence of the press, who are allowed in the arena during the
competition, and who frequently conduct interviews with participants during the
performance itself, for example, when a dancer stops for a minute to have a drink of
water. A final component is the performance itself, which unfolds in chronological time,
to the ticking of the clock, and which both acknowledges the frame in which it occurs and
also endeavors to become a world unto itself: a world which exists in folkloric time, a
magical place in which fantastical creatures dance with feathered humans and life does
not necessarily have to end with death.

The Narrative Chronotope

The chronotope that nests within the outer, Festival Competition time-space is what I call
the Narrative chronotope. This is the most self-conscious chronotope, whose entire
purpose is to form a link, or a cross-chronotope alignment (Agha 2007, Perrino 2007),
between the spectators inhabiting the participation framework and the world that lives
only inside the performance. The four players who inhabit this chronotope all behave
in similar ways: they live within the festival but are simultaneously aware of their
situation. They all dress in variations of the same costume: a suit of pants and jacket,
adorned with feathers and ribbons, topped with a feathered hat. They exist only in the
space of the festival, and in the time that the performance runs, but are able to break the
fourth wall of the performance and address the audience directly, whether through song
(the Levantador, the Amo do Boi), or through song and speech (the Apresentador, the Animador).

The Animador is generally the first to enter the arena, to prepare the audience for the spectacle they are about the experience. The Animador may address the audience directly through speech, to welcome them to the performance, or may sing. His purpose is to elevate the mood of the audience, to whip them up into a fever of excitement, so when the performers enter the arena, the galera is attentive and prepared to cheer them on. The Animador generally introduces the Apresentador, and thereafter takes on only a minor role.

The prime narrator of this chronotope is the Apresentador, the “Presenter,” who works as a master of ceremonies, welcoming the judges and the spectators, introducing
each item as it enters the arena, calling attention to each act of the performance as it approaches, and narrating the legend and the auto do boi. He (for the Apresentador is always male) is the glue that holds the disparate elements of the performance together. In addition to this, the Apresentador is the one who is tasked with creating a festive, celebratory atmosphere, for “heating up” (aquecendo) the spectators. If there is a lull in the action—if, for example, the stagehands are having trouble maneuvering an alegoria into its proper place—it is the Apresentador who springs into the gap and keeps up a steady patter while the problem is resolved. Much of the boi-bumbá is a controlled and planned act, but there is also much that is improvised, and a good Apresentador will keep the boi-bumbá performance moving along smoothly, these unforeseen bumps scarcely noticeable to the uninitiated.

The others who inhabit the Narrative layer are the Levantador de Toadas (the “Raiser of Melodies”) and the Amo do Boi. As non-narrative performers in the boi-bumbá do not speak, but only act and dance, the Levantador’s singing provides a commentary on the action that is unfurling. Although levantadors are not usually the composers of the songs they sing, they do occasionally write songs (the 2011 Levantador, Renato Freitas, wrote the song “A dona do meu boi” along with his wife, Débora, who is also in charge of musical production for Boi-bumbá Garanhão). Most often, however, they serve as the animators of messages written by others. These songs are generally in a narrative first person; the narrator, for example (as in the song by Renato and Débora), sings about the beauty of the Sinhazinha, but also enters into the song, as he calls her the “mistress of my bull” (my emphasis). The Levantador’s communication with the
audience is solely through song; unlike the Apresentador, he does not generally talk directly to the audience.

The Amo do Boi is the final member of the Narrative time-space, and his position is perhaps the most ambiguous and complicated. Like the Levantador, he sings, but unlike the Levantador he is both the author and the animator of his words, and they are intended for the most part to communicate directly with the audience. In Manaus, the songs that the Amo sings are by custom spontaneously invented, though today they are generally created before the performance. This certainly makes sense, as earlier the performance was informal and ephemeral in nature, with few onlookers, while today the pressure is much greater, with large crowds in attendance and performances extensively covered by the press and filmed as well for posterity by the folklore group itself. The Amo sings verses of welcome (to the audience and the jurors), verses of challenge (to the Amos of the other folklore groups), and verses of farewell (to the audience and jurors, to close to the performance), as well as more general verses of praise for his bull. In addition to his versifying role, the Amo is also an actor in the drama of the auto do boi, where he plays the part of the owner of the bull and the father of the Sinhazinha. However, his clothing (which corresponds to the other members of the narrative chronotope) and his manner (especially in his direct address of the audience) set him apart from the other members of the auto do boi.

**The Auto do Boi Chronotope**

Within the outer participation framework of the Festival Competition time-space nests the Narrative time-space layer, and within that are four distinct central chronotopes. The first two of these are the Auto do Boi time-space and the Boi de rua Nostalgic time-space.
These two occur simultaneously, precisely overlapping each other, but occupy distinctly different places in space and time, and are peopled by a very different set of inhabitants. To elucidate how this is possible I will first examine the Auto to Boi chronotope.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the auto do boi ostensibly takes place on a colonial plantation or cattle ranch, at an undefined time, but most probably in the early 1800s or late 1700s. However, in the 2011 performance by Boi Garanhão, the characters of the auto are transposed magically to present-day Manaus; the background for this act being comprised of alegorias representing the Teatro Amazonas and the Amarelinho district of Educandos. This is not an entirely serious world; its Afro-Brazilian inhabitants are touched by a clownish streak. Catirina, Francisco, and their friends Cazumbá and Mãe Maria, accompanied by the priest and doctors, all enter the arena skipping (with the exception of Dr. Cachaça, who enters stumbling and staggering, as if drunk), and proceed to romp and cut up for the remainder of their time in the arena. With the death of the bull, they become serious for a short time, but with his resurrection, the high jinks resume.

Thus, the Auto do Boi Chronotope is in part a kind of historico-comedic time-space. There is little attempt to seriously portray life as it was in the late 1700s/early

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227 As the Teatro Amazonas (Amazon Theater) was constructed during the rubber boom (initiated in 1881 and completed in 1896), one could argue that it represents that time period. However, as the theater today serves as a symbol of the city of Manaus, I maintain that it serves as part of the Boi de rua Nostalgic chronotope, as the boi-bumbá groups of Manaus commonly performed (and fought) in the city center close to the theater and conceivably even performed in São Sebastião Square in front of the theater. In Chapter 3, Mário Ypiranga Monteiro describes a brawl between competing boi-bumbá groups on Epimanondas Avenue, a few blocks from the theater.

228 As discussed in Chapter 3, the Cazumbá of the northeast region of Brazil, while bearing the same name, has taken a completely different trajectory. There, multiple Cazumbá clowns appear, adorned in elaborate masks and costumes, often chasing or frightening children (for more on Cazumbá, please see Matos and Ferretti 2010 or Bitter et al. 2005). In Manaus, Cazumbá dresses and acts similar to Pai Francisco, usually in blackface.
1800s, but rather a caricature or a spoofing of life at that time. Catirina, Francisco, Cazumbá, and Mãe Maria all wear colorful, outlandish outfits patched together from various calicos, stumble and take pratfalls, display their backsides to the audience, wrestle with each other, and sometimes even interact with the audience or members of the press (Catirina bear-hugged and made comic sexual advances on a hapless cameraman in 2011). While the Sinhazinha and her Sinhazinhas mirins are dressed in hoop dresses, bonnets, and parasols, the Amo do Boi (father of the Sinhazinha) is not dressed in colonial gear, and his wife, Mãe Maria, has somehow wandered far from her original role as mistress of the ranch and is one of the clowns! The “traditional tribe” is dressed up in elaborate feathered outfits that are meant to evoke Indian gear, though they resemble no Indians which ever existed historically. Thus, this is a general, pastiched historic time, not a realistic portrayal of an 18th century cattle ranch. The last element of the auto do boi, the vaqueiros, burrinhas, and rapazes, though dressed in outfits that are reminiscent of colonial dress, move through the arena by prancing, or hilariously zig-zag dancing, and thus also form part of the comico-historical time-space. These performers are generally children or teenagers, who delight in adding their own comedic touches to their dances. The final element that completes this chronotope is the music that is layered over, and narrates, the action by all these actors. It is distinctly different from the music in other parts of the performance, with lighter drumming, and the action of the drama narrated in a singsong voice by the Amo do Boi.

Boi de rua Nostalgic Chronotope

Although the Auto do Boi chronotope portrays a rich and full world with its own cast of characters and internal logic, the performance references a completely different world as
well: that of the time of the boi de rua,\textsuperscript{229} or the street performances of the boi-bumbá. As we saw in Robert Avé-Lallemant’s 1859 account in Chapter 3, performances of the boi-bumbá (or the “bumbá,”\textsuperscript{230} as Avé-Lallemant called it) in the street of Manaus began occurring at least 150 years in the past. Although some clear changes happened between the mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century performance and the ones in more recent memory, as Monteiro (2004) pointed out, the boi-bumbá in Manaus remained remarkably stable throughout its boi de rua phase. Removed from the street due to clashes with police and the dangers of increased automobile traffic, the boi-bumbá of the streets began to disappear in the 1970s and 1980s, by the 1990s leaving only its cousin, the boi-bumbá performances generally held in arenas. By the end of the 1990s Mário Ypiranga Monteiro, the great Manaus boi-bumbá scholar, was able to declare “There does not exist one bumbá in Manaus (and perhaps not in Amazonas) that could be chosen today [1999] as a kind of pattern and model for in-depth studies”\textsuperscript{231} (Monteiro 2004:121).

It is this street boi-bumbá of Manaus, existing still in the memory of many involved in today’s folklore groups, which is portrayed in this chronotope. Claudete Auxiliadora and her brother Claudio Muneyme, two lifelong supporters of the Manaus Boi-bumbá Corre Campo, reminisced about following the boi as children:

Claudete: And so this is what Corre Campo was like: when the season of St. John arrived, here in [the neighborhood of] Cachoerinha, I was a child, and when [the boi] passed, the drums would beat, and so at dawn we would hear [them],

\textsuperscript{229} “Boi de rua” literally means “bull of the street.”
\textsuperscript{230} “Bumbá” is still an accepted nickname for the boi-bumbá. More common is Manaus today is “o boi,” or “the bull.”
\textsuperscript{231} “Não há um bumbá em Manaus (e talvez no Amazonas) que possa ser elegido hoje como tipo padrão e modelo para estudos de profundidade.”
sounding that the boi was coming. Everyone ran from their houses to see the boi pass by in the street.

Claudio: It was a tradition.

Claudete: It was a tradition. So, those mothers with little children would accompany the boi, they took off with the boi, to go wherever the boi was going.232

These memories are common among boi-bumbá participants in their forties or older.

Even respected dancer and choreographer Marcos Boi, born in 1975, remembered the boi groups that passed in front of his house when he was a child:

I remember in the…the time of [the] June [festival], right, it was always eagerly awaited by all of us. I remember the bonfires from when I was a child, right? And…the Manaus boi-bumbá groups passing here in the street, towards São Geraldo, right? Near to here there was the Seringal Mirim, and there was a boi also, but I don’t remember its name because I was a small child, I was 4 or 5. And an interesting fact happened, since my mother was dating my father, and they were in his room with the door locked, and one of my older brothers began insistently beating on the door, “Dad, dad, come here!” And there was noise in front of the house, “hey, bull, hey bull!” because they were going by, and Dad

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232 Claudete: E o Corre Campo, então, ele era assim: chegava a epoca de São João, aqui na Cachoerinha, eu era criança, quando ele passava, batava […], aí a gente ouvi de madrugada, ouvi-a batendo boi. Todo mundo corria das casas para espiar o boi passar na rua.
Claudio: Era uma tradição.
Claudete: Era uma tradição. Ai, aquelas mães com as crianças pequenas acompanhava o boi, ia embora com o boi, para onde o boi ia passar.
[From interview with author, April 11th, 2011, my translation.]
was busy, right? And then, Dad: “What is it, son? Speak up, what happened? “No Dad, come here, please!” This brother’s name is Inácio. And my father had to recompose himself, and opened the door, very annoyed. “What is it??” “Come here, there’s a noise in front of the house!” And there was the noise, “hey bull, hey bull!” And he took my father to open the door all the way at the front of the house, my father was really put out. And [Inácio] pointed at the bull group that was passing, and asked, “So, that’s the boi that’s going by, is it?” [laughs]

Marcos told me that this story was a favorite to be recounted when the family came together now as adults. By the time he was ten years old (which would have been the mid-1980s), he remembers, the boi groups no longer passed through the streets of his neighborhood.

One reason for this practice being halted, João Feliço of Manaus’s Boi Brilhante says, was the problem of traffic. The areas through which the Manaus boi-bumbá groups customarily passed are largely central streets, and traffic in the city is notoriously congested. To be able to perform in the street today would require permits as well as police to accompany the folklore group and help maintain the safety of performers. Some

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233 “Eu lembro que nas…no período junino, né, era sempre muito esperado por todos nós. Na minha infância eu me recordo de fogueiras, né? De...dos bois de Manaus passando aqui na ruas para o São Geraldo, né? Aqui próximo tinha um Seringal Mirim, tinha um boi também que eu não me recordo do nome, que eu era muito criança, tinha 4, 5 anos. E aconteceu um fato interessante, que minha mãe ‘tava lá namorando com meu pai, trancando no quarto, e um dos meus irmãos mais velhos bateu na porta insistentemente, “Papai, papai, vem cá!” E lá barulho em frente da casa, “ei boi, ei boi!” assim eles estavam passando e Papai ‘tava ocupado, né? E ai, Papai: “Que é, meu filho? Fala dai, que foi?” “Não, Papai, venha cá, por favor!” O nome desse meu irmão é Inácio. E meu Papai teve que se recompor, e muito chateado abriu a porta. “O que é??” “Venha cá, tem barulho lá na frente!” E ai, o barulho: “ei boi, ei boi!” E ele pegou meu pai pela mão e levou na porta lá na frente da casa, meu pai muito puto. Apontou por boi que estava passando e perguntou, “Isso que vai lá passando é o boi, é?” [laughs] [From interview with the author on May 19th, 2011, my translation.]
people reported that the last of the boi de rua groups had ceased to perform in the streets after impatient motorists had hit performers. Boi de rua performances do occasionally still happen, but they are special, self-consciously nostalgic events.

And so, while on one level (the Auto do Boi Chronotope) the performers are portraying historical individuals on a colonial cattle ranch, simultaneously they are portraying 20th-century boi de rua performers portraying colonials! For this reason, then, the backdrop for the action is that of modern day Manaus; like time travelers, these visitors from the past inhabit our familiar places. These two chronotopes are markedly different in emotional affect: while we are far enough chronologically from individuals of the colonial era to regard them with a kind of fond and perhaps amused distance, the

Figure 36. Manaus bois-bumbás Tira Prosa and Garanhão processing through the streets of Educandos in a boi de rua event, 2014.
epoch of the boi de rua is still close, and with its passing there remains a kind of poignant, smarting loss, tinged with some reproach: how did we let this beautiful thing die? A Brazilian might diagnose this feeling as saudades, that bittersweet nostalgic melancholy that is said to be a fundamental part of the national character. Be that as it may, the enacting of the boi de rua chronotope is purposeful and self-conscious: we will remember our roots.

Today the boi-bumbá of Amazonas is domesticated, contained in the arena, subsidized by government agencies, and protected by the police from any disturbance; it is not perhaps fully inside, but much closer to DaMatta’s controlled, safe world of the casa, or house (DaMatta 1997). But even in this domesticated space, boi-bumbá performers enact the remembrance of the rua, the street, where every man (for the street is, in DaMatta’s view, an inherently masculine space) must look out first for himself. There, spontaneous action is not only necessary (as the nature of the street is unpredictable and ever-changing), but prized: thus even today the Amo do boi pretends to invent on the spot the verses which he directs as a challenge at the Amos of other boi-bumbá groups. In the time of the boi de rua, these verses were genuine insults, taunts hurled with the intention to inflame rival groups to street brawls. Thus was necessary the cohort of rapazes and vaqueiros, to protect the figure of the bull itself (often the centerpiece of the fight was a skull-on-skull234 smashing of the bull figures of the two groups) and join the battle. Additional companions were those who carried lanterns on

234 Boi de rua bulls were generally quite sturdy, literally designed for battle. They were made of fabric stretched over a wooden frame, usually with an actual bull skull and horns mounted as the head, then covered with fabric or painted. The tripas, or performers who animate and carry the wire-and-foam bulls, today generally emerge from a performance exhausted and slick with sweat; imagine the state of a boi de rua tripa after a street battle.
poles, to light the path of the bull at night; today those lamps have been transformed into the decorative lances carried by the burrinhas, which serve no function in today’s electrically lighted arenas but to remind us of the boi de rua which is no more.

**The Tribal Celebratory Chronotope**

The switch from the comico-historical Auto do boi Chronotope and the nostalgic remembrance of the boi de rua time-space to the solemn chronotope of the celebration of the tribes is eased by the narration of the Apresentador, who informs the audience that the “Tribal Moment” has arrived. The first and last sections of this act are danced, rather than acted, and focus on spectacle instead of dramatic action. Wave after wave of individuals dressed as Indians stream into the arena, decorated with thousands of feathers, which dance and vibrate in dizzying motion as the dancers move through the patterns of their choreography. Even the ways that the dancers move are different from those in the Auto do Boi and Boi de Rua Chronotopes: the Indians march solemnly in long lines, and perform abrupt, geometric movements in near-perfect synchrony. The songs that the Levantador sings are peppered with Tupi words, and the rhythm of the batucada is less rollicking and more concentrated, more driven. Sandwiched in between the two massive displays of Indian tribes is the dramatic portion of the tribal act, the danced enactment of the legend, a required component of the performance. Even this segment is largely visual, with no narration of the legend; to the uninitiated it appears merely to be modern dance choreography performed by dancers costumed as Indians. The backdrop of this chronotope is that of an Indian village in the jungle, with a large male Indian figure looming over the dancers. The Tribal Celebratory time-space is a kind of kaleidoscopic
visual intermission between the low comedy of the auto do boi and the high drama of the ritual.

While the choreography of the tribes is admittedly a kind of pastiche of indigenous dance, choreographers do strive to take their inspiration from actual dances performed by indigenous groups. The choreographers with whom I spoke had either worked personally with Indians, had watched videos of tribal dances, or had been taught by others who had. Dancer and choreographer Manoel Marcos de Moura Clementino, popularly known as Marcos Boi, began as a fan, then progressed to being a dancer and soon commenced writing his own choreographies. Not content to simply invent Indian-like dance steps, the teenage Marcos began researching the dances of tribal groups of the region at the Manaus public library.

The music for that ritual, okay, I’ll do it, but wait, what ritual is that? I’ll research it. If it’s the tucandeira ritual, then I’ll get into it, what is the history, what are the Sateré costumes like, [...] that’s a bigger challenge. And then, let’s do the tucandeira ritual, let’s do it just like the indigenous people, I’m also not going to make the choreography too complicated, because the objective is to make people dance. I was always very persistent, and it turned out well. And...how to make an easy, pretty choreography, based in the context, up until today, that’s how I do it. It’s not, “oh, I saw this nice little bit [of choreography], I’m going to do that.” No. I go deeper.235

235 “A musica do ritual tal, pô, eu vou fazer, mas não, que ritual é isso? Vou pesquisar. Se é da tucandeira, aí, eu vou vir pra cá, qual é o historico, como é que é o costume dos saterés, ta ta ta ta ta, é um desafio maior. E aí, vamos fazer o ritual da tucandeira, vamos fazer exatamente como os indígenos, não vou também complicar demais a coreografia, porque o objetivo é fazer o publico dançar. Eu sempre fui muito resistente, e deu certo.
Later, as he progressed more as a professional boi-bumbá choreographer, he continued to pursue every opportunity to gather information on tribal dances:

I also had the opportunity to visit various tribes. I organized a social movement, politically it was the movement that we did during the time of [Fernando Henrique Cardoso], the ex-president, we did the “Cry of the Excluded,” there I was, totally painted with urucu,236 reciting poetry...anyway, I was involved with the movement. I went to Santarém, and I made friends there, did a course in Nheengatú, which is the lingua geral, Tupi. There in Santarém, at Fiat College, I did an exchange with them, right? I exchanged reflections, and tried to make a connection, you know?237

The effect is felt as authentic by viewers, as indicated by this 33-year-old Garanhão supporter from Educandos:

This is how I think: “is this how they do it, in the forest, the Indians, in this kind of situation,” you know? I think...that the majority of things that they do there [in the arena] have something to do with the Indians in their tribes, right? I wonder, really, is this how the Indians do it? Because generally they create a choreography from a tribe that still exists. [...] So, that’s what they do, investigating that.

E...como fazia uma coreografia fácil, bonita, fundamentada no contexto, até hoje, sempre assim me move. Não é simplesmente: ‘ah, eu vi uma parte bonitinho, vou fazer.’ Não. Eu vou fundamentar.”

236 Annatto dye.
237 “Eu também tive oportunidade de visitar varias tribos. Eu organizei o movimento social, politicamente estava o movimento que a gente fazia na época do FHC, o ex-presidente, fazia ‘Grito dos Excluídos,’ lá estava eu todo pintado de urucu, declamando poesia...e, em fim, era envolvido mesmo com o movimento. Fui para Santarém, e eu fiz amizade lá, fiz um curso de Nheengatú, que é a língua geral, Tupi. Lá em Santarém, na faculdade Fiat, e lá intercambiêi deles, né? Intercambiêi reflexões, e procurei trazer por meio, entendeu?”
watch, and that’s what I wonder, is this how they do it, you know? Because, from what…the artists say, they say that they go there to the tribes and ask…and then they put that into practice.” [Interview with the author, January 8th, 2013.]

When I asked this participant if the dances seemed authentic, he responded:

They gave me an idea, more or less, of how it really is. Not one hundred percent of an idea, but a feeling, like of the movement. And because I’ve attended rehearsals, you know, and there were even Indians, you know? And they show the kind of movements, you know? Pretty authentic.

Choreographers in general shared that they tried to portray an authentic indigenous dance, and popular opinion considers their efforts to have largely been successful. Today many report making extensive use of Internet resources and videos to create believable tableaux.

Years have passed since Marcos Boi went to the public library as a teenager to research indigenous choreography, and most choreographers, songwriters, and artists I spoke with told me that their principal research tool today is the Internet. While it may seem incongruous to use modern research methods to learn about tribes that may no longer be extant or rituals that have disappeared, this only underlines the fact that Indians

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238 “Eu penso assim: ‘será que eles fazem assim, na floresta, os índios, nesse tipo de situação, entendeu? Eu acho...que a maioria das coisas que eles fazem lá tem alguma coisa a ver com o índio na tribo, né? Eu fico pensando, realmente, será que os índios fazem isso? Porque geralmente eles fazem uma coreografia de uma tribo que ainda está existente. [...] Pois é, eles fazem, investigando aquilo. Eu olho, e penso assim, será que eles fazem isso lá, entendeu? Porque, pelo...que os artistas falem, eles falam que vão lá nas tribos e perguntar...eles botam em pratica aquilo.”

239 “Eles me davam a noção, mais ou menos, como é que é, realmente. Não da uma idéia cem por cento, mas uma noção, tipo de movimento. Até porque eu já participei de ensaios, entendeu, e já teve índios, entendeu? E eles mostram, tipo de movimento, entendeu?...Meio autentico.”
in the boi-bumbá are not imagined as dynamic, modern groups. The Indian of the boi-bumbá is eternal and unchanging, mystical and attuned to nature, truly a part of the jungle rather than a participant in modern civilization. The depiction of an Indian wearing nylon shorts or talking on a cellphone is an impossibility in the boi-bumbá. Thus, while choreographers may speak with actual living groups, they are considered as repositories of knowledge, rather than consulted with the intention of accurately depicting modern ways of living. However, authenticity is important, many songwriters, costume designers, and choreographers told me, as performances are closely scrutinized by rival groups, and faux pas can lead to public embarrassment or even points being removed from competition scores. For example, the theme of Boi-bumbá Garanhão’s 2010 performance was “Guerreiros Munduruku,” (“Mundurucú Warriors”) but the artwork for the year accidentally portrayed a Yanomami, rather than a Mundurucú—and the error was noticed by one of the judges on the festival’s panel. This mistake is frequently mentioned in discussions of the need for authenticity.
Figure 37. 2010 Garanhão “Mundurucu Warriors” design, which mistakenly portrays a Yanomami youth rather than a Mundurucu.

The *Tribal Mystical Chronotope*

The final time-space of the three inner chronotopes, and the apotheosis of the performance, is the Tribal Mystical chronotope. The sinister-looking alegorias have been arranged in the arena, and the only music is that of the drums, beating an ominous,
driving, double-time rhythm, accompanied by a haunting flute melody. There are many clues that this is not the celebratory space of the Tribal Celebratory chronotope: instead, we are in a liminal time-space where the very air crackles with magic, populated by threatening beings who move slowly, in crouched postures, awaiting the pajé. The alegorias appear to be made of bones and skulls, with the huge, alien-faced ant goddess hovering over the scene. The lights, too, are different, now blood-red and purple, casting strange, low shadows across the arena. The pajé, when he appears, is a frightening figure. With his face painted black and white to resemble a skull, his eyes pure white, and his body covered in strange symbols and a long grass skirt, he appears something other than human. He shakes a rattle as he spins around the dancers, now scuttling like a crab, now exploding into dizzying gyrations. He is otherworldly; his purpose is to bring to a resolution the building frenzy of anticipation, which finally breaks, and the tension flows out of the scene. The music lightens, and the arena is flooded with performers, the vaqueiros, the rapazes, the burrinhas, all dancing in celebration. The Amo do Boi returns to bid farewell to the audience. Through his narrative powers, he closes the circle, bringing the time-traveling audience back to the present day and the hard concrete seats of the Sambódromo bleachers.
Figure 38. 2011 paje Fabiano Alencar in front of the fire ant goddess alegoria.
The ritual is the most spectacular part of the spectacle, and the one most cited by viewers as the section of the boi-bumbá that they most look forward to. One batuqueiro\textsuperscript{240} who plays the surdo, or bass drum, in Garanhão’s percussion corps, admitted that it was the ritual that first drew his attention when he was a child:

I really liked just to watch that…the things at the beginning, the lights, you know?

The thing that shone the most, you know? What impressed me the most was the ritual. […] I was open-mouthed in amazement, because…because…even Mom said it, look at how he is just staring, because I paid such attention, like, “How is it possible that they are doing all that?” All that structure made by those people, what a huge amount of material, making those kinds of movements, you know?\textsuperscript{241} Remembering how astonished he was as a child, this usually articulate speaker was at a loss for words to describe the experience of watching the ritual. The rehearsals of the ritual are often tightly guarded, so as not to let outsiders have a preview of the most anticipated part of the performance.

Cross-Chronotope Alignments in the Boi-bumbá

When one emerges at the end of two and a half hours of boi-bumbá, it is like awakening from a vividly colored dream, or like leaving a dim movie theater to blink, disoriented, in the sudden sunlight. One has lived for a time in a different reality, visited other worlds. And yet, at the same time, the boi-bumbá is intended to be a kind of mirror, reflecting

\textsuperscript{240} A batuqueiro/a is a member of the batucada, the percussion corps.

\textsuperscript{241} “Eu gostava muito de ficar olhando, assim…as coisas assim no começo, assim luzes, entendeu? A coisa que mais brilhava, entendeu? O que mais me impressionava assim era com o ritual. […] ‘Eu ficava de boca aberta, porque…porque…até a Mamãe dizia, ‘olha como ele fica parado,’ porque eu ficava prestando atenção mais assim, ‘Como é que pessoal fazia tudo isso aí?’ Toda aquela estrutura do pessoal aí, qual monte de material, fazendo um tipo de movimento, entendeu?”
back to the observer truths about her- or himself, memories that have been forgotten and need to be remembered. The music is the key component that creates a connection between the participation framework in which the viewers exist, and the various scenarios of the performance, creating cross-chronotope alignments. Boi-bumbá toadas are written almost exclusively in the first-person narrative voice, and are intended to be sung by the galera, along with the Levantador and the other singers. Thus, when the Levantador is singing, “Vem pra festa meu caboclo/Que o meu o boi já vai chegar/Se veste de verde e branco/E chama a morena pra dançar!” the audience also sings these words, putting themselves into the performance, inviting others to come to the celebration, because “my bull,” the singer’s bull, is going to arrive. A key component of the performance of the boi-bumbá is the participation of the audience, and the audience, singing, inhabits the worlds into which the presentation takes them.

I began this chapter with a discussion of the kinds of time one encounters in modern-day Manaus. The boi-bumbá of today contains two kinds of time: clock-time and the worlds of time and space of the various chronotopes through which the performers travel. In a discussion of performance, Richard Schechner describes the way that such an event is set apart from every day life:

Even time is treated specially. In a drama, the time of the story does not equal the time on your wristwatch. In sports, "the clock"—which often can be stopped—becomes a decisive element in the playing. The final two minutes "on the clock" of an American football game can take 10 minutes to play as each team and its coaches enact intricately choreographed endgames. Many rituals abolish ordinary
time altogether, helping participants experience an "eternal present" or some other immeasurable existence. [Schechner 1995:1]

For the boi-bumbá, like a period in a soccer game, once the clock begins, it continues without interruption until the time runs out. The large digital clock is mounted conspicuously above the center of the arena, counting up the minutes the team has to complete its performance.

It is true that the “time of the story” or stories, told in the boi-bumbá does not equal the time on a watch. We travel into the colonial past, the more recent past of the boi de rua, the celebratory and ritual times of the indigenous tribes in the forest, all within the space of two and a half hours. But at the same time, “the clock” is ticking, ticking, adding up the seconds that remain for the group to complete their performance. Unlike a play or an opera, the boi-bumbá never has a full dress rehearsal with all the elements from start to finish, but rather relies on the disparate parts to figure out on the fly how to be in the right places at the right times in order to complete their part of the performance. Spontaneity is necessary, and if time is short, parts of the performance may be compressed or cut entirely. Points may be taken away for performances that are too long or too short, and so the clock is an integral part of the performance.

Does this mean that the boi-bumbá today has elements of sport? I would assert that yes, it does. Unlike a musical (which it in many ways resembles), the boi-bumbá (in its competition mode) is a timed contest between rivals for a title. There are fans who sit in stands, wear their team colors, and cheer for their team; there are trophies to be won or lost; there is fierce rivalry; there are judges who decide the outcome; there are often scandals in which judges are bought or competing teams are sabotaged. But the boi-
bumbá is not the only cultural phenomenon about which one could make the above series of statements: Carnaval is another. Competition is deeply woven into the fabric of Brazilian popular culture. During the first Carnaval season that I passed in Manaus, I struggled to understand why people found Carnaval so interesting (as opportunities to get drunk, dress up, and dance in the streets are not rare occurrences in the city). “Why do we like Carnaval?” one friend told me. “It’s not just the drinking and dancing. People are excited about the competition of the samba schools.” The parade of the samba schools in Rio and in Manaus are beautiful displays of artistry, music, and dance, but they are also competitive events. Similarly, when I asked a member of the Garanhão galera if the boi-bumbá would be as interesting if one removed the element of competition, he said, “No…the rivalry is what gives it spice.” From the street skirmishes of the boi de rua of old to the grand arena competitions of today, a boi-bumbá group is nothing without its rivals. Customarily, even speaking the name of the rival is taboo (Valentin 2005).

Schechner resists the desire to draw sharp lines between different kinds of performance and ways of performing, instead organizing them into a continuum: “playing—games & spectator sports—music, theatre, dance—popular entertainments and folk performance—performance in everyday life—identity constructions—ritualizing” (Schechner 1995:8). And even this is not a fixed list of sharply delineated categories:

These genres, behaviors, and activities do not each stand alone. They blur into one another at their boundaries and interact with each other from their centers. The continuum ought not be drawn as a straight line but as a more complicated figure. Playing and ritualizing are closely connected to each other. [Schechner 1995:8]
And so is the brincadeia do boi today. I would even suggest that all of the categories that Schechner suggests appear in performances and competitions of the boi-bumbá, from play, to game, to identity performance, to ritual.

The boi-bumbá bears another clear link to sports, in particular soccer, Brazil’s favorite pastime. While fans of the boi-bumbá of Manaus generally align themselves with the city’s folklore groups due to family history or neighborhood residence, Manaus fans of the Parintins boi-bumbá do not always have such pre-determined loyalties to fall back on. How, then, do Manauaras chose which group to support? While many fans insist that they chose their loyalty solely on artistic merit, others cite a different reason. The two groups of Parintins are strongly identified with colors: Boi-bumbá Garantido is red, while Boi-bumbá Caprichoso is blue. Soccer clubs are also strongly identified by their colors, particularly Rio de Janeiro’s Flamengo team. As Manaus does not have a team that is competitive on the national level, most Manauaras chose to support teams from the outside—or just as frequently, inherit such a loyalty from their parents. Flamengo is one of the most popular teams in Manaus, and bears the colors red and black. Hence, Flamengo fans are much more likely to chose to support Boi Garantido, based on an affinity to the color red; while fans of other teams are most likely to chose to support Boi Caprichoso, due to an aversion to the color red. “It’s very unusual,” a large number of

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242 Parintins residents who are fans of Parintins boi-bumbá groups generally inherit loyalties from their families. People from Manaus who have relatives in Parintins often adhere to the same loyalties as their Parintins family members. There are always exceptions, perhaps most notably the famous singers—and brothers—Israel Paulain, Apresentador for Garantido, and Junior Paulain, Apresentador for Caprichoso.

243 Manaus’s Nacional team, or Naça, as it is popularly known, is trying to fill this void, however.
Manauaras told me, “for a Vasco [da Gama] fan to be Garantido.” This connection became even clearer when, after a Flamengo win against Vasco, a group of boi-bumbá enthusiasts posed in the street for pictures in front of a flag that bore two images: half of the flag bore the red-and-white image of Boi Garantido, and half the red-and-black stripes of Flamengo. To make matters more complex, certain Carnaval samba schools are also connected to certain soccer teams, often through geographical connections. And so rivalries nest within rivalries; one supporter of soccer team Vasco da Gama (black and white), Boi-bumbá Caprichoso (blue and white), and samba school Beija-Flor de Nilópolis (blue and white) told me that Carnaval could be like futebol and boi-bumbá together: a mixture of emotion, competition, and folklore.

Conclusion

The rise of folklore festivals across Latin America is linked to the massive, widespread urbanization that began in the mid-twentieth century. Leaving their rural homes, individuals and families came to industrializing towns and cities like Manaus in large numbers, seeking greater opportunities for employment, schooling, healthcare, and education. With urbanization, nostalgia for the rural life grew in cities, and celebrations of folklore and “traditional culture” became popular, often promoted by governments searching for a coherent national image in the midst of the changing faces of their nations. In Brazil, the project of intellectuals was co-opted between the 1920s and 1940s by Getulio Vargas’s Estado Novo regime’s hunt for regional and folk culture that best represented brasilidade, or Brazilianness. As celebrations of popular culture grew in size

244 “É muito dificil um vascaíno ser Garantido.” Vasco da Gama, also from Rio de Janeiro, is Flamengo’s main rival, and also very popular in Manaus. Vasco’s colors are black and white.
and importance, they faced pressure to conform to laws of urban order (Williams 2001). As Jose Maria da Silva (2009) argues for the Parintins boi-bumbá holds true for the Manaus boi-bumbá as well: the customary violence of the boi-bumbá was domesticated when it was removed from the street and confined to performances in the arena. Similarly, raucous, feces-flinging Carnaval celebrations were tamed into relatively sedate parades.

Urban life brought many changes for newly urban workers, who were forced to conform to the exigencies of the factory time clock, a logic which increasingly divided up their days into ever-growing slices devoted to work and ever-shrinking slices allocated for leisure. In turn, this rationalization of time brought an additional effect that can be seen in competitive urban spectacles such as boi-bumbá performances and Carnaval parades: like urban workers, these too were brought under discipline of the clock. While rural boi-bumbá celebrations often continued until the light of dawn, today’s arena performances are restricted to slots on a festival schedule. During the day, many from Educandos are constrained by the clock as they labor in the Industrial District of the Zona Franca de Manaus. In nocturnal festival performance in the Sambódromo or the ZFM’s Bola de SUFRAMA, they are constrained by the clock as well. In spite of this, the logic of time inherent in the boi-bumbá allows performers and participants to break free of these constraints and travel through time and space, visiting remembered and imagined worlds of possibility.
CHAPTER 6
Tourism and Perceptions of Amazonia

Part I: Images of Amazonia

From the beginning of European incursion into the Amazon region, outsiders have struggled to mentally tame and make sense of the vast stretches of water and forest that comprise the region. To do so, they have often resorted to one of two standard templates. The first relies on an imagining of Amazonia as a prelapsarian paradise, a place frozen in a better time, in which humans live in harmony with nature. This view imagines Amazonia as an unbroken vastness of rivers, jungle, monkeys, and colorful birds. While generally more positive than the second view, it still denies modernity and agency to today’s Amazonians, and regards (consciously or not) indigenous groups as “backward” remnants of the Stone Age. The second view is distinctly postlapsarian in nature: Amazonia as a lawless space of arrested development, where civilization was never able to fully take root. Whether this lack of progress is due to environmental conditions (heat, humidity, poor soils, disease-carrying insects) or human deficiencies (degeneration of Amazonian’s bodies due to harsh conditions, an inbred lassitude caused by inferior racial background, etc.), the effect is the same: Amazonia is seen as chaotic, ungovernable, and quite simply less than the “more civilized” eastern seaboard. This second view sees the Amazon region as a space of modernity – failed modernity, but modernity nonetheless. Along with ammunition and guns, butterfly collecting cases and journals, these two views have been part of the baggage that travelers have brought with them to the Amazon region. Both views fail to see Manauaras as they are today: urban Amazonian wage laborers tied to a web of social and economic relations in the context of high-tech
internationalized capitalism, working to claim space for themselves in the Brazilian
nation of the 21st century.

In 1848 when Henry Wallace Bates visited Manaus and described it in his popular
book *The Naturalist on the River Amazons* as “wretched,”245 he could expect with some
confidence that his words would not immediately be available to the ears and eyes of
offended Manauaras. In today’s world of instant electronic communication, however, this
kind of immunity can no longer be taken for granted. Social media, blogs, and online
video sites such as YouTube allow people to respond en masse to remarks they view as
thoughtless or discriminatory. In 2011, two polemical incidents involving such negative
assessments of Amazonia inflamed the city of Manaus. The first resulted in outrage,
death threats and finally, the cancellation of a show by the Brazilian boy band Restart; the
second resulted in an escalating and angry exchange of blog posts and online insults
between journalist Eugênio Santana of Goiás and many unhappy inhabitants of Manaus,
and the eventual rewriting of the offending essay. Both of these scandals were caused by
individuals from outside the Amazon region relying on these familiar images to interpret
their experiences and expectations of Amazonia. However, these same templates are also
deployed by those inside the Amazonian region, in an effort to capitalize upon these same
timeworn templates.

**Restart: “I don’t know if there are people, civilization”**

In an interview that appeared on the website YouTube on March 9, 2011, 19-year-old
drummer Thomas of the popular teen band Restart spoke with an unfortunate candor:

245 Though this was indubitably an accurate observation, as Manaus was undergoing a
crippling food shortage at the time.
I would really like to play in [the state of] Amazonas. Imagine playing in the middle of the jungle like that, well, I don’t know the audience there, I don’t know if there are people, [if there is] civilization. For me it would be really cool to play there, in part because we think there’s nothing there.246

[LESSANDROALTERNATIVO 2011]

In Manaus, the reaction was instantaneous, varying from sadness and disappointment to anger and threats against the health and safety of the band members. There are indications that the video was originally taped the previous year, but it was posted on YouTube in response to the announcement that Restart would play a show at Manaus’s trendy Studio 5 venue on April 1st, 2011.

Largely popular with tweens and teens, Restart had built their fan base through savvy Internet tactics, using the social media websites MySpace, Facebook, and Orkut to spread their gospel of colorful clothing, skinny jeans, ironic mullet haircuts, and romance. In 2009, Restart claimed the second most accessed MySpace page, with over 2 million hits (entretenimento.r7.com 2009). The immediacy of the Internet can put fans only one step away from the objects of their admiration, allowing music enthusiasts to feel a deep connection with band members. Conversely, however, that same closeness can allow Internet users to express their displeasure in equally immediate forms. Close upon the heels of the release of the video, anti-Restart movements were started in online social networks. The Orkut community named “Manaus odeia Restart” (“Manaus hates Restart”) had achieved 11,000 members by the 19th of March, ten days after Thomas’s

246 “Eu queria muito tocar no Amazonas. Imagina você tocar no meio do mato, assim, sei lá, não sei como é o público de lá, não sei se tem gente, civilização. Para mim seria bem legal tocar para lá, para a parte que a gente acha que não tem nada,” (LESSANDROALTERNATIVO 2011).
unfortunate interview (Dias 2011). A similar campaign took place on the social networking site Facebook.

A more thoughtful reaction came from a group of youth activists, fans of the band, people upset with the situation, and members of the Amazonas State Youth Council (Dias 2011). Calling themselves “Game over na Ignorância,”247 (‘‘Game over for ignorance’’), they began meeting with the view to protest peacefully outside the planned Restart concert. Rather than attack concertgoers or try to convince them not to attend the performance, instead they would hand out informational pamphlets with the history and geographical information about Manaus. First, Game over member Fernando Fritz (who also is active in Nação Mestiça) told me, they wanted to share information about the culture of Amazonas:

Since the [video] said that there wasn’t any culture here, and what is important is the culture of other places, let’s share about the culture. Okay. Let’s use—both the boi-bumbá of Parintins, since we consider it the biggest cultural manifestation, the one most seen both abroad and also here in Brazil, let’s go to the boi-bumbá of Parintins, let’s go to the folkloric boi-bumbá of Manaus, which isn’t as well known, but has also been publicized. Let’s also go to our culture, indigenous mixed with that culture of ours, which was brought by the Portuguese. All of those [cultural] manifestations that even the people from São Paulo say [the Portuguese] brought to Amazonas, you know.

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247 As Restart was named in reference to video game culture (apparently as the band members were engaged in a Playstation session), the name “Game over na Ignorância” is a cleverly framed challenge.
However, the point was not only to provide an educational lesson about culture, but rather to protest the hegemony of the southeastern coastal centers of power:

And what was our objective with this? It was to say, not just that the culture of Amazonas exists, that there is civilization here, but to say that just because São Paulo has a larger economy than Amazonas, for example, that it is the most important Brazilian state. It’s not. Both São Paulo, which is the richest, and Amazonas, which has the most diversity, need each other.248

In spite of249 Game over na Ignorância’s attempt at peaceable education, show organizer Mega Eventos decided to cancel the show, citing on March 25th, 2011 “reasons of public order,” and a concern with protecting the “physical integrity” of the band and its public, which was largely comprised of children and teenagers (acritica.com 2011, g1.globo.com 2011b).

The following day, Thomas did apologize after a fashion, writing on his website that he had not meant to offend anyone, he was simply truly ignorant about the city of Manaus. He added that the video had been cut in a way to provoke controversy. On the

248 “Porque já que a matéria diz que aqui não tem cultura, o que importa a cultura de outros lugares vamos divulgar a cultura. Bom. Vamos usar – tanto boi-bumbá de Parintins, por que a gente acha que é a maior manifestação cultural mas vista no exterior e no interior também do Brasil, vamos ao boi bumba de Parintins, vamos ao boi-bumbá folclórico de Manaus, que não é tão conhecido, mais tem sido divulgado, vamos ao também a nossa cultura indígena misturada com aquela cultura nossa, que veio trazido pelos Portugueses. Todas aquelas manifestações que tanto inclusive os Paulistas que eles já dizeram que trouxeram para o Amazonas, sabe. E que qual era nosso objetivo com isso? Era dizer, não só dizer que a cultura de Amazonas existe, aqui tem civilização, dizer que não é porque São Paulo tem uma economia maior do que Amazonas, por exemplo, que ele é o estado mais importante do Brasil. Não é. Tanto São Paulo, que é mais rico, quanto Amazonas, que tem o maior diversidade, um precisa do outro.” [Fernando Fritz, from interview with author 01/16/2013.]
249 Or perhaps in part because of their actions. A faction of Game Over na Ignorância pushed to have the show cancelled.
22nd of March, the band issued a video apology, in which Thomas stated that he had “spoken without thinking” (g1.globo.com 2011a). However, later on the social networking site Twitter, he showed that his views of Amazonia had indeed not changed: “When they talk about Manaus, I imagine nothing but nature! I didn’t put anyone down!” He later continued, “I love peaceful places! Even more so, because there must be nothing but nature there! Waterfalls and all that!” (g1.globo.com 2011a). The symbolic value of Amazonia as an Edenic paradise is so strong that Thomas was unable to see past it to the very real people who were speaking to him through the modern technology of the Internet.

**Eugênio Santana: “A Season in Hell”**

The second inflammatory incident of the year 2011 was an editorial for the newspaper *Diário da Manhã* of the state of Goiás, written by an individual named Eugênio Santana. On his blog, Santana describes himself as “…writer, journalist, essayist, advertising man, copydesk, verse maker; self-made man, author of published books, current member of the Press Association of Santa Catarina and of the Journalism Association of Rio de Janeiro, ex-superintendent of press of the government of Rio de Janeiro” (Tiradentes 2011). In February, 2011, Santana paid a short visit to Manaus for a training session with the company Amazonas Show, with the view to becoming the regional manager for the

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250 “Quando se fala em Manaus, imagino natureza total! Não desvalorizei ninguém!” [g1.globo.com 2011a]
251 “Eu adoro lugar tranquilo! Ainda mais lá, que só deve ter natureza! Cachoeiras e tudo mais!” [g1.globo.com 2011a]
252 “…escritor, jornalista, ensaísta, publicitário, copydesk, versemaker; self–made man, autor de livros publicados, sócio efetivo da Associação Catarinense de Imprensa (ACI ) e da Associação Fluminense de Jornalistas (AFJ), ex–superintendente de imprensa do governo do Rio de Janeiro.”
253 Or perhaps in April; a later version of Santana’s article carries a different date.
company in his home state of Goiás. In his June 30th editorial entitled, “Manaus: selva de pedra fora do contexto,” [“Manaus: concrete jungle out of context”], Santana criticized the city primarily for at once being “a big city like any other,” located in a hot, inconvenient place; and secondly, for not living up to his imagination of Manaus as a eco-paradise deeply in tune with nature. “Manaus,” he complains, “neither confirms nor affirms, not even close, the title of host city, shall we say, of the Amazonian Forest” (Santana 2011a). Further complaints were that Manaus was lacking in infrastructure; that prostitutes were visible on the streets; that Manauaras were racist and unwilling to accept their own indigenous heritage, and that there were very few black people on the streets. Continuing, he accused the inhabitants of the city of a lack of cordiality and of an unbecoming rivalry with the neighboring state of Pará; and finally, complained that Amazonas Play (a company that runs children’s indoor play centers in shopping malls) forced him to work slave hours, and that the fish of the region was inferior to that of his native state. His time in Manaus was, in short, “a season in hell, reminding one of Arthur Rimbaud” (Santana 2011a).

This article was circulated on social networking websites on the Internet, and inhabitants of Manaus responded with displeasure to this unexpected attack. As Santana had included his e-mail address with his unflattering prose, he was inundated with apparently vehement responses, and Internet bloggers soon appeared en masse to launch counterattacks. In turn, many blog readers then posted, commenting upon the bloggers’ responses, their comments ranging from courteous to abusive.

Respected Manaus journalist Ronaldo Tiradentes reposted the original editorial on his blog, under the heading: “What an imbecile thinks and writes about Manaus” (“O que
pensa e escreve um imbecil sobre Manaus”), with the introduction: “I received a link for
the following text from a reader of this blog. It was published in the newspaper Diário da
Manhã of the city of Goiania. At the end of this text full of prejudice the imbecile who
wrote it is identified. Let’s send e-mails with our response to this boastful coward” (Tiradentes 2011). Rosana Villar de Souza, a journalist from São Paulo who currently
lives in Manaus and writes for the newspaper Diário do Amazonas defended the culture
and good nature of Manauaras, pointed out that Santana’s state of Goiás is actually the
third in the country in slave labor, much above Amazonas, and drew attention to the
xenophobia and racism in Santana’s article (Souza 2011). Too many bloggers responded
to be able to cite here, but the basic content was fairly consistent: a vehement rejection of
Santana’s assessment of Manaus.

These disgruntled responses provoked a rejoinder on Santana’s own blog. In this
reponse, entitled, “Aos Selvagens e Irascíveis da Capital do Estado do Amazonas” [To
the Savages and Irascible People of the Capital of the State of Amazonas], he posted
pictures of brandished middle fingers (including one of a very young child apparently

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254 “Recebi de uma leitora do blog, o link para o texto abaixo. Foi publicado no jornal
Diário da Manhã, de Goiania. No final do texto preconceituoso, há a identificação do
imbecil que o escreveu. Vamos mandar e-mails com a nossa resposta para o sacripanta”
(Tiradentes 2011).
255 The original response essay, along with the images described, was copied and posted
on the Portal do Holanda, the website of a Manaus blogger, on July 7th, 2011
(portaldoholanda 2011). apparently has the practice of renaming his writing; this same
piece appeared on his blog on the 20th of July, 2011, under the title “Leitores Manauaras:
Irascíveis e Reacionários.” The piece as it currently stands on his website does not
include the same images; rather it has an image of a cartoon of a professor standing in
front of a blackboard on which is written, “Educassão [sic] do Brasil é uma das pior do
mundo…” (“Education [spelled wrong] in Brazil is one of the worst in the world.”); an
image of an expressionist painting of a naked, wreathed man playing a harp; and an
image of a broadly smiling Santana in front of a map wearing a many-pocketed vest
(portaldoholanda 2011).
giving the finger to a rival soccer team), and accused the offended Manauaras of responding as they did due to jealousy – because he is “handsome, cultured, with a defined profession, has planted trees, published books, has three children; has a house and his own car and was born in the Southeast – it is not his fault that he was a well-born person…” (portaldoholanda 2011). Further, he threatened to sue anyone who threatened his right to freedom of expression. Finally, he posted posed pictures of himself (presumably to show that his claims to handsomeness were justified), one of himself in a camouflage jacket and sunglasses and one with a blond woman who is presumably the mother of his vaunted three children.

After posting this indignant and somewhat undignified response, at some point Santana reworked the original article and posted it on his blog257 on July 25th, 2011, under the title: “Manaus: Meu Inferno Astral?!,” with quite a different spin.258 The current blog post is preceded by beautiful, full-color pictures of that symbol of Manaus,

256 “Sou bonito, culto, profissão definida, plantei árvores, publiquei livros, fiz três filhos/as; posso casa e carro próprio e nasci no Sudeste – não tenho culpa de ser um bem-nascido…” (portaldoholanda 2011).
257 Santana’s blog can be found at asasdamemoria.blogspot.com.br (“asas da memória” means “wings of memory”).
258 I was at a loss as to how to translate “inferno astral,” and am very grateful to Anne Santos, Brazilian-American and fellow graduate student at the University of New Mexico for the following explanation: “Many people in Brazil talk about an ‘inferno astral’ and a ‘paraiso astral.’ The general idea is that you reach your paraiso astral after you experience your inferno astral. I have heard it used most commonly referring to birthdays. People describe going through their inferno astral, or a period of very bad luck, right before their birthdays and they talk about the paraiso astral, or a period of loads of good luck, that will arrive after the birthday. Eugênio seems to be making reference to this cycle of paraiso astral following the inferno astral. He titles his article ‘meu inferno astral’ referring to his current experience in Manaus and makes reference to the ‘paraiso astral’ he will experience in his next visit to Manaus” (Santos, personal communication with the author, 12/17/2012).
259 Interestingly, the actual date that he ascribes to his visit to Manaus changes, from the 11th of February in the original version to the 9th of April in the current.
the Amazon Theater; an artist’s rendition of the Arena da Amazônia (Amazonian Arena), then under construction for the 2014 World Cup; stilt houses on the edge of a river; and a bird in flight. Gone were the explicit references to Amazonas Play, and defanged the accusations of racism, elitism, corporate corruption, and white slavery. Rather than ending on a note of insult (in the original, he wraps up his tirade by sneering that the fish in Manaus are not as delicious as in his home state), in the rewritten version, Santana (2011b) suggests that he should simply see this as a visit gone terribly awry. The next time he visits Manaus, he will surely make time to enjoy:

…the beautiful women, the cooking based on grilled *tambaqui*, the magical bath in the river channels to wash the soul, to experience the *Ayuasca* shamanism in an indigenous community and encounter in those visions the inspirations for my next book, visit the legendary and secular Amazon Theater, and, embrace my colleagues from the *Academia de Letras* of the state of Amazonas, to boot.²⁶¹

In short, hopefully upon his next visit, Manaus would have transformed itself from a modern industrial city with an economy dependent upon the Zona Franca de Manaus to a fantastical and sensual jungle paradise. Rather than developing a more nuanced view of the Amazon region, Santana instead moved from the second view, considering Amazonia as a failed experiment in modernity, to the first view, which regards Amazonia as an Edenic paradise.

²⁶⁰ In his original essay, Santana denigrated this specific dish, which is a hallmark of Manaus cookery.

²⁶¹ “…as belas mulheres, a cozinha à base do tambaqui na brasa, o mágico banho nos Igarapés para lavar a alma, vivenciar o xamanismo da Ayuasca numa comunidade indígena e nas mirações encontrarei as inspirações para o próximo livro, visitarei o legendário e secular Teatro Amazonas e, de quebra, abraçarei meus confrades da Academia de Letras do estado do Amazonas” (Santana 2011b).
Tourism to the Amazon Over Time

Of course, these images neither originated nor will end with teen band Restart or journalist Eugênio Santana, but have existed as long as people from outside of Amazonia have visited the region. In Chapter 4, I examined the reactions of explorers to what is today Manaus. In this section I turn my eye to more recent visitors to the city, their reactions to Manaus, and how Manauaras have spoken back to outsiders’ denigration of their hometown.

The Zona Franca and Consumer Tourism

Not beginning, but intensifying with the Estado Novo regime of Getúlio Vargas and the March to the West, the Brazilian government sponsored numerous colonization projects designed to bring citizens from economically struggling areas such as the drought-stricken Northeast, or heavily populated areas such as the Southeast, to the Amazon region, painted as “a land without people,” ready to receive “people without land” (Hochstetler 2007; Schmink 1982; Schmink and Wood 1992). The military regime (1964-1985) was anxious to settle the Amazon, as they feared the vast reaches of the region would fall prey to rapacious outside nations desiring control of the region’s resources. Their alarmist slogan was “integrar para não entregar,” or “integrate so that others may not appropriate” (Nugent 1999). This led to the Calha Norte project and the construction of the Transamazonian Highway, among others, all intended to bring citizens from the overcrowded eastern seaboard to the northwestern Amazon region, a place imagined to be “without people.”

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262 Getúlio Vargas’s authoritarian Estado Novo regime ran from 1930 to 1945, and immediately after he served a democratically elected term to 1951.
263 This phrase, which became a famous slogan in the history of the colonization of the Amazon, was coined by President Medici in 1970 (Schmink 1982).
As discussed in Chapter 4, another project seeking to encourage development in the Amazon, the Zona Franca de Manaus (ZFM) was originally created in 1957 as the Free Port of Manaus. Occupying a warehouse at the harbor, the project languished, failing to establish itself as a viable and important project (Russo n/d). In 1967, President Castelo Branco signed into being the Free Trade Zone in its current incarnation, occupying 10,000 square kilometers, and later in the same year SUFRAMA, the Superintendency of the ZFM, was created to administer the project.\(^{264}\)

At the time of the creation of the ZFM, Brazil’s government was under the control of a restrictive military regime, led by Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco. It was difficult for Brazilian citizens to travel outside of the country, and importation of goods from outside was limited by heavy taxation. With the opening of the ZFM, Manaus became a vacation shopping destination for Brazil, a kind of “safety valve” for the desires for acquisition of modern consumer goods (Chernela 2000; Russo n/d). With the free trade zone, then, Manaus began to grow quickly, not only to support the industries which relocated to the city, but also in the hospitality and service industries, as hotels, restaurants, and taxi companies were established for the flood of tourists. This effect lasted until the fall of the military regime in the mid-1980s, and the consequent relaxation of Brazil’s border policies, both in terms of the importation of goods and the free movement of citizens abroad.

With the establishment of the ZFM, Brazil’s desire to secure settlement to the northwestern part of the country finally succeeded. Once Manaus was established as a major industrial zone, the city became large enough to sustain itself, and growth has

\(^{264}\) For more on the Zona Franca, please see Chapter 4.
continued yearly. The center of Manaus is still a large shopping zone, specializing in products manufactured in the ZFM as well as imported goods. However, the majority of tourists who come to Manaus today are not there to shop in the ZFM but for ecotourism, sport fishing, and to experience the cultural offerings of Amazonia.

Tourism Today

AmazonasTur: “Brazil’s Green Destination”

While Manauararas strongly criticize those outside the region for naively believing modern Amazonia to be an innocent paradise, Amazonian tourism agencies strategically deploy these images of a pure, natural location in order to encourage prospective visitors to spend their vacations in the region. The website of AmazonasTur, the Amazonas state tourism agency, makes use of a variety of techniques to emphasize the paradisiacal nature of the state. The header of the website itself proclaims: “VisitAmazonas: O Destino Verde do Brasil” [“VisitAmazonas: Brazil’s Green Destination”], in white against a vibrant background of veiny green leaves. Under this, a blue-skied jungle landscape appears, offering a short video clip. With a flurry of chaotic noise that resolves into a medley of rhythmic drums and flutes, the viewer is plunged through the jungle canopy in a rush of branches and green leaves. As the viewer arrives on the jungle floor, the scene resolves itself into an idyllic hiking path, wide and flat, with a profusion of lush bushes, trees, and vines. Animated blue butterflies flit around a family of light-skinned, fair-haired tourists in khaki safari wear. Smiling, pointing in wonder at the scenery, and pausing for photographs, the mother, father, and son are clearly enthralled by the experience of this safe, unthreatening jungle setting. After the family disappears, an adorable animated monkey appears and capers around the jungle scene. No mosquitoes or
biting ants make an appearance; this rainforest is only populated by nothing more sinister than iridescent indigo butterflies and chubby little ladybugs.

The lower half of the page appears against a black-on-green background of what appear to be indigenous graphic designs. The visitor to the web page is offered a series of buttons with photographs of jungle scenes and animals, and one depicting the interior of the Amazonas Theater. Below, a green map of the region is flanked by links to information on “Sport Fishing” and “Culture.” To the right side, more buttons offer information on the “Young Worker” program, biodiversity in Amazonia, and local arts and crafts. The site’s visual images focus on water scenes, boating, nature, and relaxation, all of which appear to take place in an innocent paradise, a place one might well expect the lions to lie down with the lambs. The one hint that people may also inhabit this Disneyland-like paradise is indicated by the “culture” button, but that quickly reassures us that “the richness offered by the culture of Amazonas state, which received a considerable influence from indigenous peoples, is present in our regional music, as well as in the plastic arts, handicrafts, and the folkloric manifestations.”

The website’s presentation of the city privileges the past, rather than the present: to visit Manaus is to step back in time to the belle époque, the height of the rubber trade in Amazonia. Scrubbed from this presentation are any hints of the urban problems which plague both the state’s capital and the smaller towns and cities: violent crime, drugs, prostitution, political corruption, poorly planned and incomplete infrastructure (roads, sewage, water supply and distribution), frequent power outages, insufferable traffic jams.

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265 “A riqueza oferecida pela cultura amazonense, que recebeu uma considerável influência dos povos indígenas, está presente em nossa música regional, bem como nas artes plásticas, artesanato e nas manifestações folclóricas” (AmazonasTur 2013).
From what is presented on the AmazonasTur website, the potential tourist does not need to worry about being assaulted by modernity when visiting Amazonas; even the culture is natural and old-fashioned, more part of the rainforest than of the urban concrete jungle from which the tourist is presumably seeking to escape.

**Luxury Ecotourism**

A second strategy that tourism agencies and hotels implement is to focus on the luxury and modernity of accommodations and services. As the couple on the AmazonasTur website experiences the jungle without the inconvenience of bug bites, heat, or humidity, these companies promise a similarly comfortable encounter with the primitive. The Arai Amazon Towers, created by Manaus entrepreneur Francisco Ritta Bernardino, is one luxury hotel that offers this experience. This is from the Arai’s website:

> Escape to the natural beauty and wild majesty of the Amazon Rainforest - one of the most exhilarating destinations on the planet. Nestled in a canopy of trees above the Amazon River, Arai Amazon Towers jewel of the Amazonian Rainforest and the only hotel resort built completely at tree top level in the Jungle.

> Experience the ultimate in eco-tourism - from navigating the Amazon River to swimming with rare pink dolphins, to trekking through the rainforest to relaxing in a luxury tree house surrounded by the wonders of nature.

> Welcome to Brazil’s largest eco-friendly treetop hotel and discover rejuvenation and adventure in the heart of the Amazon. Arai Amazon Towers was chosen as one of the 1000 place to see before you die by the Travel Channel.

> Amazon’s Eco-Friendly Treetop Resort. Our eco-friendly hotel was built in 1987 by Dr. Francisco Ritta Bernardino under the inspiration of oceanographer
Jacques Cousteau. Enlightened by Cousteau’s quest to protect the Amazon Jungle, Dr. Ritta built an eco-aware resort that would preserve the fragility of this magical forest. Cousteau's declarations sounded like a premonition: “The war of the future will be between those who defend nature and those who destroy it. The Amazon will be in the eye of the hurricane. Scientists, politicians, and artists will land here to see what is being done to the forest.” Taking these words to heart, Dr. Ritta started building Ariau Amazon Towers in 1986 on the banks of the Rio Negro. Utilizing the techniques of native Amazonians, the hotel was built on stilts in the treetops. Originally an intimate jungle hotel with one tower and four suites, Ariau Towers has become the largest treetop hotel in world! [Milestone Internet Marketing, Inc. n/d]

At once modern and natural, the Ariau hotel is a magical bubble of civilization and luxury, insulating the visitor against any potential discomfort, while providing an “authentic” eco-experience.

The Tropical Hotel, another hotel promising luxury symbiotically combined with nature, manages to textually distance itself entirely from any urban experience, despite being located in Manaus’s Ponta Negra neighborhood, a favorite leisure destination for Manauaras. With restaurants, ice cream and frozen acai stands, a newly opened public beach, an extensive pedestrian zone, beach volleyball and soccer courts, and a recently renovated concert amphitheater, the Ponta Negra pedestrian distract lies only meters from the Tropical, and in the evenings and weekends is filled with families pushing prams, runners, bicyclists, swimmers, venders hawking wares, and loafers of all sorts.
A promotional brochure from the Tropical Hotel stresses the ways in which a visitor can enjoy the “exotic” while not sacrificing modern comforts:

In the "heart" of the Amazon rainforest, on the banks of the Rio Negro. The choice hotel for leisure and business travelers wishing direct contact with nature. At the Tropical Manaus, comfort and exoticism promote a matchless symbiosis. The hotel offers top infrastructure and services and features a modern 15-function room Convention Center totaling 3,122 m², for small meetings, conferences, conventions and major events accommodating over 3,000 people. [Tropical Hotel 2012]

The Tropical’s website, too, fails to mention the hotel’s urban location:

Welcome to Tropical Manaus, a luxury Brazil vacation eco-resort located in the gateway to the majestic Amazon rainforest. An unforgettable experience, Tropical Manaus offers state of the art technology and luxurious accommodations with the magnificence of the rainforest as a backdrop. Experience the exoticism of the Amazon Jungle while enjoying total comfort at the Tropical Manaus. This resort offers a world class guest experience for hotels in Brazil by placing you right in the Amazon rainforest. [Tropical Manaus n/d]

In reality, far from being “right in the Amazon rainforest” (except in the sense that the entire city of Manaus is located in the rainforest, and the Tropical Hotel with it), the Tropical Hotel is very much of the city. The hotel offers many events that are open to the urban public of Manaus, including elaborate Carnaval, Halloween, and New Year’s celebrations. Perhaps the largest event is the annual SummerFest concert, a multi-stage music extravaganza on the hotel’s beach, attracting thousands of concert-goers. A hotel
guest expecting a rainforest eco-experience would surely be taken aback at the concrete jungle in which he found himself instead.

**Part II: Tourism and the Boi-bumbá**

*Non-Festival Boi-bumbá Performances*

Another class of cultural event offered in the Tropical Hotel is the performance of the boi-bumbá. These range from performances of individual musicians, such as Leonardo Castelo, official singer for Parintins Boi Garantido’s *batucada*, or drum corps, to multi-singer and dancer performances. In July 2010, I was invited by a friend of a friend to attend a performance of the performing group to which he belonged, though he warned me that it was quite a bit different from what I might expect from a festival performance. And so it was. The performance was held in a large, conference-style room, arranged with large round tables seating eight, and at one end of the room an elevated stage was located, while at the other end of the room a buffet was arranged. The entrance fee was R$60\(^{266}\) per person with the dinner buffet, and R$30 without. About half of the tables were occupied, the majority of the attendees having exercised the buffet option, and cocktail waiters circulated discreetly throughout the performance.

Rather than the loud, rhythmic drumming characteristic of the festival boi-bumbá groups, the performance in the Tropical Hotel conference room was muted and sedate. Gentle, fluting music accompanied the bikini-clad, feather-festooned dancers, who descended from the stage to stroll among the tables and pose for photographs with audience members. A Master of Ceremonies provided a voice-over for the performance, making reference to the dances of the Indians of the rainforest. At the close of the

\(^{266}\) At the time, approximately US$30.
presentation, the MC invited audience members to join the dancers on the stage to learn a simple version of the boi-bumbá dance. “After all,” he said, “It’s your party! So come on up and dance if you feel like it!” And they did, posing for photographs surely destined to be shared with family, friends, and social networking sites.

Far from its brawling past in the mean streets of midcentury Manaus, the boi-bumbá has been effectively sterilized and packaged for easy tourist consumption and dissemination as a jungle celebration of Indian culture and dance. Fulfilling the promise of the happy and be-butterflied family in the AmazonasTur video, such experiences remake the Amazon region as a commodity that can easily be purchased in the form that is most convenient for the tourist. “After all,” they seem to be saying, “It’s your Amazon!” Here the boi-bumbá takes on a new form of play, in which tourists are invited to make believe, trying on identities along with the feathered headdresses that are also for sale. In this new social order of tourism, Manaus fabricates yet another product for global consumption: the sanitized fantasy jungle. It is important to note that these performances for tourists, in sharp contrast to the arena competition performances, do not emphasize the complicated race history of Brazil. They do not valorize the Amazon Caboclo, or even hint at his existence. Not even Pai Francisco or Catirina remain; the auto do boi has been entirely erased.

If the brincadeira do boi encapsulates the history of Brazilian race relations, and its flexibility allows it to reflect and comment on local understandings and realities, what does this tell us? Its early incarnation in the Brazilian northeast presented a tableau of colonial latifundia society, characterized by near feudal social relations. A classic ritual of reversal, it told the story of a hapless Afro-Brazilian cowpoke who killed the white
master’s prize bull, setting the entire cattle ranch on its head, only to be saved by an indigenous shaman. The Amazonas version, originating from Parintins and promulgated throughout the region, vilifies the money-hungry colonist who cuts down the forest, pays homage to the Indian as a spiritual forebear, and valorizes the Caboclo as a modern-day forest guardian. When the tourist version reduces the Amazonian experience to sexualized and feminized Indians in feather bikinis, disarmingly inviting the (white, European) visitor to take ownership of the experience, it is only recreating the classic expectations of “authenticity” and pre-modernity. Indians, Nugent’s (1993) “more ‘genuine’ others,” sell better than invisible Caboclos.

Similarly, during the 2014 FIFA World Cup, discourse centered for sometime before the event’s kickoff around whether Manaus would be able to perform adequately as one of the event’s host cities. Labeled as “the place to avoid” by England’s coach Roy Hodgson and slated to host the “group of death,” Manaus’s geographic situation was exoticized even by such as the New York Times. The New York Times website published an article entitled “The Snakes May Not Bite, But the Humidity Devours,” featuring a variety of photographs emphasizing the strangeness of the area, including photographs of a young rural girl with a snake around her shoulders (presumably posing on command for the camera) and muddy looking streets in which police roamed mounted on horses and dark skinned youths clung to grates to watch World Cup games (Longman 2014). The prose runs to the purple, full of references to “creepy crawlies” and “vampire catfish”:
The put-upon mayor of Manaus, Arthur Virgílio Neto, has reminded everyone that he runs a city of two million people, one with a celebrated opera house, a vital industrial zone, sumptuous cuisine and a thriving base for eco-tourism. Surely no other mayor of a World Cup city has felt the need to say, “There are not poisonous snakes and tarantulas roaming around the streets and falling from the trees.” [Longman 2014]

Of course, then-mayor Arthur Neto only had to respond to such absurd questions because of the insistence of journalists in trafficking in such images, which serve to reinforce hegemonic discourses about the “primitive” nature of the Amazon.

In spite of the ongoing questioning of Manaus’s suitability as a host city, its hosting was a resounding success, and on-the-street interviews with satisfied tourists aired nearly nightly on local TV. 260,000 arrivals were registered at the Manaus’s Eduardo Gomes International Airport between June 6-25, 2014—a 45% increase from the previous year—and a study indicated a satisfaction index of over 80% for both national and international tourist visitors (Severiano et al. 2014). A focal point of tourist activity was the FIFA Fan Fest, held at the newly renovated amphitheatre at Ponta Negra Beach, where cultural offerings included (in addition to national acts such as Grupo Olodum, Biquini Cavadão, and Maria Cecília & Rodolfo) musical performances of famous boi-bumbá singers such as Márcia Siqueira and the group Canto da Mata. If visitors were displeased by Manaus’s heat or lack of “modern” conveniences, their comments were not broadcast on the evening news.
Parintins: Boi-bumbá, Inc.

Returning to the Game over na Ignorância protests, let us consider why the group believed that a cogent response to the ignorance of band member Thomas could be to bring boi-bumbá dancers to perform outside of the programmed show. What does the boi-bumbá represent, and how has it come to be brandished as a weapon against ignorant outsiders? It is clear that such performances, similar to touristic events such as Márcia Siqueira’s performance at the FIFA Fan Fest, are intended not only to evoke a nostalgic emotional response in locals, but are also meant to be read by outsiders as “Amazonian culture.” When I asked study participants why the boi-bumbá was important to them, people most commonly said that it was “our culture.” This is perhaps not so enlightening, but raises the question: how did the boi-bumbá rise to its present status, in which it is unquestioningly accepted as the most representative example of Amazonense (and often Amazonian267) culture? How did a rather eccentric folkloric dramatic dance from the Northeast, a variation of which exists in every region of the nation, come to be a major symbol of Amazonas state?

The key to understanding this development lies in the Parintins boi-bumbá craze, which began to gain momentum in 1988 and hit its peak in the late 1990s. The Parintins boi-bumbá had existed as a street phenomenon since at least the early 1900s, and was raised to the status of the Festival Folclórico de Parintins in 1965. However, after the

267 “Amazonian” here refers to people from the Amazon region, or “Legal Amazonia,” an area comprised of the Brazilian states of Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima, Tocantins, Mato Grosso, and the majority of Maranhão. “Amazonense” refers to people from the state of Amazonas. Amazonense people are thus also Amazonian, though the inverse is not necessarily true.
construction of the Bumbódromo in 1988, sponsored by the state government, the festival grew to spectacular proportions, attracting today between 90,000 and 100,000 attendees. Coca-Cola became the festival’s first big sponsor in 1995, and its support, along with other sponsors, and monies from the state and federal governments, allowed the festival groups to expand their budgets and thus the spectacular nature of the performances.

The bois-bumbás of Manaus perform as part of the Festival Folclórico do Amazonas, the capital city’s Festa Junina celebration, which takes place in the months of June and July. The festival is a joint production of the state of Amazonas’s Secretary of Culture and Manauscult, which holds the same function in the Manaus city government. The festival in 2014 was supported by the Secretary of Culture of the state of Amazonas to the tune of R$2,603,766, with each of the three principal bois-bumbá of Manaus (Garanhão, Brilhante, and Corre-Campo) receiving R$197,922, and other groups (other bois-bumbás, cirandas, international, national, and regional dances, square dances, etc.) receiving R$30,000 each (State of Amazonas 2014:2). This seems like a quite a sum until we compare it to the R$15,500,000 that Amazonas spent on the 2014 festival of Parintins (Amazonas State Government 2014). However, it is not only from the state government that the bois receive money. The city also gave R$232,276 to each of the three boi-bumbá

268 The “Bumbódromo” was nicknamed as a playful analogue of the “Sambódromo” (literally, Sambodrome) of Rio de Janeiro, the special parade grounds of the Carnaval samba schools. The “Bumbodrome,” then, is the stadium where the Parintins boi-bumbá competition is held. Although almost exclusively referred to by its pet name, the Bumbódromo was named the Centro Cultural Amazonino Mendes, after the then governor. The actual project was not begun by Amazonino (as he is familiarly referred to), but by the previous governor, Gilberto Mestrinho, who finished his term in office with having constructed the promised new stadium. Amazonino is famous for having recognized opportunities to attaching his name to impressive works, and pounced on the stadium as a worthy return on investment (Rodrigues 2006:90).
groups. In addition, a donation of R$25,000 was made to each boi-bumbá group by a
local family. The total, then, for each boi-bumbá group—at least, according to the figures
I have been able to obtain—was R$455,198 in 2014.

The bois-bumbás of Manaus have long talked about uniting to gain the support of
corporate sponsors, but this has not yet happened. This is in strong contrast to the
Parintins bois-bumbás, which are heavily supported by corporate sponsors, the principal
of which is Coca-Cola, but significant monies come from “Petrobras [Brazil’s petroleum
company], Skol [beer], Ambev [Amazonas beverage distribution], Banco Bradesco
[banking], Eletrobras [Brazil’s electricity company], Correios [Brazil’s postal service],
Volvo, Oi [telephone] and Band [television]” (Amazonas State Government 2012) as
well as Johnson and Johnson. Cavalcanti (2000:1041) notes that the 1996 budgets of the
Parintins boi groups comprised about a million dollars each, with US$250,000 from the
Amazonas state government, US$250,000 from the Brazilian Ministry of Culture,
US$80,000 from the Rede Amazonas TV station), with the remaining from smaller
sponsors and the folklore groups themselves. In 2011, the budget of each boi group was
estimated at R$7.5 million, and remains around that level (roughly the equivalent of half
that in US dollars) (Santos 2011).

Historically, boi-bumbá groups were financed by wealthy patrons. While the bois-
bumbás of today have purportedly moved away from these social relations of patronage
so common in the Amazon region during the period of aviamento, patronage still
continues. Today, however, this patronage takes place in the form of a commodified,
corporate sponsored, and government supported system of folkloric performance. While
the Manaus bois-bumbás have discussed for years the possibility of organizing similar
corporate sponsorship, this has not yet taken place. This new form of patronage is part of the new social order that has arisen in the Amazon, based on international capitalism rather than the earlier social patron/peon relationships of aviamento.

Compared to the boi-bumbá groups of Manaus, the scale of everything in Parintins (excepting the city itself) is simply bigger. While the Manaus folklore groups have approximately 1000 members who enter the arena as brincantes, the number in Parintins per group is around 2500 (Valentin 2005). The larger budgets, supported extensively by governmental and corporate sponsorship, allow more spectacular costumes, larger and more mechanically sophisticated alegorias, more famous guest performers, more professional musicians, more props and hand-outs for the galera, more radio and television advertising, complete TV coverage of the actual performances (with live commentators), and the yearly production of professional cds and dvds for each group, as well as numerous elite and public events in which enthusiasts can choose to participate (generally for a fee). Folklore groups in Manaus inevitably told me that the amount of money received was the only difference between the performances of Parintins and the capital city; with a comparable cash infusion, the Manaus groups would easily surpass the grandeur of Parintins.

While it cannot be said that state and corporate patronage created the new form of the boi-bumbá in Amazonas, its effects were significant and far-reaching. The boi-bumbá of Parintins was already becoming a regional success when it caught the attention of then-governor Amazonino Armando Mendes in 1987 and gained first state and later corporate sponsorship. The first support of the state government came with the construction of the bumbódromo (officially know as the Centro Cultural e Esportivo
Amazonino Mendes [the Amazonino Mendes Cultural and Sporting Center]), an arena built in the shape of a bull’s head, for the express purpose of the viewing of the boi-bumbá. From this initial investment, the boi-bumbá grew, attracting more tourists with each year.

If monies from a multinational megacorporation such as Coca-Cola have in part created the spectacular and nostalgic form of the new boi-bumbá of Amazonas, this complicates discussions of insiders and outsiders. While there is no evidence that such corporate patrons have influenced the thematic content of boi-bumbá performances, the funds they have donated have definitely affected its structure. Previous to the construction of the bumbódromo, the boi-bumbá was generally practiced in open spaces, such as the square in front of the town’s church, Nossa Senhora do Carmo.\(^\text{269}\) With a move to high (though somewhat precarious) wooden stands for fans, the boi-bumbá responded by becoming three-dimensional, with Carnaval-influenced stage sets of increasing size and elaboration becoming the focal point of the dramatic dance. This would almost certainly not have happened without the support of state and corporate sponsors. Another visual change that happened in the Parintins boi-bumbá is the omnipresence of sponsor logos: brilliantly lit logos for Coca-Cola, Kaiser beer, Yara water, and the Bradesco bank, among others, are found everywhere in and around the bumbódromo. When I attended the festival in 2010, festival attendees were presented with plastic bags of fan accessories from Bradesco: cardboard feather crowns, plastic inflatable rods to beat together, noisemakers, and pom-poms, all emblazoned with the

\(^{269}\) It also took place at least once in the town’s Tupy Cantanhede Stadium, a soccer field with low bleachers, which has since also been used for the “Festa dos Visitantes,” the Visitor’s Party, to honor and entertain tourists come to Parintins to see the festival.
Additionally, Coca-Cola soda, Yara bottled water, and Kaiser beer exclusively were sold in the arena. I seemed to be the only one who was surprised when an *animador*, charged with the task of pumping up the crowd who had spent hours in line to enter the arena and faced more hours before the performances would begin, led the fan-packed stands in the chant: “Coca! Cola! Coca! Cola!”

**Spread of Boi-bumbá in Amazonas**

Beyond the not insignificant shift in visual aspects of the boi-bumbá, state and corporate sponsorship caused a much more fundamental shift: the commodification of the boi-bumbá. Rather than simply an event to be visited once a year, the boi-bumbá became something that one could make her or his own. In my view, the Parintins boi-bumbá was a prime site for commodification because it combined three key elements: music with catchy melodies and lyrics, social dancing, and fan-supported competition. The boi-bumbá became present outside of the town of Parintins first as music heard on the radio: a new rhythm accompanied by poetic, clever words—and, of course, advertising for corporate sponsors such as Coca-Cola and Kaiser beer—and the festival itself. One boi-bumbá enthusiast from the far eastern edge of Amazonas state said that in his hometown, “we didn’t hear much. Just on the radio. They always talked about Parintins, the best festival in the world, the eighth wonder.” For people in the central Amazon region the festival’s music was especially exciting because it was by Amazonians and about

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270 Similar if not identical items were distributed at attendees at the Sairé, as discussed in the following chapter.
271 From interview with the author, 07/31/2012. “...a gente não ouvia...era pouco. Mais...pela radio. Sempre falava do boi de Parintins, o melhor festival do mundo, a oitava maravilha” (my translation).
272 Parintins is in Amazonas state, but lies close to the western border of Pará state; in fact, many musicians and songwriters of Parintins come originally from Pará.
Amazonians, rather than being another import from the eastern seaboard. Undoubtedly, however, the music’s association with the perennially popular Coca-cola brand as well as the state corporate funds that underwrote its production, recording, and dissemination did much to make the music popular.

As much as good songwriting is worth, however, a new kind of music takes an easily learned dance to really make it a popular hit in Manaus. Social dancing and a kind of line dancing (rather than individualistic modern club-style dancing) is still the norm in Manaus, with dance halls catering to fans of forró, pagode, bolero, and sertanejo being some of the most popular. While forró, bolero, and sertanejo are generally danced by couples (though sertanejo, which to my ear often borders on pop, sometimes is danced in an individualistic way), pagode in Manaus is usually danced as a kind of line dance, with everyone repeating the same moves in unison. Boi-bumbá dance follows this format as well, to the boi-bumbá rhythm of dois-pra-lá, dois-pra-cá, or two to the left, two to the right.

The increased budgets of the bois-bumbás of Parintins due to state and corporate sponsorship allowed the Parintins boi-bumbá to colonize Manaus, which during the festival season boi-bumbá fans like to say, “is really just a neighborhood of Parintins.” On weekends, Parintins “corrals” operate in Manaus, charging fans a small fee to enter, listen to music, dance—and purchase cds, festival team t-shirts, jewelry, and sponsored beverages. In the heyday of the Manaus boi-bumbá mania of the late 1990s, live performers called puxadores de bailado would perform choreography for the fans, who would copy the moves and dance along. These dance leaders would often invent dance moves on the spot, and the most creative and charismatic puxadores de bailado such as
the duo Ítalo and Ícaro Freire became cult figures, drawing huge crowds to dance along to boi-bumbá music (Guerreiro 2013). Beyond catchy lyrics and easily learned dances, the boi-bumbá also provided followers with something more concrete to attach themselves to: the complicated and involved rules and taboos surrounding the competition itself. During the festival, supporters of Garantido, for example, would never imagine wearing blue, as that color is associated with Caprichoso. People wearing the wrong color were not allowed to enter events or official areas of the folklore groups, and were harassed and threatened with violence if they dared to enter into the stands at the actual event itself.

Moreover, the name of the rival boi-bumbá group is never to be uttered; the group and the bull itself are referred to as “o contrário” [the rival]. Knowing and adhering to the rules increases a fan’s feeling of membership in the group; adorning oneself with boi-bumbá consumer commodities visually identifies one to others as a group member.

In the case of the Parintins boi-bumbá, when talk of the event comes up, people immediately quiz each other to find out if their conversational partners belong to one team or the other. If a person is undecided, recruitment efforts by either or both sides often begin: Garantido’s music is so much more poetic, their pajé more awe-inspiring, their alegorias more visionary; or the rhythm of Caprichoso’s drum corps more thrilling, the levantador’s voice more true, the cunhã-poranga’s costume more beautiful. As soon as a novice boi-bumbá fan aligns herself with one side, she is generally (playfully) attacked by the rivals, who assert that their boi is the better. Responding in defense of the new allegiance, her conviction becomes stronger, especially as others from the same group rally around and welcome her to the fold. Upon identification, one instantly and wholly belongs to the group, without challenge. The adherent to a boi-bumbá group can
state, “Eu sou Garantido,” or “Eu sou Caprichoso.” This is not “I am a supporter of the
Garantido group,” or “I am a Caprichoso fan,” but literally, “I am Garantido,” and “I am
Caprichoso.” There is no intermediary; the fan metonymously is the group, is the bull, is
the batucada, the dancers, the cunhã-poranga, the pajé.

As visually displaying group identity is at the core of the boi-bumbá it is no
surprise that there has been an endless proliferation of consumer goods that the boi-
bumbá enthusiast can invest in to further demonstrate and celebrate his allegiance. Every
year, both Parintins groups Garantido and Caprichoso record and release CDs of the
year’s new toadas, or boi-bumbá songs, as well as official DVDs of the performance,
with commentary and extra interviews with performers. Official shirts as well as
innumerable unofficial t-shirts, dresses, bikinis, skirts, shorts, pants, socks, and hats are
available for purchase at rehearsals in Manaus and in Parintins, at official and unofficial
parties, and at street fairs, as well as at the festival itself. At such venues jewelry in red or
blue is also sold, a dizzying array of feathered, beaded, or bull-embellished earrings,
chokers, headdresses, tiaras, armbands, bracelets, anklets, rings, hair ornaments, and
adhesive jewelry. Moving beyond personal adornment, one can also purchase paintings,
cups, beer cozies, and an infinite variety of geegaws and home decorations, all in either
red or blue, with a white bull or a black one. In short, the boi-bumbá, whether by design
or by accident (certainly a felicitous combination of the two), became a perfectly
marketed cultural and consumer phenomenon. Easily identifiable, as well as listenable,
wearable, and danceable, the boi-bumbá is not a once-a-year event. It is a wraparound
experience, even a way of life.
In his analysis of cultural performance in Venezuela, Guss (2000:91) points out that with the sweeping reorganization of Latin American society through urbanization, changing economics, and the introduction of technologies, “festivals […] are no longer limited to the interpretations of a single community,” with such events engaging in discourse in national and even global levels. García Canclini (1988:486; 1993:45) has asserted that in Latin America all “traditional” or “popular” cultural performances are “doubly enrolled,” gaining meaning at both local and extralocal levels concurrently. While celebrating the importance of its ties to specific city neighborhoods (the Baixa do São José for Garantido; Francesa for Caprichoso), the boi-bumbá of Parintins also explicitly envisions itself as being viewed by a global audience; it is “for the world to see” [para o mundo ver]. On a deeper level, however, corporate sponsorship of festivals such as the boi-bumbá (or the Dance of the Monkey, as Guss [2000] describes in Venezuela) serves also to put a local face on global economic interests. Continuing discourse which casts the boi-bumbá (even in its present form) as a “traditional folkloric dance” celebrating “authentic” community-based social relations masks the ways that the boi-bumbá is economically useful to players such as multinational corporations and state tourism boards.

**Boi-bumbá: More than just a Marketing Phenomenon**

Even though it has become a state- and corporate-sponsored spectacle characterized by the proliferation of consumer goods, this has not precluded people in Manaus and Parintins from finding personal meaning in the boi-bumbá. Catchy music, a fun dance, some pretty trinkets, and the rush of rivalry alone cannot explain why for many Amazonians the boi-bumbá also represents their cultural identity, their regional history.
No empty sporting event, the boi-bumbá is a celebration of the Amazon region and its peoples. The boi-bumbá has become the symbol of modern Amazonian culture, and the figure at the heart of today’s brincadeira do boi is the Caboclo, preserver of the forest and wise Everyman.273

At the heart of the boi-bumbá are two symbols: the Indian and the Caboclo. Mystical, other-worldly, and existing in a world characterized by music, dance, and religious ritual, the Indian represents not the living Indian tribes of today, but the rich indigenous heritage to which the majority of Amazonians feel strongly connected. As Eugênio Santana noted, Manauaras are generally hesitant to self-identify as Indians, though their phenotypes may strongly point to an indigenous genetic inheritance. In part due to the longstanding policies of assimilation that removed tribal Indians from their villages and forced them, beginning in the mid-sixteenth century, into Jesuit-run mission villages, aldeamentos (Wagley 1976:36) or aldeias (Chernela and Pinho 2004:84), where they were taught to give up their own languages to instead speak the língua geral;274 the vast majority of Amazonians have been detribalized for centuries. The symbol—in the spectacular arena performances of the boi-bumbá—who represents the Amazonian Everyman is not the Indian, but the Caboclo. It is significant to note that this is markedly

273 Caboclas, female rural mixed-race Amazonians, are also present in the boi-bumbá. However, the male Caboclo figure is dominant, just as the female Indian figure is the principal representation of indigeneity. As Caboclos are popularly considered to be “civilized” Indians, this male Caboclo/female Indian dichotomy aligns nicely with Lévi-Strauss’s theory of “raw,” natural women and “cooked,” male culture-bearers.

274 Língua geral means “general language,” and was a Tupi-derived trade language used in Amazon region (Urban 1991:308). It is called língua geral amazônica to distinguish it from a second língua geral spoken in the southwest, and was also known as brasileiro (Rodrigues 1996). Língua geral amazônica was a language of conquest and occupation (Borges 1996), and is still exists in a form known as nheengatu, and is still spoken in some areas of the Rio Negro.
different from the versions presented for tourist consumption, in which (as mentioned above) is it the figure of the Indian that takes center stage.

The Caboclo (and to a lesser extent, the Cabocla), while idealized in the boi-bumbá, is generally represented as performing every day tasks familiar to any Amazonian: catching fish, making farinha, planting and harvesting manioc, collecting fruits from trees, and working as rubbertappers. These may not be activities in which participants themselves have taken part, but surely their parents or grandparents may well have. One Manaus fan of Caprichoso, now in his 30s, told me about his teenage visits to Parintins, and what it meant to him:

I saw the toadas, like that in the Bumbódromo, everyone there singing the toadas. One toada really touched me, from Caprichoso, it’s the one that goes: [singing]

“A boatsman goes, on the branches of the river, old boatsman.” Man, that’s from our region, and I always liked boats….It’s connected to our everyday life. I used to travel a lot by boat with my dad, you know? And Dad, his whole life, Dad talked about how he always went by boat, by canoe, traveling, carrying small boats, understand? And I thought, man, Dad traveled in that? And Mom said that she traveled by boat, got stuck in thunderstorms….and [singing] “on the branches of the river, old boatsman, go, there goes the boatsman….”

275 "Eu olhava as toadas, assim no bumbódromo, ai todo mundo cantando as toadas. Uma toada que me coisou muito, do Caprichoso, é aquele do, [singing] “vai um canoeiro, nos braços do rio, velho canoeiro.” Pô é da nossa região, e eu sempre gostava de barcos….Liga ao dia a dia. Eu andava muito de barco com meu pai, entendeu? E Papai, a vida inteira Papai falando que ele andava de barco, de canoa, andando, carregando catraia, entendeu? E pô, Papai andou nisso? E Mamãe dizia andava de barco, pegava temporal… e “nos braços do rio, velho canoeiro, vai, já vai canoeiro…. ” [From interview with the author, 01/08/2013. My translation.]
Marcelo Diogo, long-time boi-bumbá musician and current **comunicador**\(^{276}\) of Boi-bumbá Garanhão also connected Caboclo imagery in the festival to his own family history:

> We would go to the arena, and we would see all that was staged: the Caboclo, making the **farinha**\(^{277}\) the lyrics of the music, all that went together, David Assayag singing over there…and at this time Arlindo was…sang, was…oh, my goodness! This is a wonder. It tells all of our history. My father was from there, my grandfather also, my great-great-grandfather. It’s all Caboclo roots, my goodness…\(^{278}\)

Boi-bumbá participants see their own personal and family history inscribed in the lyrics and scenes of festival performances. Lyrics are especially able to evoke affective reactions in boi-bumbá enthusiasts:

> I don’t know if you know [the boi-bumbá song] “Senhora Vazante.”\(^{279}\) [singing] “Lady of the Dry Season, don’t punish the land of the water people anymore…” It’s a beautiful song…that talks about our reality, you know? When the dry period arrives, the period of drought that dries everything up, understand? But there are

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\(^{276}\) The role of the “**comunicador**” is to communicate news related to the boi-bumbá to community inhabitants, often by driving through the streets of the neighborhood in a car with speakers mounted on top, broadcasting recorded or live news message.

\(^{277}\) Toasted manioc meal, a traditional food of the region.

\(^{278}\) “A gente ia na arena, a gente via todo aquele encenação: o Caboclo, fazendo a farinha, a letra da musica, tudo combina, David Assayag então ali cantando…ai nesse tempo Arlindo era…cantava, era…minha nossa senhoro! Isso é uma maravilha. Conta toda nossa historia. Meu pai vem de lá, meu avô também, meu tataravô. É toda raiz cabocla, puxa vida…”

\(^{279}\) “**Vazante**” is the time during the dry season when the river is at its lowest. “**Senhora Vazante**” means roughly, “Lady of the Dry Season.”
people who have never seen it, were never there to see it. That person isn’t going to be able to imagine how it is, or at least the reality of it.\textsuperscript{280}

And so it is more than that the festival reflects the reality of everyday life in Amazonia. Nogueira suggests that only those who have lived that reality are truly able to understand the festival and experience it fully. The implication is that part of the festival’s deeper purpose is for Amazonians to see their reality reflected, to behold themselves in the mirror.

Amazonas may not have the economic power of São Paulo, or the famous samba schools of Rio de Janeiro, or even a successful major league soccer team. The state version of the boi-bumbá, however, not only is unique to Amazonas, but its power is that it valorizes the humble lives of ordinary citizens of the region. When Amazonenses claim their boi-bumbá as “their culture,” they mean not only that the folklore groups’ performances are cultural performances, but also that the subject matter of the boi-bumbá is the everyday culture of the rural Amazon itself. It is a way of life that is still held by many, but is slowly disappearing as urbanization spreads further and further into the interior of the state.

Cultural tourism is often a search for the experience of authenticity on the part of the visitor, a desire to leave the everyday and spend time in the sacred (Graburn 1989). It is not at all unusual that a cultural performance would be commodified and neatly packaged for tourist consummation (Bruner 2005; Graburn 1976; and many others).

\textsuperscript{280}“Eu não sei se você conhece [a toada] ‘Senhora Vazante.’ [singing] Senhora Vazante não castigue mais a terra dos povos das águas...É uma musica linda...que fala uma realidade nossa, né? Quando a seca chega, período de estiagem que seca tudo, entendeu? Mas tem gente que nunca viu, nunca esteve lá para ver. Essa pessoa não vai conseguir imaginar, como é ou pelo menos a realidade que é.”
However, it is not necessarily the case that such commodification in any way lessens the value of the performance for those whose culture it is purported to be; on the contrary, such performance may indeed play an important part in the process of self-definition and self-construction of an ethnic or cultural group (Halter 2000, Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998, Xie 2003). In *Ethnicity, Inc.*, John and Jean Comaroff (2009:9) discuss an editorial written by one Tswagare Namane on the topic of Tswana identity and heritage: “The commercialization of identity, he insisted, does *not* necessarily cheapen it or reduce it to a brute commodity. Quite the opposite: marketing what is ‘authentically Tswana’ is also a mode of reflection, of self-construction, of *producing and feeling* Tswana-ness” (italics in the original).

Similarly, the production of the boi-bumbá is not a blind process of pastiche, a pulling together of a miscellany of images and symbols. Instead, it is a conscious and purposeful process by the thousands of artists, songwriters, scenographers, musicians, and performers who each year create the boi-bumbá anew. As this is an ongoing practice of deciding what belongs to greatest current symbol of Amazonian “culture,” of “producing and feeling” Amazonian-ness, it is infinitely flexible. What *felt* Amazonian in 1990 might not be the same in 2000, or 2010, or 2020. This makes the boi-bumbá relevant not only through time, but also transposable through geographical space as well.
CHAPTER 7
The Boi-bumbá-style Festival as a Regional Phenomenon

The explosive popularity of the Folklore Festival of Parintins, in which Boi-bumbá Garantido and Boi-bumbá Caprichoso compete in the Bumbódromo arena, set in motion the proliferation of many smaller festivals made in its image. Some of these smaller festivals were new creations, while others involved the transformation of an existing local celebration. While individual towns seek to create their own “brand” by creating a distinctive festival, Parintins exerts an ongoing influence on festival styles. While festival creators may resist the cultural hegemony of Parintins, they are also tied economically, as the propagation of such competitive folklore festivals has generated a class of professional festival workers: artists, craftspeople, carpenters, musicians, costume designers and creators, songwriters, dancers, and scenographers. Thus, underlying attempts at differentiation through particular festival “brands” and concern over Parintin’s cultural hegemony is an interconnected network through which technologies, commodities, and people flow.

Branding and the Folkloric Competition

The late 1990s and early 2000s was a time of unforeseen success for the Folklore Festival of Parintins, which came to be seen as the biggest cultural manifestation of the North Region or perhaps even of Brazil. Inspired by the branding success of the Parintins festival, other folklore festivals throughout the Amazon region began to rebrand their existing celebrations or add elements to create a boi-bumbá-style folkloric competition. The number of such festivals with a boi-bumbá competition as centerpiece today is enormous, such as the Bois-bumbás Tira-prosa and Corajoso of the city of Fonte Boa; the Bois-bumbás Diamante Negro and Corre Campo of Nova Olinda do Norte; the Bois-
bumbás Tira Prosa and Cacau of Maracanã, Pará; the Bois-bumbás Garanhão, Corre Campo, and Brilhante of Manaus, and many, many others.

And not only bulls are competing against bulls these days: in the Folklore Festival of Caracarai, in the state of Roraima, the Cobra Mariana [“Mariana Snake”] competes against the Gavião Caracará [“Caracará Hawk”]. At the Festisol of Tabatinga, Amazonas, the Onça Preta [“Black Jaguar”] faces off against the Onça Pintada [“Painted Jaguar”]. In the city of Novo Airão, not far from Manaus, two manatees face off in a boi-bumbá style competition at the yearly EcoFestival. In Borba, Amazonas, the Jaraqui da Escama Fina [“Fine-scaled Jaraqui”] battles the Jaraqui da Escama Grossa [“Thick-scaled Jaraqui”]. The Sairé festival of Alter do Chão, Pará, features the competition between the Boto Cor-de-Rosa [“Pink Dolphin”] and the Boto Tucuxí [“Tucuxí Dolphin”]. Moving beyond the boi-bumbá, the city of Manacapuru holds a yearly festival of the Ciranda, a competition between the three folklore groups Ciranda Tradicional [“Traditional Ciranda”], Ciranda Flor Matizada [“Multi-colored Flower Ciranda”], and Ciranda Guerreiros Mura [“Mura Warriors Ciranda”]. These celebrations have taken root for the reasons outlined above: state, city, and often corporate financial sponsorship; the commodification and marketing of music, dancing, and consumer products; but also because they are meaningful to the people where they are produced. Even more local and more personal than the boi-bumbá of Parintins, these smaller festivals are most successful when they reflect the everyday lives of the participants.

281 The jaraqui is a small, relatively cheap food fish that together with rice, beans, and farinha (toasted, coarse manioc meal) makes up the daily diet of many Amazonians. “Quem come jaraqui não sai mais daqui,” or “He who eats jaraqui doesn’t leave here again,” is a rhyme frequently offered to fish-consuming visitors to the region.

282 The tucuxí dolphin is a small gray dolphin common to the rivers of the Amazon region.
In July of 2011, I visited the town of Maracanã, Pará, to attend the competition of the Boi-bumbá Tira Prosa and the Boi-bumbá Cacau. First I traveled to the city of Faro, which is located in the state of Pará, on its border with Amazonas. On the Amazonas side of the border (and visible across a bay from Faro) lies the island town of Nhamundã, known regionally for its Tucunaré Festival in September, which is very popular with tourists. In July, when the river is high, roads connecting Faro and Maracanã are covered with water, leaving the latter, a tiny community with perhaps one thousand inhabitants, quite isolated and only reachable by boat. While in the low-river months one can arrive in Maracanã in a half an hour by car, at high-river a two-hour boat trip is required. Most of the attendees of the Boi-bumbá competition in Maracanã, then, are residents, friends, and relatives of the performers. When we arrived in town the day before the competition, we visited the arena (which appeared to be a repurposed soccer field) and noticed that new wooden bleachers were under construction. The entire tiny community seemed to be working to get the festival ready for the next day, hot gluing feathers onto costumes, spray painting enormous snakes to go onto floats, practicing one last time with the batucada. But it was not until the next day, a few hours before the competition was to begin, that the festival really came together: the majority of the materials for Boi Cacau arrived by boat from Parintins, along with a great number of performers.

The performance was similar to those of the bois-bumbás of Manaus and other areas in Amazonas. The one striking difference, however, was the prominent place of the

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283 The tucunaré, commonly known in English as the peacock bass, is a medium-sized sport fish that is also a popular (and delicious) food fish.
carimbó dance, symbol of Paraense\textsuperscript{284} culture and identity. A second difference was the collaboration of folklore groups with local schools, and the incorporation of many schoolchildren both into a boi-bumbá mirim\textsuperscript{285} which had a presentation the night before the festival, and into the main festival performance itself.

I spoke with Valter Marques Malheiros, the founder of Boi Cacau, who was frustrated by the colonization of his community’s small festival by boi-bumbá enthusiasts from Parintins. The problem, he told me, was not Maracana’s lack of enthusiasm, but rather, a lack of financial resources, and the isolation of the community during the high river months. One problem in gaining revenue for a festival was that it must be able to draw tourists, and a visit requiring a two-hour boat ride from the small towns of Faro and Nhamundá was simply not appealing to visitors. The current president, he said, was succumbing to pressure to accept help from Parintins, to which Valter was strictly opposed. While on the one hand, the festival had become much more professional and “spectacular,” on the other hand, the money for performers, set construction, and costumes was going to Parintins, rather than staying in the community. A successful folklore festival can generate a great deal of revenue for a small community, if government funds for cultural activities go to local artists, musicians, and artisans. Valter now dreams of starting a second festival, one which would be scheduled in September, like Nhamundá’s Tucunaré Festival, in order to draw more visitors.

People like Valter Malheiros, who are “traditionalists” when it comes to the boi, consider the version of the boi-bumbá that is being exported from Parintins as a corrupt

\textsuperscript{284} As Amazonense denotes a person from Amazonas state, so Paraense refers to a person from the neighboring state of Pará.
\textsuperscript{285} “Mirim” means “little,” so this could be translated as “junior boi-bumbá.” A boi-bumbá mirim is a boi-bumbá group composed totally of children.
version. Some resist it as having been *carnavalizado* [carnavalized] with the 1990s addition of electric guitars, new rhythms, and sexualized female roles. Beyond this, there is a feeling that the *humilde* [humble] bois-bumbás of small communities such as Maracanã are being *Parintinsizado* [Parintins-ized]; colonized by the hegemonic spectacle emanating from that small but influential town. While a more spectacular boi-bumbá in Maracanã might have the power to draw additional tourists and benefit the community economically, Malheiros and many like him have expressed concern at what is lost when the multiple voices of small bois-bumbás have been swept away by the tsunami that is Parintins.

**Sairé: Alter do Chão**

This process of Parintins-ization has not only affected boi-bumbá festivals, but has extended its reach to other folklore festivals as well. I visited the village of Alter do Chão, Pará, for the Sairé Festival, in September, 2011. Alter do Chão was originally founded as the mission of Our Lady of Purification, in 1738, at the location of a village of the Borari tribe. The Sairé was a religious festival introduced by the Franciscan priests in the 1600s who sought to convert and “civilize” the indigenous peoples of the area, by using their own symbols and ceremonies to create a link with Christianity (Nogueira 2008). This syncretic dance seems to be consistently performed through the 18th and 19th centuries, as many accounts of its appearance can be found in the travel journals of visitors—though the celebration of the festival was prohibited from 1943-1973 (Nogueira 2008). It also appears that the Sairé was celebrated throughout quite a large area, as
Henry Walter Bates recorded his observations of the Sairé festival at Serpa\textsuperscript{286} during his 1848-1859 expedition to Amazonia:

We stayed at Serpa five days. Some of the ceremonies observed at Christmas were interesting, inasmuch as they were the same, with little modification, as those taught by the Jesuit missionaries more than a century ago to the aboriginal tribes whom they had induced to settle on this spot. In the morning, all the women and girls, dressed in white gauze chemises and showy calico print petticoats, went in procession to church, first going the round of the town to take up the different “mordomos,” or stewards, whose office is to assist the Juiz of the festa. These stewards carried each a long white reed, decorated with coloured ribbons; several children also accompanied, grotesquely decked with finery. Three old squaws went in front, holding the “saire,” a large semi-circular frame, clothed with cotton and studded with ornaments, bits of looking-glass, and so forth. This they danced up and down, singing all the time a monotonous whining hymn in the Tupi language, and at frequent intervals turning round to face the followers, who then all stopped for a few moments. I was told that this saire was a device adopted by the Jesuits to attract the savages to church, for these everywhere followed the mirrors in which they saw as it were magically reflected their own persons. [Bates 1921(1914):161-162]

\textsuperscript{286} Serpa is known today as Itacoatiara (and has been since 1874), and is located towards the far eastern edge of the Manaus metropolitan area. Itacoatiara is frequently referenced in Manaus to indicate “a place ridiculously far away,” as in “The next place to turn around is all the way in Itacoatiara.” It can be reached by car from Manaus in a few hours. To illustrate the range in which the Sairé was apparently celebrated during the mid-1800s, it takes over 24 hours going downriver to reach Alter do Chão from Itacoatiara today in a standard passenger riverboat.
A celebration of syncretism, today’s Alter do Chão festival has as its emblem a symbol representing crosses combined with bows and arrows, and the ceremonies themselves intertwine Catholicism with indigenous harvest festivities.

This smaller, quieter part of today’s Sairé Festival is ignored entirely by the majority of visitors, dwarfed as it is by the much showier evening activities, which include live outdoor concerts, a fair, and the competition of Boto Cor-de-Rosa and Boto Tucuxi. Maria Santiago noted in 1993 that the village of Alter do Chão was attracting visitors, principally from the neighboring city of Santarém, for the Sairé celebrations, including folkloric dances such as the boi-bumbá “sem o aparato e o luxo dos famosos bumbás da cidade de Parintins” [without the trappings and the luxury of the famous bumbás of the city of Parintins] (Santiago 1996:88). This has since changed. The addition of the boi-bumbá-style competition of the two dolphin groups around 1998 was undertaken with an eye to enhance the festival’s interest to tourists, and this has been completely successful. As Emanuel Leite wrote shortly thereafter:

In 1998, the competition of the Boto Tucuxi and Boto Cor-de-Rosa started. At that point, the event turned into something commercial. That is, beyond the religious character, there was the folkloric, putting on stage one of the most exotic legends of the Amazon, that of the boto. At that moment a new tradition was born. (...) Alter do Chão, besides the beauty of its beaches, wants to be known for its biggest event. It is said, in the village, that a festive event is being created for exportation. Everything is being worked on in a planned way. The Municipality of Santarém is enabling the business part. The private sector has already begun to make its presence felt, since some companies have provided providential support.
But the idea is to sensitize the Federal Government so that in future years the doors have effectively been opened. You dream about the Rouanet Law\textsuperscript{287} as the ideal partnership, since, through an incentive program for culture, the Celebration of Çairé\textsuperscript{288} [sic] condition will take a giant step towards attracting an even more interesting public. Particularly in these times of modernity, in which people come to appreciate all that is authentic, that is representative of a specific region.\textsuperscript{289}

[Leite 2001 as quoted in Nogueira 2008]

This partnership has worked. During my 2011 stay, the tiny town was overrun by visitors, mostly young men and women in their late teens and twenties. While many were from nearby Santarém, others came from Manaus and even farther afield. The intention of the vast majority was clearly to spend the long weekend partying; even on the 30 kilometer bus ride from Santarém, where most people arrive by boat or by airplane, bottles of wine and cachaça were freely passed around, guitars played, songs drunkenly but enthusiastically sung.

\textsuperscript{287} The Rouanet Law, or the Cultural Incentive Law (Brazilian Law 8.313, approved 1991) provides fiscal incentives for people or companies who support cultural events (Portal Brasil 2009).

\textsuperscript{288} I have come across this alternate spelling several times.

\textsuperscript{289} “Em 1998, foi iniciada a disputa dos Botos Tucuxi e Cor-de-Rosa. Naquele ponto, o evento deu uma guinada para transformar-se em algo comercial. Ou seja, além do caráter religioso, o folclórico, colocando no palco uma das lendas mais exóticas da Amazônia, a do boto. Estava naquele momento nascendo uma nova tradição. (...) Alter do Chão, além da beleza de suas praias, quer ficar conhecida pelo seu evento maior. Diz-se, na vila, que está sendo fabricada uma festa tipo exportação. Tudo está sendo trabalhado de forma planejada. A Prefeitura de Santarém está viabilizando a parte comercial. A iniciativa privada já começou a se fazer presente, já que algumas empresas têm prestado apoio providencial. Mas a ideia é sensibilizar o Governo Federal para que em próximos anos as portas sejam efetivamente abertas. Sonha-se com a Lei Rouanet como a parceria ideal, uma vez que, por meio de um programa de incentivo à cultura, a Festa do Çairé [sic] terá condição de dar um passo gigantesco no sentido de atrair um público ainda mais interessante. Principalmente nestes tempos de modernidade, em que as pessoas passam a valorizar tudo que é autêntico, que seja representativo de uma região específica.”
Alter do Chão brands itself—and is sold by tourist agencies—as the “Caribbean of the Amazon” (Nogueira 2008) and its protected bays and beautiful white sand beaches surrounded by jungle-topped hills make the tiny community a favorite vacation location for people within the region and without. During the Sairé, the beaches, the streets, and the restaurants of the town were filled with young partiers, who generally slept in late (during the hours of the early morning religious Sairé ceremonies) and arrived at the festival grounds in the evening (after the evening religious ceremonies) to enjoy the concerts, the food stalls, the beer stands, and the competition of the folklore groups. In spite of the R$20 entrance fee to the competition arena (called the “Lago dos Botos,” or the “Lake of the Dolphins”), the stands were packed to the point of discomfort. Just as in the Parintins festival, fans entering the stands were handed goodie bags of festival trinkets emblazoned with the logos of corporate sponsors; this time with Cerpa beer and Oi telephone company the biggest contributors. Thousands of people wearing color-coded pink or gray (pink for the Boto Cor-de-Rosa, gray for Boto Tucuxí) foam fedoras, clutching dolphin mylar balloons, and drinking local Cerpa beer specially packaged with Sairé labeling, stayed until the bitter end, as both groups performed on the same evening, finishing only after one in the morning. The competition of the dolphins was similar in overall format to and clearly modeled on the Parintins boi-bumbá, with some added regional touches.

Rather than the auto do boi, the performances centered around the popular Amazonian legend of the dolphin, who comes ashore in the form of a beautiful man in a white suit and a fedora, and dances with the local maidens and enchants and impregnates
Both the Boto Tucuxí and the Boto Cor-de-Rosa groups enacted the legend, complete with elaborate wheeled alegorias and a host of characters from the dolphin story. Thus, rather than a dancing bull, there was a man in a suit who then disappeared and was replaced in the arena by a dancing dolphin. Where the bull of the boi-bumbá cavorts like its real-life counterpart, wiggling its ears and shaking its head, the dolphin of the Sairé similarly tried to copy the motions of an actual dolphin, adopting a shimmying up-and-down swimming movement. Rather than the Sinhazinha of the boi-bumbá, who feeds the bull with grass and salt, there was a Cabocla maiden with a bucket of fish, which she fed to the frolicking dolphin.

While the boi-bumbá relies on great numbers of dancers adorned as indigenous peoples, dancing rhythmically in long lines, the Sairé’s contest between the dolphins made the wise choice of instead incorporating the carimbó. This had a very different effect from that of the somber atmosphere of the Tribal Mystical and Tribal Celebratory time-spaces that were discussed in Chapter 5. The carimbó is a vivacious social dance that is performed by couples, to a fast-paced, lively music. The women wear abbreviated tops and long, full, multi-hued skirts that twirl about them like bright wheels of color. Thus, the effect of rows and rows of couples dancing the carimbó was anything but dour, and added a great deal to make the performance of the dolphin groups engaging and colorful.

A final tactic through which the dolphin folklore groups of the Sairé were able to make their performances truly different from those of the Parintins-style boi-bumbá was the incorporation of the religious Sairé ceremonies into the folklore performance. The

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290 For more on the dolphin legend please see Dance of the Dolphin: Transformation and Disenchantment in the Amazonian Imagination by Candace Slater (1994).
first performance of the evening, that of the Boto Cor-de-Rosa, began with a procession, in which a swarm of carimbó dancers escorted a replica of the Sairé religious building into the arena. The building is very distinctive, a small chapel made of palm fronds woven onto a wooden frame, with two poles erected in front, both of which are decorated with greenery, flowers, and all manner of fruits. Accompanying the dancers and the chapel were young girls\(^{291}\) bearing the Sairé symbol, which is customarily wrapped in multicolored ribbons. In the performance of the Boto Tucuxí, the symbol of the Sairé and the palm frond chapel were both present as well, this time in the form of a float bearing one of the principal female dancers into the arena. This dancer, whose hoop skirt was decorated with the Sairé symbol, was one of the judged items in the competition, representing the sacred side of the festival.

Perhaps less successful in the narrative continuity of the dolphin folklore group performances was the appearance of the pajé, familiar from the boi-bumbá’s ritual. The dolphin groups also included a ritual starring a pajé; in fact, to my surprise I immediately recognized the pajé of the Boto Cor-de-Rosa as the same individual who plays the pajé in Manaus’s Boi-bumbá Corre Campo, and that of the Boto Tucuxi as Fabiano Alencar, then pajé of Boi-bumbá Garanhão of Educandos. Although both performances were delightful, there appeared to be no logical connection between the ritual, the carimbó dancers and dolphin legend. While it was the boi-bumbá which was described as an “an aggregation of tomfooleries” (Gama 1996), the Sairé’s folkloric competition is an even more eccentric pastiche, although an enchanting one.

\(^{291}\) In the Sairé religious ceremony, a woman called the *Sairapora* heads a procession which weaves in and around the two greenery-wrapped poles, bearing the Sairé symbol. (This information was shared with me in informal conversations with inhabitants of Alter do Chão during my stay there.)
The Sairé festival of Alter do Chão represents one flourishing adaptation of the boi-bumbá-style competitive folklore performance. Certainly, its ability to attract significant funding from state and corporate sponsors has propelled the Sairé onto the stage of regional tourism. Further, I believe the success of the Sairé festival rests partly on its hybridity, the manner in which the new secular boi-bumbá-style competition intertwines with the ancient sacred celebration. An additional contributing element in the popularity of the Sairé festival is its incorporation of cultural elements of Pará state, which makes it not just a carbon copy of Parintins’s boi-bumbá, but a celebration of its own local culture. Also important is that the Sairé festival takes place in September, a time when the river is neither high nor low, the weather is dominated by sunny skies, and beaches are not hidden by water. Finally, while the beauty of Alter do Chão’s natural environment has long drawn tourists to its beaches, complaint has been that the tiny community provides little for visitors in the way of nightlife. To visit Alter do Chão during the Sairé festival is to experience the best of both worlds: relaxing white sand beaches during the day, live music and a folklore competition at night.

**Ciranda: Manacapuru**

Another festival which has been infected with the Parintins virus is located in Manacapuru. In August of 2011, I paid a visit to this small city to visit the Ciranda Festival. Today, Manacapuru can be reached from Manaus by crossing the Rio Negro Bridge, completed in 2011 and driving 90 kilometers by car; previously it was reachable only by means of a ferry or by boat. The ciranda, a dramatic dance similar to the boi-bumbá, is also performed throughout Brazil. Mario de Andrade, traveling in the Amazon
region in 1927, noted that the dance had incorporated many characters from the regional folklore, and thus recognized a distinct “Amazonian Ciranda” (Nogueira 2008:120).

It appears that the ciranda was brought to Manacapuru in the 1980s from Manaus by Maria do Perpétuo Socorro de Oliveira and José Silvestre do Nascimento e Souza, schoolteachers who were invited by the city’s mayor to teach the children about the famous cirandás of the cities of Manaus and Tefé (Nogueira 2008). The ciranda was received with such immediate popularity that two other schools formed their own groups, and a rivalry developed between the three groups *Flor Matizada* [“Multi-colored Flower”], *Guerreiros Mura* [“Mura Warriors”], and *Tradicional* [“Traditional”]. In the late 1990s the groups became more professional and ceased to be solely school-based, and the festivities were moved from the time of the Festa Junina (the customary time for the performance of the ciranda, as also the boi-bumbá), and earned their own festival, at the end of September. Soon, an arena was erected for the growing festival at the Parque do Ingá, and dubbed (unsurprisingly) the Cirándromo.

The “Ciranda de Manacapuru” evolved away from its previous form as a simple circle dance (*danca de roda*), and instead became—like the model of the boi-bumbá that began in Parintins—focused on the presentation of scenes and the presence of elaborate *alegorias*, the movable stage sets so characteristic of the boi-bumbá. José Silvestre do Nascimento e Souza, the teacher who helped bring the ciranda to Manacapuru, noted his distaste at the form the dance had taken:

In Manacapuru—following the example of Parintins, where bumbás Garantido and Caprichoso adhered to the rhythm, choreography, and the carnivalesque—since 1993, leaving aside the fine traditional performances of the best folk group
of the festivals that take place there annually, the ciranda also sought to imitate those bumbás using carnaval-style allegorical trucks and floats, costumes, rhythms and choreography, aiming to please the many Manacapuru fans. Besides the allegorical trucks, the leaders of [Manacapuru’s] ciranda began to innovate, for the worse, putting Sabiá,\(^{292}\) the Uirapuru,\(^{293}\) and other birds to supplement the ciranda. These innovations, in my opinion, brought nothing positive to the group. The costumes of the revelers, following the example of Manaus, are insufficient to cover their bodies, and the use of the miniskirt, thong underwear, etc. predominates almost entirely. Certain ladies, to the delight of many, prefer to go out naked, showing their genitals to see if it please the judges and the wayward youth of the Princess of the Solimões [Soccer Club].\(^{294}\) [Souza as quoted in Nogueira 2008:127-128]

It cannot be disputed that the ciranda of Manacapuru has adopted a format and aesthetic closely aligned with that of the Parintins boi-bumbá. In my analysis, this modification of format greatly increased the popularity of the ciranda, drawing boi-bumbá fans from

\(^{292}\) A thrush.  
\(^{293}\) The musician wren or organ wren.  
\(^{294}\) “Em Manacapuru, a exemplo de Parintins, onde os bumbás Garantido e Caprichoso aderiram ao ritmo, à coreografia, e às carnavalescas, a ciranda, a partir de 1993, deixando de lado as belas apresentações tradicionais de melhor grupo folclórico dos festivais que ali se realizam anualmente, também procurou imitar aqueles bumbás, utilizando carros alegóricos, alegorias, vestimentas, ritmos e coreografias momeca com o objetivo de agradar aos numerosos fãs manacapuruenses. Além dos carro alegóricos, os dirigentes das cirandas daquela cidade começaram a inovar, para pior, colocando o Sabiá, o Uirapuru, e outros pássaros para o complemento das partes da ciranda. Essas inovações, salvo melhor juízo, nada trouxeram de positivo para o grupo. As vestimentas das brincantes, a exemplo das de Manaus, são insuficientes para lhes cobrirem o corpo, predominando, na sua quase totalidade, o uso da minissaia, do fio-dental etc. Determinadas damas, para alegria de muitos, preferem sair peladas, mostrando sua partes genitais para ver se agradam os jurados e a mocidade transviada da Princesa do Solimões.”
Manaus. The Ciranda of Manacapuru has also gained the support of city, state, and corporate funding, with Bradesco Bank, the Novo Mundo department store and the Calderaro Communication Network representing the latter category (acritica.com 2014).

The ciranda, while similar (being also a dramatic dance by Mario de Andrade’s categorization of Brazilian folkloric manifestations) to the boi-bumbá, differs slightly: while all of the dramatic dances feature the theme of death and resurrection, in the ciranda, rather than being a bull that is killed and brought back to life, it is a bird, the carão, or limpkin. However, while both the Amazonas boi-bumbá and the ciranda contain both a dramatic core (or auto) and a succession of dramatic scenes, the two are quite different. The ciranda is fundamentally a dance comprised of many sets of couples, who perform a variety of complicated dance steps (each with a special name) to ciranda music. The simplest versions just involve dancing in couples, generally in lines, circles, or other relatively simple formations. More complicated versions introduce the drama of the death and resurrection of the bird and a variety of characters (each with their own dance), such as the Galo Bonito [Handsome Rooster] and Cupid, the god of love.

In the Ciranda of Manacapuru, as also in the Folklore Festival of Manaus, the three competing folklore groups present their performances to be judged on three consecutive nights, in the case of the 2011 Ciranda, there were the 26th, 27th, and 28th of August. I was only able to attend the second night of the festival, to see the performance of Ciranda Flor Matizada. It was a dazzling experience. While boi-bumbá dancers are generally costumed as Indians, Amazonian Caboclos, or inhabitants of a colonial ranch, and carimbó dancers of the Sairé festival array themselves in tiered colorful skirts, the dress of the cirandeiro is entirely different. Couples are clad in matching costumes, the
women’s half consisting of a tight-fitting, often midriff-bearing top, a stiff, ruffled, tutu-like skirt with reveals the buttocks (which are often covered, as indicated by Souza above, by a very brief thong-style matching bottom piece or sometimes a more modest bikini-style bottom), ruffled over-the-knee gaiters, arm and neck decorations, and a tiara or headdress. All of these pieces are aggressively sparkly, spangly, ruffled, and reflective.

The men’s costumes are comprised of coordinated pants and shirt or jacket (similarly shiny and dazzling), and a straw or boater-style hat. An entire arena full of dancers sporting these glittering, bouncing costumes is a sight to behold.

Special individual dancers appeared as well on tower-like floats, hovering above the arena on tiny platforms that were not for the faint of heart. Amazing scenic floats provided the background for the cirandeiros in the arena and undoubtedly told a story, though for the uninitiated it was difficult to follow. A beautifully painted dome opened up to reveal a Caboclo village and a crowned Virgin Mary bearing an infant Christ. A large float suddenly rose up, depicting a mustachioed Caboclo with outstretched arms, on his head a rainbow-colored straw hat. From the stands, Indians in canoes were born down on the backs of assistants, flowing into the arena on ribbons that waved like water. Fans waved white and purple flags (the colors of Flor Matizada) or lifted hundreds of painted cardboard cutouts into the air, the entire bleachers transformed into a gigantic school of fish. A giant whirligig, forty feet in the air, decorated with horned demons, spun above the arena as an enormous snake emerged from the belly of the Caboclo. The audience held up huge Carnaval masks, and a two-story-tall orange and yellow frog appeared in

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A cirandeiro is a male ciranda dancer, while a cirandeira is a female. The verb, cirandar, to dance the ciranda or to participate in a performance of the ciranda (similar to brincar de boi for the boi-bumbá) also exists.
the arena. Accompanying this hallucinogenic spectacle was the deafening music, the roar of the crowd, and the ceaseless dancing of the sequined cirandeiros.

Like the dolphin competition of the Sairé festival, the Ciranda of Manacapuru is thriving. The expansive arena at the Parque do Ingá, constructed especially for the Ciranda competition, is filled to capacity with locals and visitors (many from Manaus) who flock to see the performances. Also like the Sairé dolphin festival, the Ciranda has adopted the successful competition format of the boi-bumbá, but offers much that is different as well. For one, the ciranda is a folk dance that people often learn in school, and many secondary schools in Manaus have ciranda dance groups that perform in their neighborhoods or compete in folklore festivals. Thus, the ciranda is familiar and accessible to most Amazonians, who have at least a passing acquaintance with the story and the dance. Additionally, while the boi-bumbá of Parintins is a regional phenomenon, the Ciranda of Manacapuru, though impressively spectacular in its own right, is a local phenomenon. Therefore, people are able to feel greater ownership of the ciranda than of the boi-bumbá, which has become a massive industry. Finally, the rhythm and the costumes of the ciranda are vastly different from the boi-bumbá. While the boi-bumbá insists on the use of local, natural materials – anything reminiscent of the “brilho” of Carnaval is criticized and strictly to be avoided – the Ciranda of Manacapuru does not bear the same limitations. Ciranda costumes, floats, and effects are joyously and unapologetically shiny, sparkly, and glittery, making the ciranda into a shimmering fairy wonderland, quite different from the sometimes somber and sinister world of the boi-bumbá’s forests and rituals.
**The Professional Artistic Class**

The proliferation of festivals modeled on the Parintins boi-bumbá, such as the Competition of the Botos in Alter do Chão and the Ciranda of Manacapuru, has allowed for the creation of a class of professional artists to create the folklore festivals. The expansion of festival budgets—both in Parintins and in smaller festivals as well—due to state and corporate funding has increased both the numbers of artists directly employed in festival creation as well as those who are able to launch careers as freelance workers (especially in music). While not all are able to rely solely on their art for their income, an increasing number of musicians, dancers, plastic and visual artists, and choreographers earn a significant portion of their income from folklore festivals. Some work part-time at other careers while building their artistic careers. This professional class began to be seen in the 1990s, when boi-bumbá music took the capital by storm and was played constantly on the radio, at nightclubs, shows, and parties. A boi-bumbá band was a must-have at every celebration, and in Educandos, even Carnaval left behind its customary rhythms to dance to boi-bumbá music instead. Marcelo Diogo, today the official “communicator” of Boi-bumbá Garanhão, talks about how the boi-bumbá rhythm exploded in popularity overnight:

> At every party that happened, there was boi in the middle. It was just like it is today [with forró music], even during the enormous Carnaval celebration in Educandos, they play forró. At that time forró hadn’t exploded yet. It was the boi.
There wasn’t anyone else — it was just the boi-bumbá groups. There were other rhythms, but the official rhythm of Manaus was boi-bumbá.  

Musicians jumped on the bandwagon and took up the new rhythm on the spot, taking advantage of the possibilities that boi-bumbá music was offering. Riding the wave of popularity, many found instant success, as Marcelo Diogo remembers:

So, man, I’ll tell you, brother, […] we were on this trajectory. So we did some opening acts, we had the opportunity to travel to almost all the municípios. One time, when I was traveling by plane, I sat down — for the first time I got into a plane because of the band that I had formed. I couldn’t believe it. When I entered the plane, when I sat down on the seat, I twisted my head like this, and I looked back like this…I saw all of my people sitting down, all of them tightening their seatbelts, and I say, my God. We’re in a situation, arriving at a level that we never expected. It began as a bit of fun in the backyard, we got this band together, and now here we are traveling by plane.

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296 “Em toda festa que tinha, tinha boi no meio. Era igual como é hoje [com a música de forró] tremendo Carnavalzão de Educandos, toca forró. E nesse tempo forró não era estourado. Era os bois. Aqui não tinha ninguém, era o boi. Tinha outros ritmos, mas o ritmo oficial mesmo de Manaus era o boi-bumbá.”

297 In Brazil, a município is a geographical division roughly equivalent to a county in the United States.

298 No fundo do quintal, literally, “at the back of the yard,” implies a situation of informal conviviality, a relaxed situation of amateur performers, friends, and family.

299 “Aí, rapaz, eu digo meu irmão, [...] a gente tivemos essa trajetoria. Então fizemos alguns pré-shows, quase todos os municípios a gente teve a oportunidade de viajar. Uma vez, eu, viajando de avião, sentei—pela primeira vez eu entrei num avião através uma banda que eu formei. Eu não acreditei naquilo. Quando eu entrei no avião, quando eu sentei na poltrona, eu torci minha cabeça assim, e eu olhei por trás assim...eu vi todo o meu pessoal sentado, tudo mundo apertando o cinto, e eu digo, meu deus. A gente está chegando numa situação, num patamar que a gente não esperava. Começou numa brincadeira no fundo de quintal, a gente formou essa banda, e hoje a gente vai viajar de avião.”
This golden moment of boi-bumbá music, however, could not last forever. By the end of the first decade of the 21st century the ascension of forró music in Manaus displaced the boi-bumbá as the city’s popular music. Many musicians were unable to continue working solely as boi musicians.

A significant number of musicians and artists, however, still find a living through the boi-bumbá today. Fabiano Alencar, 2011 pajé of Garanhão, worked as a dance teacher while developing his performance resume and most recently putting together Wânkô Kaçauré, a group of professional dancers. Fabiano said, “With time I began professionalizing, you know? Because I think you really have to professionalize today, so today I’m more professional. And so I professionalized during my time as pajé. I took a lot of time to really hone my performance and create my own space, my own costumes.”

In addition to his Manaus boi-bumbá performances, Fabiano frequently receives invitations to perform in festivals outside of the capital. As discussed above, the number of competitive folkloric festivals is growing throughout the Brazilian Amazon. Frequently, smaller folklore groups hire outside talent to fill the gaps in their own performances. Manaus’s Boi-bumbá Garanhão, for example, partnered with Boi-bumbá Garantido (from Parintins) in 2012, in order to have enough percussionists to form an impressive batucada. Boi Cacau of Maracanã hired the large majority of its itens, its lead individual performers, from Boi-bumbá Caprichoso (of Parintins). At times this happens in order to achieve the required number of performers in each category; for example, the 2012 regulations in Manaus mandate a minimum of 120 percussionists for the three

300 Aí eu fui me adquirindo com o tempo, me profissionalizando, né. Porque eu acho que tem que se profissionalizar mesmo hoje. Hoje eu estou mais profissional. Assim eu me profissionalizou mesmo na época minha de pajé. Porque assim eu levei muito tempo pra mim aprimorar e criar meu próprio espaço, minhas próprias fantasias.”
groups competing in the “Special” category. At other times such outside hires are due to a desire to have a competitive edge; if one group hires a seasoned boi-bumbá Apresentador or Levantador de Toadas from Parintins, for example, their rival may think twice about giving that position to local talent and instead hire a professional as well. Thus, while each competing folkloric group generally has their own band and back up singers, the main singing parts—Apresentador, Levantador, and Amo do Boi—are often brought in from outside.

Scenographers, set builders, and visual and plastic artists also travel the festival circuit. In fact, it was often difficult to talk to these artists during my field research, as they were generally either hard at work or out of town, working on another folklore festival. As completing the alegorias, or movable sets, for a competing folklore group can take months, those who have the skills and the will to travel constantly can make a living from constructing folkloric sets and Carnaval floats. Artists, for the most part, are self-taught or learned on the job. Some are like Nataliço, who specializes in the design and construction of alegorias, and who got his training beginning with Boi-bumbá Caprichoso of Parintins. Natal began by sweeping the floor of the workshop where the set makers worked, and moved up the ranks until he was allowed to work on the alegorias themselves. Today’s children of Parintins can benefit from more structured schooling: Caprichoso established in 1997 its Escola de Artes, or School of the Arts, for local children wanting to learn the arts used in the boi-bumbá.

The professionalization of the boi-bumbá in Manaus is recent—undoubtedly enabled by city, state, and corporate sponsorship—and has already deeply penetrated the structure of the folklore groups. Only twenty years ago, brincantes (“players,” or those
who participate in the boi-bumbá) were informed as to the parameters of their festival costumes, and each would pay for materials and construct his or her own costume at home. This led to both a greater eccentricity in the appearance of the costumes and a deeper personal investment of participants in the construction of their boi-bumbá performance. Today costumes are assembled by professional costumiers, with the help of some locals who do piece work, and all is paid for by monies allocated for each boi-bumbá group by the state and city governments.

**Amazonia from Within and Without: Giants and Shapeshifters**

Why has the Parintins-style boi-bumbá found such resonance as a symbol of “Amazonian culture” throughout the region? Maria Laura Viveiros de Castro Cavalcanti (2006:6) points out that “a group of humans dancing around an artefact-ox is enacting a symbolic form of behavior *par excellence*.” While Cavalcanti is concerned with the Freudian analysis of the boi-bumbá, I am interested in what the boi-bumbá, itself as a symbol, means to those who proclaim it to be representative of regional culture.

Candace Slater’s *Entangled Edens* examine the differences between and motivations for stories that both people from outside the Amazon and inside the Amazon tell about the region. Slater calls the outsiders’ stories “giants,” conveying the idea that the stories iconically stand in for larger, often psychological issues. Giants are the sites of a powerful, concentrated force, like all icons:

> The Rain Forest is a powerful symbol because of the immediacy with which it evokes not just vivid images but a whole array of cherished beliefs about the natural world. Giants’ ability to summon up these larger beliefs makes them a potent catalyst for thought and action. At the same time, however, they may also
conceal or skew a larger whole to suit a particular end. This is because although
often large in their own right, giants ultimately turn out to be fragments of
something bigger and far more difficult to grasp. [Slater 2002:14]

For those from outside the region, then, Amazonia becomes a metaphor, rather than a
real, lived environment populated with ordinary people.

As the great expanse of the ocean becomes a symbol that stands for death, or
eternity, the Amazon’s forest and rivers become a forgotten Eden, the lungs of the planet,
a font of abundance that will solve the world’s hunger problems, or a repository of
spiritual and healing powers. Those searching for an innocent paradise are disappointed
by the mundanity of everyday life in Amazonia. The people who view the region as the
key to the environmental or agricultural issues of the globe are surprised to find that the
Brazilians who live here have their own plans about how to administer the lands and
waters. And those seeking a spiritual experience are often taken in by charlatans happy to
accept the money of rich outsiders. Additionally, Amazonians are frequently excluded
from policy conversations and decisions as they are simply not seen by those who are
blinded by the symbolic power of the region.

The stories told about the region by Amazonian themselves, however, have a
different emphasis, and Slater refers to them as “shapeshifters.” The rise and fall of the
Amazon River and its tributaries, first flooding and then retreating from low-lying lands,
or varzea, creates a constant transformation of the Amazonian landscape, which is
reflected in the rhythmic nature of social life in the region (Chernela and Pinho 2004;
Harris 1998 and 2000). Stories of shapeshifting people, animals, and other entities are
common in stories of Brazilian indigenous groups, and exist also in modern Amazonian Caboclo stories such as that of the boto and other enchanted river beings. Rather than putting the region in a convenient symbolic package, shapeshifter stories emphasize the complexity of life in Amazônia:

The tendency of different Amazonians to employ these figures as a way of talking about human beings’ relationship to nonhuman nature provides a striking contrast to the legacy of environmental giganticism that has characterized many outside (and some inside) accounts of the Amazon. These more sinuous stories emphasize the mercurial character of both the natural world and relations among people.

[Slater 2002:17]

Can we, then, see the Manaus and Parintins boi-bumbá as a shapeshifter story?

The most useful way to see the Amazonas boi-bumbá is not as a single story, but as a collection of stories: the story of the auto do boi, the cunhã-poranga, the pajé and his ritual, the acting out of the legend. In the auto do boi, the bull itself changes from a live bull to a dead one with its tongue cut out, food for a pregnant woman’s cravings, and back again to a living, dancing bull. The various individual dancers, such as the Rainha

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301 See, for example, the Kaingang legend of fire in Chapter 5.
302 For more on the boto legend, see Candace Slater’s 1994 Dance of the Dolphin: Transformation and Disenchantment in the Amazonian Imagination. For stories on the power of the Great Snake, or Cobra Grande, to transform the Amazonian landscape, see Chernela and Pinho 2004.
303 And of course the boi-bumbá itself has shifted its shape as well, from a folk drama of the drought-stricken Northeast performed on the streets under lantern light, to a grand spectacle presented by casts of thousands in jungle arenas built for that specific purpose. The hallmark of the brincadeira do boi has always been its ability to change and adapt to its surroundings, and the boi-bumbá has done just that. As so many others: the fugitive slaves, the settlers, the rubber tappers, and later the rubber soldiers, the boi-bumbá came to the Amazon, was changed by that contact and remained, having been transformed into something uniquely new.

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do Folclore, the Porta-Estandarte, the Cunhã-Poranga, the Pajé, and the Sinhazinha, generally appear in the arena hidden in an alegoria, which transforms itself in some way to reveal that it is not only a simple decoration, but hidden inside is a beautiful woman or a powerful shaman. The Pajé and the Cunhã-Poranga both generally wear masks as part of their costumes, and transform between animals and human actors during their performances. The legend performed in 2011, that of the Kaingang legend of fire, prominently featured a shapeshifter.

The boi-bumbá is not a monolithic and unchanging object, and does not carry the same meaning for all participants or viewers. It cannot be reduced to a simple category like Slater’s giants and shapeshifters. Neither is it a simple, Geertzian story that Amazonians tell themselves about themselves, although it is sometimes a story that is told to outsiders. The Parintins boi-bumbá and the festivals modeled after it, such as the Sairé or Ciranda, are explicitly produced for consumption by outsiders. One common catch phrase, de Parintins para o mundo ver [from Parintins for the world to see], suggests that one aim of the festival is what Laura Graham (2005) refers to as “existential recognition,” the desire for their existence to be seen and recognized by outsiders (see also Suzanne Oakdale, 2009). At the same time, the boi-bumbá is often offered as a generic presentation of local culture for outsiders. Writing about dance performances of the Xavante, Graham (2005:637) submits that:

Whereas, for Xavante actors in traditional contexts, each distinct performance form signals complex meanings (such as age-set membership or ceremonial position), for members of a non-Xavante outside audience, these forms act as

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304 Other individual dancers, such as the Porta-Estandarte, also may wear these masks. However, it is perhaps the most common for the Cunhã-Poranga and the Pajé.
"second-order indexicals" (Silverstein 1996) displaying nothing more than "Xavanteness" or, perhaps, more simply, "Native Amazonianness" or even a more generic "indigeneity."

Similarly, while productions of the boi-bumbá are undoubtedly matrices of meaning that contain powerful historical and emotional markers for local producers and participants, for outsiders such as tourists they may be interpreted as indexing only “Amazonian culture.”

Tourist agencies and city tourism boards act in collusion with tourist expectations of “authenticity,” packaging and selling the boi-bumbá and similar manifestations as spectacular examples of generic Amazonian culture. The commodification of regional folklore is certainly not apolitical, as in additional to multinational and state sponsorship, local businesses and individuals have also contributed monies to the boi-bumbá in order to gain influence. Such “donations” are hard to track and I have chosen not to pursue this line of investigation out of respect to their sensitive nature. However, the boi-bumbá has also been an explicitly political instrument. In the next chapter I will turn to the politicization of the boi-bumbá by activist groups in Manaus.
CHAPTER 8
Caboclo Political Identity

Introduction

The boi-bumbá has become a key element of Amazonense identity, and is promoted by tourist agencies and political activists alike as a symbol of the culture of the state. This is due not only to the fact that the brincadeira do boi has a long history in the state, or even that the festival in Parintins is touted as the largest folklore festival in the country. As discussed in Chapter 6, the boi-bumbá is important in being Amazonense because its subject matter is the every day life of the humblest citizens of the region: Caboclos.

Those who are usually considered Caboclos, or rural, mixed-race Amazonians, reside far from centers of power, in the interior of the region. They generally make ends meet by implementing a portfolio of economic strategies, often including subsistence or small-scale for-profit farming, fishing, collection of forest products (fruits, nuts, herbs, wood), and seasonal wage work (Nugent & Ocean 1994, Nugent 1981, Wagley 1976). Neither tribal indigenous members nor obvious descendants of fugitive slaves, Caboclos have no legal claim to land grants from the federal government\textsuperscript{305} (Chernela & Pinho 2004, French 2004, Véran 2010, Warren 2001), and often occupy lands through Brazilian squatting laws—lands which are frequently taken from them by threat, violence, or legal maneuvering (Schmink 1982, Schmink and Wood 1992). While the term “Caboclo” was widely considered a slur for much of Brazilian history, today it is being taken on through self-ascription by some urban Amazonians. Chapter 6 discussed the symbolic meaning this identity has acquired in the nostalgia boi-bumbá of Manaus, which arose in the

\textsuperscript{305} At least not based on their ethnic or racial heritage. As Véran (2010) points out, it has been possible since 2004 for groups to claim rights to lands as “Povos e Comunidades Tradicionais,” or “Traditional Peoples and Communities.”
context of urbanization and industrialization in the wake of the implantation of the Zona Franca de Manaus in 1967. In this chapter, we will take a look at how this new “urban Caboclo” identity is being deployed by different individuals and groups in the political arena in Manaus. In defining what this political identity means to those who choose it, the boi-bumbá often plays a role.

“Caboclo”: From Insult to Badge of Pride

Here we must pause and take a closer look at the historic and current significance of the term “Caboclo.” A tri-racial mestiço, the Caboclo has historically been celebrated in literature and political rhetoric as the most authentic and patriotic Brazilian. Throughout Latin America, imaginings of people of mixed heritage have long been central to the construction of national identities (Anderson 2006[1983]; Field 1999, 2002; Gould 1996; Hale 1996; Hanchard 2005; Mallon 1996; Martinez-Echazabal 1998; Nagengast & Kearney 1990; Ramos 1998; Smith 1996; Van Cott 2000). Representing a fusion through miscegenation of savage passion, innocence, and environmental savvy with European civilization, reason, and scientific ability, the Brazilian Caboclo has symbolized both a connection to a fading past and a hope for the future (Freyre 1986[1933], 1986[1936], 1985[1959]; Ribeiro 2000). From the images of Caboclos on the mastheads of anti-Portuguese newspapers post-independence (Kraay 2005), to the creation of the São Paulo Caboclo Club after the establishment of the First Republic in 1889, the romantic Caboclismo movement of the first World War (Freyre 1985[1959]), the regionalist

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306 Whereas the Spanish word mestizo/a often is used to designate individuals with mixed indigenous and European heritage, the Portuguese mestiço/a refers somewhat more broadly to individuals of mixed heritage in general, and thus Caboclo is contained within this broader category. There are limits to this breadth, however; a Japanese-Brazilian of today would not usually be considered a mestiço, for example.
resurgence of the image of the Caboclo during Getúlio Vargas’s 1930-1945 regime, and beyond, the imaginary of the Caboclo has long played a part in Brazilian nationalist ideology. Representing every Brazilian, this image has repeatedly been called on by the country’s intellectuals to explain and describe the distinctiveness of their national character.

However, for most of Brazilian history, “Caboclo-ness” has remained primarily an imaginary of the authentically rural and “traditional,” rather than an identity taken on through self-ascription. Such mixed-race Amazonians comprise the majority of the population of the Brazilian Amazon, though they are without legally recognized status as a racial, cultural, or ethnic group (Chernela and Pinho 2004). Among other factors, this has led to Caboclos taking on a kind of “functional invisibility,” both culturally and politically (Nugent 1993), and Caboclo group identity has long been held by social scientists to be nonexistent, with the word Caboclo itself at best a mildly pejorative label, at worst a racial slur (Harris 2000; Nugent 1993; Parker 1985; Slater 1994, 2002; Wagley 1976).

Nugent points out that of course Caboclos “are not literally invisible; rather they have been treated as marginal in relation to an overdetermined naturalism represented by a forest of mythic proportions and marginal in relation to ‘proper’ Amazonian social formations, Indian societies” (Nugent 1993:xviii). So it is not only the large expanses of trees and river that cause the Caboclo to disappear from the imaginary of the Amazon, but also the fact that non-tribal Amazonians are considered less worthy of our attention when compared to the more “exotic” or picturesque members of Indian tribes. As discussed in Chapter 6, this is in part due to the fact that indigenous peoples are
considered (consciously or not) to be a part of the natural landscape, rather than as part of
the modern world. This “functional invisibility” of the Caboclo is so powerful, it seems,
that it can make large swaths of the rural and the entire urban population of the Amazon
region—including Manaus, a city of nearly two million people—simply disappear from
the popular imagination.

In his 1997 article “The Amazon Caboclo: What’s in a Name?” Richard Pace
discusses both the ethical implications and the real-world consequences of labeling
practices in the social sciences. Pace’s concern here is with the academic use of the term
Caboclo to describe rural Amazonians. Pace points to the variation among definitions of
Caboclo, which in general focus either on racial characteristics, occupational and
adaptive strategies, or cultural or quasi-ethnic characteristics. Thus, an uncritical use of
the term Caboclo is problematic if for no other reason than the fact that its meaning is
unclear, multi-layered, and disputed. Pace asserts that people who voluntarily call
themselves Caboclos are rare, due to the derogatory nature of the term.

Charles Wagley defined Caboclo as the term “city people in the Amazon [use to]
refer to the inhabitants of small towns and to the rural population” (Wagley 1976:31), and
noted that the label was a relational one, given to those lower on the socioeconomic
ladder than the speaker (Parker 1985:viii). Stephen Nugent discusses the “difficulty” of
the term, which he defines as “an historical Amazonian peasantry which has emerged
amidst the abandoned colonial apparatus of empire and state” (Nugent 1993:23). Candace
Slater notes that the term has “negative rural connotations—a little like the words
hillbilly or bumpkin, with racial overtones” (Slater 2002:229). Mark Harris states that
Caboclo is “used regionally to refer pejoratively to rural people” (Harris 2000:15). We
can see that *Caboclo* is a multi-layered identity, one that can include elements of race, ethnicity, geography, language, occupation, and class. It is also important to consider that *Caboclo*, like *índio*, is a term whose connotations are many and varied, and which can mean very different things to different people (Ramos 1998, Warren 2001). Ramos asserts as well that as Brazilian indigenous groups become more organized and politically powerful, the negative connotations that were in the past associated with *índio* are now disappearing and accruing instead to the term *Caboclo* (Ramos 1998:119-120).

Part of the variation in definitions derives from the changing meaning of *Caboclo* over time. Chibnik observes:

Nontribal nonsettler, lower-class rural people of the Brazilian Amazon are called *caboclos*, a term also occasionally applied to middle-class and upper-class rural people and some residents of towns. The word *caboclo* has been used in many different ways in Brazil (Stephens 1989:278-280). The most general meaning is "rural backwoodsman" and refers to "any individual or population that pursues the rural life" (Parker 1985:xix). In the Amazon, the term *caboclo* refers more specifically to "civilized, pure blood, Indians," "offspring of Amerindian-European parents," and "descendants of offspring of Amerindian-European unions." These definitions, all of which can be found in recent dictionaries, reflect the evolution of the meaning of *caboclo* in the Amazon. [Chibnik 1991:169-170]

While *Caboclo* is indeed a term that has evolved over time, rather than simply moving from one meaning to the next, it has instead snowballed, adding more connotations over the years. This means that increasingly, it is necessary to pay attention to context and even the speaker’s tone of voice in decoding what exactly is meant.
Complicating this is the fact that *Caboclo* was historically used outside of the Amazon to indicate the class of people who appeared after indigenous contact with Europeans. So while a *Caboclo* can be anything from a “pure blood Indian” who has become “civilized” to a descendant of “Amerindian-European unions,” Parker (1985) emphasizes the fact that a third factor also came into the mix in creating today’s Amazonian Caboclo:

In Amazonia, caboclos are a mixed-blood group resulting from the intermarriage of Amerinds with early Portuguese settlers, and, later, with Northeasterners of African descent who moved into the region in the mid-18th century and during the Rubber Boom of the late 19th century. African influence, however, was largely restricted to Maranhão and northeastern Para, and to the urban environments of the region. [Parker 1985:xx]

Phenotypically, then, Caboclos can vary greatly from those with all or nearly all indigenous heritage, to those with more predominant European heritage, to those with more African heritage.

Generally, a confluence of factors is necessary to determine if someone is a Caboclo or not, as evidenced by the following conversation I had in 2007 with Carlos,\(^{307}\) a self-professed Caboclo from Manaus who works as a fish vendor at the Manaus Moderna market in the city center:

MW: So are there Caboclos here in Manaus? Are you a Caboclo?

Carlos: Yes. We’re all Caboclos here.

MW: So what about me, I’m here now, am I a Cabocla?

\(^{307}\) Pseudonym, at his request.
Carlos: [laughing] No, no, you’re not a Cabocla.

MW: Why not?

Carlos: [still laughing and shaking his head] You’re a gringa [foreigner].

MW: Well, what if I lived here for the rest of my life?

Carlos: Still no.

MW: Why?

Carlos: Because you don’t know the life of a Caboclo, on a riverbank, fishing and growing manioc.

MW: So what if I moved to the riverbank for the rest of my life, fished, and cultivated manioc?

Carlos: Hmm. Still no.

MW: So there is no way that I could become a Cabocla?

Carlos: Well…maybe if you married someone from there, and had children, maybe your children could be Caboclos.

Here, Carlos indicated three important elements: a lived experience of the region and the culture, the daily practice of “traditional” Caboclo subsistence fishing and farming, and genetic or “blood” heritage.

Pace concludes his “What’s in a Name?” article by asserting: “Unless the Amazon population itself chooses to use the term for self-identification, converting a negative term into a positive symbol (as Chicanos in the USA, for example, have done), then academic use of the term should be questioned” (Pace 1997:87). This conversion has begun to happen: currently, in the context of tourism and a growing awareness of the
political advantage of cultural distinctiveness, “Caboclo” is gaining currency as an identity label, particularly in urban areas such as Manaus.

Of Caboclos, Cabocos, Caboquice, and Caboquês

While the term carries these various layers of meaning, additionally, in Manaus Caboclo is frequently used today as a way to refer to people who are from the region. Chibnik (1991:171) noted:

Even residents of the large city of Manaus occasionally refer to themselves as caboclos. According to the Brazilian anthropologist Roberto Motta (personal communication), the term caboclo nowadays sometimes is a regional term used to describe any resident of the Brazilian Amazon who is neither an Amerindian nor a recent settler. In this context, caboclo contrasts with terms such as Carioca (a resident of Rio de Janeiro) or Paulista (a resident of São Paulo).

In referring to rural inhabitants of the region, the Manaus-based activist group Associação dos Cabocos e Ribeirinhos da Amazônia [Association of Cabocos and Riverine Peoples of Amazonia, or ACRA, further discussed below] supports the use of Caboco both as an alternate (and more authentic) form of Caboclo, that is, viewing the term with or without the “l” as virtually identical. ACRA’s promotion of Caboco is due to two possible etymologies of the term, both lacking an “l”: “The origin of the word caboco (or caboclo) is controversial: it could derive from the tupi word caa-boc, ‘what comes from the forest,’ or from kari’boca, ‘son of a white man’”308 (Associação dos Cabocos e Ribeirinhos da Amazônia 2008).

308 “A origem da palavra caboco (ou caboclo) é controversa: pode derivar da palavra tupi caa-boc, ‘o que vem da floresta’, ou de kari’boca, ‘filho do homem branco’.”
At first I was inclined to accept ACRA’s assertion of the neutrality of the form “Caboclo/caboco,” and with it, the possibility to use both terms interchangeably. However, as I spent more time in Manaus and began to become more able to understand the richness of local use, it became clear that the two terms were neither identical nor uncomplicated. To begin with, caboco, without the ‘l,’ can be used in Manaus in a way similar to “someone” or “that guy,” often in the context of humorous commentary. For example, upon seeing an inebriated person asleep on the sidewalk, a man might comment, “caboco achou um lugar gostoso pra tirar uma boa soneca” [that guy found a nice place for a snooze]. In his dictionary of Manauara expressions, Freire de Souza (2007) defines caboco as “Pessoa, cara, sujeito. ‘Aí o caboco chegou lá e falou um monte de coisa’” [Person, guy, individual. “And so this guy showed up and said a whole bunch of things.”]. Freire de Souza (2007) is careful to identify that caboco refers to the “urban Manauara speaker,” while caboclo is an “Amazonian who sustains his way of life in the interior of the state.”

It is common as well for friends in Manaus to comment teasingly on each other’s behavior, sometimes in the context of reminding someone of their “roots.” For example, consider the following exchange from social networking site Facebook (names have been changed), discussing the customary Manauara breakfast of juice and a roll with cheese and tucumã fruit:

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309 As this use refers generically to a person (as “someone” or “that guy”) rather than to a specific type or identity of a person (as does Caboclo, as a rural dweller or person from Manaus), I choose not to capitalize it.
310 In my experience, this form is used more frequently, though not exclusively (as seen in the following example), by men.
311 Or perhaps more properly, caboco is the person to whom an urban Manaus speaker is referencing, generally also urban and Manauara.
Ricardo Barbosa: tira so o tucumãaaaaaaaaaaaaa kk

Angela Santos: Caboco Ricardo Barbosa não gosta de tucumã por favor sei tu

Adora bodó...kkkkkkkkkkkk

Translated to English, roughly, with added punctuation:

Ricardo Barbosa: Just remove the tucumã! LOL

Angela Santos: Ricardo Barbosa the Caboco doesn’t like tucumã? Please! I know you love bodó… hahahaha

Bodó is a regional “poor man’s fish,” a typical food associated with people from the interior. Angela teases Ricardo, reminds him that he is a Caboco, and she knows he loves to eat bodó, and therefore how is it possible for him not to like tucumã, another common Amazonian food?

However, caboco seems also to be related to a derived term, caboquice, which might be translated as “caboco-ness,” and which is generally used in a teasing or negative sense, to point out behaviors that are viewed by the speaker as incompatible with modern, urban, middle-class ways of life. Administrator, teacher, and social activist João Lago (2012) elaborates in a post on his blog for the Amipaz social organization:

The term “caboquice” here in Manaus is used to describe the swaggering312 of the “caboco.” The term does not have the same meaning as “caboeiro,” that is in the dictionary as a person of mixed white and Indian background, but is rather a pejorative derivation that can describe in the noun form an individual native to

312 I chose to translate the Portuguese pavulagem as “swaggering.” Pavulagem is a word used in Amazonia to signify the behavior of a person who displays unwarranted self-regard. Freire da Souza (2007) defines pavulagem (along with its variants “pavolagem, pavolice, or pavulice”) as “empáfia, abestalhamento, orgulho besta” (“conceit, idiocy, foolish pride”).

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Manaus lacking in good breeding and manners. The adjective can be translated as anything from a lack of modesty to bad taste. The “caboco” is full of “foolishness,” or, if you like, replete with “caboquice,” but in a non-semantic analysis of what is considered “caboquice,” I see being called a “caboco” that kind of individual who violates the aesthetic standards of acceptance of a minority, which is used for creating labels to distill their prejudice. [Lago 2012]

_Caboco_ and _caboquice_, then, are not always as innocent as I had initially imagined, and the former is not interchangeable with _Caboclo_, as ACRA suggests. While they are often used in a teasing manner (especially among young men), this usage can also be used to shame those whose behavior the speaker does not view as acceptable.

In July of 2010, Manaus newspaper _A Crítica_ covered a story on a “community” on the social networking website Orkut (see Pedrosa 2010). The community, “ODEIO CABOQuICE,” had been denounced by ACRA and its partner group, Nação Mestiça (discussed further below). The description of the community indicated that it was for people who wished to comment on others’ questionable behaviors—though all in good fun. Examples of such behaviors included wearing clothes or accessories that were inappropriate for the place in which the person in question found

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313 “O termo “caboquice” aqui em Manaus é usado para descrever pavulagem de “caboco”. O termo não tem o mesmo significado de “cabloco”, que está no dicionário como mestiço de branco com índio, mas é uma derivação pejorativa que pode descrever no substantivo o indivíduo nativo manauara de pouca educação e instrução. Já o adjetivo traduz-se desde a falta de compostura até o mal gosto. O “caboco” é cheio de “leseira”, ou, como queiram, repleto de “caboquice”, mas em uma análise não semântica sobre o que é considerado “caboquice”, vejo que será chamado de “caboco” aquele indivíduo que viola o padrão estético de aceitação de uma minoria, que se utiliza da criação de rótulos para destilar seu preconceito” (Lago 2012).

314 A “community” on Orkut is a webpage for those with similar interests to discuss and exchange information, stories, photos, etc. about said interests.
himself or herself; driving one’s car around blasting music from speaker-filled trunks; tanning and then dressing so as to deliberately display the marks of one’s bikini; and wetting one’s hair in the bathroom to look sexy. Community members contributed additional examples of caboquice: “wearing out-of-style clothes, putting highlights in one’s hair, walking around with one’s celular phone on one’s belt,” as well as “listening to music on one’s celular phone inside a bus” (Pedrosa 2010). ACRA and Nação Mestiça agitated for the removal of this group, which has since disappeared from Orkut. Leão Alves of ACRA told A Crítica that they were working for “the valorization of mestizo and Caboclo identity, because it was very common for people to not want to self-identify as “cabocos” and to not value themselves as such. This kind of community on the Internet only reinforces this feeling of discomfort” (Pedrosa 2010).

To muddy the waters a bit more, I also discovered another use of caboquice, which blogger Dheyvid Hendrew Encarnação da Costa (2013) defines as “a linguagem colloquial do interior do Amazonas” [the colloquial language of the interior of Amazonas]. It soon becomes clear that he is actually referring to what people more generally call Caboquês, or Amazonês316 (in analogue to “Português”). On the social networking site Facebook.com, for example, a page317 called “Eu falo Amazonês,” [I speak Amazonês] as of April 7, 2013 had been “liked” by 50,896 users of the site. Another popular page, “No Amazonas é assim,” has an album of photos celebrating

315 “...um trabalho de valorização da identidade mestiça e do caboclo porque é muito comum as pessoas não quererem se assumir como ‘cabocas’ e não se valorizarem como tal. Esse tipo de comunidade na Internet só reforça o constrangimento das pessoas.”

316 The most impressive compilation of Amazonense expressions was compiled by Dr. Sérgio Augusto Freire de Souza of UFAM, in a small dictionary entitled: “Peculiaridades do Falar Amazonense: Um Dicionário e Alguma Reflexões Pedagógicas” (2007).

317 A Facebook “page” is similar to an Orkut “Community.”
Amazonense and Manauara culture, entitled “A caboquice never dies,” where here *caboquice* could perhaps be translated as “the silliness of Amazonenses.” These pages, in contrast to the “Odeio Caboquice” Orkut community, are tongue-in-cheek celebrations of life in Manaus and in Amazonas in general. Many similar pages commenting humorously (and affectionately) on life in Amazonas exist.

And so in Manaus, the term *Caboclo* and its derivatives can be used in several distinct ways. First, *Caboclo* is deployed in a positive sense, as an affirmation of ethnic heritage and a reclaiming of a previously denigrating word. Secondly, *caboco/Caboco* can be used in a neutral, a teasing, or even an outright negative way, sometimes to socially shame those who are deemed to not have refined, “city” behaviors, but also to remind others of their rural or humble roots. *Caboquice* can refer fondly to ways of life in Manaus and/or Amazonas, or can be used to denigrate behaviors that are seen as foolish and bumpkinish. *Caboquês* or more commonly *Amazonês* refers (pejoratively or positively) to words and expressions commonly used in the state of Amazonas.\(^\text{318}\) This complexity of use reflects the complicated and ambivalent relationship between urbanization and self-image for inhabitants of Manaus. Caught between a present urbanized industrial context and an romanticized rural past, Manauaras today walk a tightrope balancing between their own experiences, the rhetoric of progress preached by state and city officials, and media images emphasizing the overwhelming naturalness of the Amazon region.

\(^{318}\) Commonly, however, the words and phrases referred to have been collected in Manaus, and not throughout the state (for example Freire de Souza 2007). Manauaras may here be guilty of extrapolating their own experience and lifeways to encompass those of the entire state of Amazonas.
The Persistent Problem of Invisibility

As discussed in Chapter 6, while those from the region are well aware that most Amazonians today live in large urban areas, Brazilians from outside the region often still imagine the Amazon as a land of bows and arrows. But how can this be? How is it possible, in today’s interconnected and heavily mediated society, that even Brazilians living outside of the Amazon region imagine it as a place of “excessive nature,” unpopulated except by the occasional Indian? Why do we non-Amazonians, Brazilian or not, feel the need to hold so tightly to our ideas of the region as a zone of unspoiled, untouched, virgin nature? And why exactly, is it so important to us? After all, Manaus appears with some regularity on Brazilian national TV, in particular in discussions of its 1000-square-kilometer tax-free ZFM, where much of the electronics and automotive manufacturing and construction of the country happens. Why, then, are those of us from fora so willing and able to dismiss those images as irrelevant, clinging only to imagined scenes of swimming jaguars, fluting toucans, and tumbling waterfalls?

Candace Slater (2002) suggests that such idealized imaginings of the Amazon as a paradise allow us a site upon which we can displace our fears. Perhaps we insist that we feel an altruistic urge to save the rainforest, but this is really just a placeholder for a much more difficult truth: that we are worried about the health and success of our children and our children’s children. A pure and untrod Amazonia also provides us with a mirror through which we can regard ourselves. They are natural, wild, and pure, while we are

\[\text{Fora}\] literally means “outside,” and is used to designate either non-Amazonian areas of Brazil or non-Brazilian areas of the world, depending on the usage. More on this topic can be found in Chapter 6.
civilized and modern. They, in a sense, are holding down the fort for the environment, while we are free to strip mine, frack, and pollute to our heart’s content.

Ignoring the inhabitants of the Amazon makes it easier for us to disregard their complex lives, needs, rights, and ways of interacting with their environment. In a sense, we can simply not bother to try to understand the complex reality because this is a story that we already have heard:

The Amazons of Greek mythology block out the genuine strangeness of the landscape for the early Europeans by rendering it, in some sense, familiar. So, I argue, the Stone Age Indians who live in perpetual harmony with a fragile, biodiverse Rain Forest effectively cloak for us the long-standing complexities of the human interface with nature in the Amazon, such as the gathering and selling of Brazil nuts by fugitive or former slaves, the harvesting of rubber, and even the search for gold. [Slater 2002:15]

Imagining Amazonians as merely part of the landscape can also be politically advantageous. As Ramos (1998) points out,

…developers and particularly the military in Brazil insist that the Amazon constitutes a demographic void. Portraying the region as a vast emptiness is part of its attraction as a highly coveted object of economic desire. Acting as if Indians and other traditional peoples do not exist, state and private enterprises, both national and foreign, have caused much devastation to Amazonia, mainly in the twentieth century. From the areas of easier and older encroachment to the more remote and, until recently, fairly isolated corners of the region, Amazon populations in general and Indians in particular have been the involuntary and
often unwilling actors in the long history of ransacking of and disrespect for both human lives and natural resources. [Ramos 1998:222]

It is easier to plan a giant dam that will destroy the homes and livelihoods of thousands of indigenous people, for example, if those people are merely part of the landscape like the anteaters and parakeets, rather than individuals who resemble us.

It is difficult to feel today that there are still hidden mysteries of the globe, untrammeled wildernesses and undiscovered wonders. The Internet has penetrated all corners of the world, we have sent rovers to film the surface of Mars, GoogleMaps is plotting the depths of the oceans. The Amazon, for many people, represents one of the last great unknowns. And yet the interconnectedness of today’s mediated world has not managed to remove the mystery of the region, but rather has been used to perpetrate the same images. This quality of mysteriousness exists not only outside of Brazil, but is also common inside the country as well. Nugent points out that “Amazonia is as exotic a category for most Brazilians as it is for most Europeans and North Americans. It is a repository of possibility (variously regarded as threatened, squandered, retrievable, utopian) at some remove. It harbors, as Ramos’s analysis of the hyperreal Indian suggests […] both the desirable and the scorned” (Nugent 1999:188).

It is relevant also to note that these imaginings of a pure and unpeopled Amazonia exist not only outside of the Amazon, but are perpetuated within Amazonia as well. One location where images of an overwhelmingly natural Amazonia are disseminated by Amazonians is in popular visual “memes” that are circulated electronically, especially on social networking sites such as Facebook.com. One especially popular meme involves photographs captioned with the phrase, *Em Amazonas é assim* [This is what it’s like in
Amazonas]. One such image shows an anaconda, its belly swollen with an undigested meal, lying across a road. The caption reads: “Em Amazonas é assim: quebra-mola da Amazônia” [This is what it’s like in Amazonas: Amazonian speed bump]. Another image, labeled “source: Google Street View,” shows a picture of a small boat with an outboard motor tied up to a tree, which is nearly covered by the river’s high stage. A third image portrays a sign posted at a motorcycle taxi stand: “Socorro Prefeitura: Aceitamos asfalto como esmola” [Help the city government: We accept charitable donations of asphalt]. Such humorous juxtapositions of image and caption and poignantly honest portrayals of real life are a way of reclaiming the exoticization of the Amazon region, or showing that Amazonas is not that different from other places.

In Chapter 6, I discussed two lenses through which those from fora, or outside of the region, frequently view Amazonia. The second view, that which sees the region as a failed attempt at modernity, holds especially true for Caboclos:

There are more moderate and more rabid views, but in the twentieth century the prevailing attitude to non-Indian Amazonians has portrayed a shabby burlesque. They are ‘the dregs,’ those who have failed to live up to the high standards set by the generic conquistadors. It is a corollary that neo-Amazonians, the mestiço product of ‘pure’ peoples, should also have a ‘society’ which barely rates the name. The adjective most commonly applied to the economy and society of caboclos is ‘stagnant,’ a term which usefully connotes jungle/river complex naturalism as well as moral failing. Unreliable, quixotic and malevolent, the caboclo lives in the cracks of a colonial mosaic in which the dominant images
Neither fish nor fowl, the Caboclo, disappointing expectations of the viewer, falls through the cracks and is overlooked.

**Urban Amazonians**

The Amazon region has been undergoing massive population redistribution for the better part of a century, and today the majority of the population lives in urban areas. Beginning in 1966, with the creation of Operation Amazonia, the federal government laid out a concrete plan for the occupation of the Amazon region (Schmink 1982). Unfortunately, the implementation of settlement projects was fragmentary and often ill thought out. Some of these projects settled people on land that was not able to support agriculture, while others left unprepared ex-urbanites without the proper tools or know-how to survive in an unfamiliar setting (Pace 1998). Many settlers were chased off land by land-grabbing armed thugs, or, unsavvy in issues of titles and land rights, were convinced or bullied into leaving their allotted portions of land. And other settlers were brought to land that was not “without people,” but already occupied by indigenous groups or rural cultivators (Pace 1998). Settlers who could afford the journey often returned to their places of origin; the majority, who could not, ended up in towns and cities.

Although government programs initiated during the 1980s (such as the POLOAMAZONIA project) were designed to bring settlers to the Amazon region both to develop and defend the sparsely populated Northern region (Hochstetler 2007), many who participated in colonization programs were actually individuals from within the

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320 The Transamazon Highway colonization project of the 1970s was infamous in this regard.
Amazon region, who wished to escape rural areas (Pace 1998). A continuing factor influencing rural to urban migration within the region is the widespread deficiency of infrastructure in the Amazonian interior. For most individuals who previously lived in rural areas and subsequently moved to the city of Manaus, the reasons for moving were consonant with those of rural-to-urban migrants throughout Latin America: education, employment, and healthcare.

This is not to suggest that the 1965-1980 colonization projects of the military-run government did not succeed in bringing large numbers of non-Amazonians to the region, as they certainly did. However, the overall effect was not to spread the population more evenly throughout the region, but rather to exacerbate the already growing population disparity between rural and urban zones. The rural areas into which colonists moved were generally unpolic ed, land fraud was widespread, and violence was common, especially between large landholders and small migrant farmers\(^{321}\) (Schmink 1982; Schmink and Wood 1992). To make things worse, with the transition from military dictatorship to democracy in the late 1980s,\(^ {322}\) the administration of the Amazon region got lost in the shuffle. The colonists were largely left to sort their matters out for themselves, and violence became rampant in rural areas, with murders over land disputes increasingly frequent (Hochstetler 2007).

\(^{321}\) Schmink (1982) and Schmink and Wood (1992) suggest that frontier violence was the result of a complex combination of factors, rather than simply a lack of policing. For an in-depth discussion of Amazonian settlement projects and the history of government policy regarding the Amazon, please see Schmink’s article “Land conflicts in Amazonia” and Schmink and Wood’s *Contested Frontiers in Amazonia*.

\(^{322}\) The military left power in 1985; a new democratic constitution was approved in 1988.
**Why do Amazonians Perpetuate Edenic Images of the Region?**

We saw in Chapter 6 that Amazonense individuals reacted very strongly to outsider portrayals of their state as backward or unpopulated. And yet images of a hyper-natural and edenic Amazonia are perpetuated not only by those outside of the region, but by insiders as well. Why would individuals from the region choose to knock down these images with one hand, only to build them back up with the other?

One reason may be rooted in the sweeping urbanization that changed the face of the Amazon region beginning in the mid-twentieth century. Although many urbanites return periodically (for weekends, for vacations and holidays) to rural family holdings, more and more are becoming permanently rooted in urban contexts. As is common in such contexts of accelerated urbanization, for these individuals, their children, and their grandchildren, the rural world is becoming less of a reality and more of an imaginary of peace and simplicity (Fox 2004; Williams 1985; Guss 2000). The city of Manaus is widely decorated with paintings and murals depicting rural scenes, generally of a lone, hatted figure in a canoe, fishing on a serene and solitary lake. I asked one of my research participants, a rural-to-urban migrant and the son of a rubbertapper and fisherman, if this was an accurate depiction of rural lifestyles. “No,” he said, “that’s just an imagination we have of the Caboclo.”

Urban nostalgia for a bucolic past, then, plays a role in the resurgence of the imaginary of the Caboclo. Self-sufficient, peaceful, and without a boss to tell him what to do, the Caboclo represents a simpler and often better world to the city dweller. Before the move to the city, many individuals told me, life was hard, but it was honest and simple. In the interior, I was told again and again, “no one has to lock their doors.” Remembering
this way of life helps to give meaning and impose order to a life in the city, which is often plagued with crime, discrimination, a lack of services, police brutality, and government corruption.

Beyond this nostalgic remembrance of an idealized past, as seen in Chapter 6, images of a nature-dominated Amazonia are perpetuated by Amazonians because they are genuinely proud of the natural beauty of their region. Amazonians at times tout the simplicity and natural beauty of the region as a buttress against what is seen as an incursion both of values and labels from the eastern and southern portions of the country. Distinctly outward-directed, it defines itself over against fora. Fora, or literally “outside,” is a location that shifts – it can be the United States or Europe, or it can be simply the rest of Brazil, but it is a place that stands in opposition to and even menaces Amazonia. People from fora want the resources of the Amazon; people from fora come here to steal spots in the universities; people from fora write in the newspapers or say on the radio that Amazonians are Indians, or are brutish, or are not true Brazilians, or live in huts. And while Amazonians are proudly modern, with all the usual widescreen TVs, tiny cellular phones, and social networking sites that these days are used to describe modernity—in fact, a great deal of the electronics made in Brazil are fabricated in the Manaus Free Trade Zone—they choose, perversely, to emphasize what is perceived as perhaps the most backward possible pursuit, folklore, to showcase at the same time both their difference and their modernity. While they, as other Brazilians, have ambiguous relationships to Indianness and mestizo-ness, while they themselves openly disparage Indians as “a bad race,” and Caboclos as “lazy” and “backward,” in the face of an outside menace they cling to these very labels to define themselves. The same people who are
desperately trying to not commit sins of caboquice, and who create websites mocking or teasing those who do, at the same time fiercely defend this identity in the face of outsiders. One way in which this manifests is the use of folklore—and specifically the boi-bumbá—to demonstrate that there is indeed a culture here. To complete the circle, the boi-bumbá has in turn evolved to showcase the everyday life of the Caboclo.

**Caboclos and the Boi-bumbá**

Returning to the early nationalist uses of the figure of the Caboclo described by Freire, Ribeiro, and Kraay, what distinguishes this current revival of the Caboclo is that rather than representing the Brazilian Everyman, in the Manaus of today the Caboclo’s historical, racial, and cultural uniqueness is emphasized over against both non-Indian Amazonians and non-Amazonian Brazilians. No longer intended to be representative of Brazil as a whole, the Caboclo is now representative only of the non-tribal mixed-heritage people of Amazonia, and is becoming for the first time a self-ascribed label. One of the chief vehicles for promoting and valorizing this identity—and perhaps to become slightly less invisible in the national and international imagination—is the boi-bumbá.

In Amazonas, the boi-bumbá is associated with the mixed-race rural cultivators, fishers, and gatherers known as Caboclos. Before the new spectacle-style competition of Parintins arose, the boi-bumbá was losing its popularity in part due to this unglamorous connection: “No one wanted to play any more. People would criticize and say, Oh! I don’t like the [boi-bumbá]; it’s only for the poor, caboclos, fishermen, people like that, charcoal burners” (Cavalcanti 2001:79). With the spectacular growth of the Parintins boi-bumbá, new styles of music evolved, the dance developed more involved (and often more
blatantly sensual) moves, and the dramatic dance left its humble Caboclo origins to become a pastime accepted by all levels of society.

One might expect that the humble origins of the boi-bumbá, and all traces of the Caboclo might have been expunged from today’s performance of the dramatic dance. Quite the opposite is true; the Caboclo has been sanitized and elevated to a regional identity symbol, signifying a connection to a purer, simpler past, and a deep bond to the land, the rivers, and the wildlife of the Amazon region. Indians are also valorized as spiritual forefathers and forest guardians in the boi-bumbá, but it is the Caboclo with whom we are meant to identify. Interestingly, the message of the boi-bumbá drama itself seems to have undergone considerable change since it began its ascent in the late 1980s. Although earlier versions of the dramatic dance centered on the importance of indigenous groups, in recent years it has come to be infused with an environmental message celebrating the ability of Caboclos to manage the natural resources of the Amazon region. For example, the 2008 Boi Garanhão theme song, “Terra Cabocla, Santuário da Vida” [Caboclo Land, Sanctuary of Life] tells a story of how the gods Curiarí and Yacy created Amazonia for “the Caboclo, its lord…tutor and guardian,” teaching that “the forest can survive…if man preserves it” (portalamazonia.com 2008). This introduction of the discourse of conservation and preservation into the boi-bumbá runs parallel to the “greening” of business and politics throughout the Amazon region (Chernela 2000) and Brazil itself (Hochstetler and Keck 2007).

In the Parintins boi-bumbá festival, the figura típica [typical figure] is a required item in the judging of the competition, and is often portrayed in a scene depicting Caboclos fishing, processing manioc, or collecting fruits and nuts from the forest.
Whereas calling someone a Caboclo might during Wagley’s time of fieldwork have been an insult, in the world of the boi-bumbá, all Amazonians are proud to be Caboclos. *Caboclo*, then, is being transformed into a positive cultural identity, and the boi-bumbá is one powerful vehicle of this transmogrification (Cavalcanti 2001).

**Caboclo Activism**

The social activist group *Nação Mestiça: Movimento Pardo-Mestiço Brasileiro* [Mestizo Nation: the Brazilian Pardo-Mestiço Movement] or *O Movimento* [The Movement], as it is frequently called in shorthand by its members, works closely in parallel with ACRA, the *Associação dos Cabocos e Ribeirinhos da Amazônia* [The Association of Cabocos and Riverine Peoples of Amazonia]. When I interviewed founders (of both groups) Helda Castro de Sá and Jerson Cesar Leão Alves (known as Leão) in January of 2011, Helda explained that her role in ACRA was more limited at that time as she had for the time being taken on the role of president of *Nação Mestiça*, and left her position as coordinator of ACRA. *Nação Mestiça* was a more flexible instrument to work with, she told me, as while ACRA existed as a legal entity only in that it was officially registered at a cartorio, or Brazilian notary or registry office, *Nação Mestiça* was a legal corporation with the ability to open legal processes and represent people in juridical proceedings.

The idea to begin the group *Nação Mestiça* arose in 2001, Leão told me, though the movement was only legalized in 2006. The inspiration to found the group arose when he and Helda decided to start a website about *mestiçagem* [racial mixing, equivalent of Spanish *mestizaje*], and were dismayed when, searching on the Internet, they found no other sites in Portuguese with such information. Struck by the variety of websites on the topic in English, and the complete lack of sites from Brazil, which had built its very self-
image on the idea of miscegenation, Leão resolved to fill this gap. In gathering
information to prepare the site, Leão and Helda became conscious of the fact that while
the rest of Latin America and “the world” were moving in the direction of multicultural
and multiracial nations, Brazil was headed in the opposite direction:

Then we ended up getting in touch with these documents. We began to perceive
that argument that *preto* and *pardo* were *negro.* Everyone…there were some
texts speaking ill of *mestiçagem,* saying that mestiçagem was a mistaken view of
Brazilian society that did not respect diversity. It was always the kind of
construction that the mestizo emerged through the process of violence, rape of
black women, rape of indigenous women. And we realized that there was already
a movement, including the legal official line—it was at the time of the
government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso—that is to say, for the the
deconstruction and disassembly of the mestiço. I mean … so a simple research site
actually just started to transform itself into a movement of reaction, that policy.
And so we got started on what we would do to try to reverse this process. Contact
with foreign sites increased and a curious thing became apparent, right? We
realized that while foreign countries—mainly the United States and some European
countries—there was the process of people seeking affirmation of a mestizo
identity, in Brazil there was instead a process of destruction. (....) While the world
was moving towards realizing that multiracial and multi-ethnic thing, as they call

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323 *Preto* means “black,” both as in the color and also as a disparaging denomination for
people of African heritage. *Pardo* is a census category roughly meaning “brown,” as is
used for Brazilians of mixed race. *Negro* is the preferred term for Afro-Brazilians.
it there, in Brazil there was instead a process of deconstruction and imitating their model.324

Initially, Leão said, they were rather innocent, and imagined a collaboration with other political groups based on racial/ethnic identity. Soon, however, they learned that the lack of information on mestiçagem on the Internet was not a mere oversight, but rather part of a systematic political movement to remove mixed-race identities from the arena in favor of groups focused on a single racial identity, such as the Movimento Negro [Black Movement] and the Movimento Indígena [Indigenous Movement].

This pressure may be ideological, but plays out in concrete ways. Communities of people claiming indigenous identity may claim land rights as tribal Indians, and villages asserting that they are descendants of escaped slaves are allowed to claim land as quilombolas. Additionally, seats to many political conferences are allocated according to race: so many for those identifying as Afro-Brazilians, so many for indigenous peoples, etc., as young members of Nação Mestiça found when wanting to attend a national youth conference.

324 “Daí a gente acabou entrando em contato com esses documentos. Nós começamos a perceber aquele discurso que preto e pardo era negro. Tudo mundo...alguns textos falando mal da mestiçagem, a mestiçagem é uma visão equivocada da sociedade brasileira, que não respeitava diversidade. Era sempre aquele tipo de construção que o mestiço surgiu pelo processo da violência, de estupro da mulher negra, de estupro da mulher indígena. E nós percebemos que já tinha tudo movimento, inclusive legal de linha oficial, isso foi na época do governo do Fernando Henrique Cardoso, isso quer dizer, de desconstrução e desmontagem do mestiço. Quer dizer...então, de um simples site de pesquisa, na realidade acabou de começar de se transformar num projeto de movimento de reação, aquela política. E começou aquela coisa como é que a gente vai fazer para tentar reverter esse processo. O contato com sites estrangeiros pulou e surgiu uma coisa curiosa, né. Percebemos que enquanto fora nos países—principalmente nos Estados Unidos e alguns países da Europa—estava se dando um processo de pessoal procurar de afirmação de uma identidade mestiça, no Brasil estava se dando um processo de destruição. (....) Enquanto o mundo estava caminhando no sentido de perceber aquela coisa de multirracial e multiétnico, como eles chamam lá, quer dizer no Brasil estava um processo de desconstrução e de imitação do modelo deles.” [Leão Alves, from interview with Leão and Helda 01/09/2011]
conference—only to be told that there were no seats allocated for *mestiços* or *Caboclos*.

The governmental agency which decides on the races and ethnicities officially recognized is the *Secretaria Especial de Políticas de Promoção da Igualdade Racial* [Special Secretary of Policy for the Promotion of Racial Equality], or SEPPiR. Jean-François Veran (2010), who has spent years following the work of Nação Mestiça observes:

> If a right, such as free public transportation, is guaranteed to people over 60 years old, whose who are 59 are not included. From this perspective, to say that “*mestiços* don’t exist” is simply to register that “*mestiço*” is not an administrative category of Seppir. They can’t request spaces or rights reserved for a category that doesn’t include them.\(^{325}\) [Veran 2010:35]

This may lead to individuals aligning themselves with one racial identity or another in order to gain rights that they otherwise would not be able to access (French 2009). The pressure on individuals to take on a certain race with which they may not strongly identify, in order to be able to participate in the political process or gain sorely needed rights, Leão said, causes alienation for many mixed-race Brazilians.

**Activists and the Use of Expressive Culture to Claim Rights for Ethnic/Racial Groups**

Folklore festivals, while colorful and entertaining, do not simply provide a view into a simpler and more picturesque time. Rather, as sites of cultural performance, they are characterized by tension, confrontation, and contestation (French 2002:26; Mendoza

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\(^{325}\) “Se um direito, como a gratuidade do transporte, é garantido às pessoas de mais de 60 anos, quem tem 59 anos não é contemplado. Nessa perspectiva, dizer que “*mestiço* não existe” é simplesmente registrar que “*mestiço*” não é uma categoria administrativa da Seppir. Eles não podem pleitear espaços e direitos reservados a uma categoria que não os contempla.”
Urban cultural events such as folklore festivals are “key public contexts” where social identities are defined and dramatically enacted, as festival participants “are in view, are in public space, interact with and embody discourses of personhood and social order” (Mendoza 2000:4). They also affirm group unity, announce ethnic identity and boundaries (Rodríguez 1996), and express aspirations for legal recognition and land rights (French 2002).

In his study of the Nacaraguan El Güegüence drama, Field (1999) shows how such a public performance can act as a parable for national identity. Field explains the nature of the parable thusly:

> The parable is a narrative with a point or several points. Events and characters in a parable endure transformations that are instructive to an audience, often with respect to historical time, but not exclusively so. The purpose of a parable is to inform audiences, but the lessons thereby taught are always open to divergent interpretations. [Field 1999:xix]

However, while El Güegüence is promoted by the elites as a narrative for Nicaraguan national identity, artisans interpret its significance differently, resisting the neat packaging of mestizo identity. Similarly, the boi-bumbá, while it functions on one level as a parable for the harmonious union of Indian, European, and African in Brazilian national identity, is interpreted anew by the creators of the Parintins-style festival. Thus, the new festival valorizes not the merging of the Caboclo into a whitening nation, but the emerging of the Caboclo from the economic and social context of the Amazon as a distinct and important figure.
Such performances “are important dramatizations that enable participants to understand, criticize, and even change the worlds in which they live” (Guss 2000:9). It is important, though, to emphasize the diversity in the participants involved, as cultural performances are available “to differentially empowered groups, operating with vastly different agendas, to produce alternative visions of the social world” (Goldstein 2004:18). While governmental officials may wish to promote a folklore festival in order to bring tourism-related revenue to their town, city, or region, underprivileged groups may use cultural performance as a venue through wish to assert their right to territory or recognition. In sum, folklore festivals both reflect and have the potential to change or “shape” society (see Mendoza 2000) and are used by actors to “argue and debate, to challenge and negotiate” (Guss 2000:10).

In Brazil, cultural performance is often a key element in proving the legitimacy of a group’s claims to certain legal rights. Groups who may claim rights to land based on racial, ethnic, or community heritage include descendants of fugitive slave communities, members of Indigenous tribal groups, and “Traditional Peoples and Communities.” At times, mastery of cultural performance is an expected or required part of the process of claiming such rights (as in the case of the government’s expectation that those claiming “Indian” status be able to perform the *toré* dance, French 2004). While performing dances, songs, or rituals is not always a required part of the process of demanding or requesting such rights, it very often plays a part, and existing cultural performances often take on new meaning in the context of redefining the identity of a community (French 2002, 2004, 2006, 2009). Anthropologists frequently play a part in the process of a
community claiming land and rights (and are often accused of doing so in order to profit monetarily, see Coutinho et al. 2010).

In Brazil, miscegenation among whites, Indians, and those of African descent has historically been encouraged in order to culturally and biologically assimilate and “civilize” Indian populations (Ramos 1998, Wagley 1976, Warren 2001) and lighten the population through the policy of *branqueamento* [whitening] (Skidmore 1993), and so has been intended to create a homogeneous and whiter population of mixed-race Brazilians. Nação Mestiça has chosen the interestingly contrarian approach of agitating to have mestiços, or the very mixed-race individuals that government policy wished to disappear into the national melting pot, recognized as their own sub-group. Rather than intending to further carve up Brazil into smaller racial divisions, their goal is to unify the nation through miscegenation (Veran 2010). Members of the group appear at public events in yellow t-shirts emblazoned with their motto, “A miscegenação une a Nação,” or “Miscegenation unites the Nation.” More interested in browning the population than in whitening it, Nação Mestiça’s philosophy builds upon the work of Gilberto Freyre, Darcy Ribeiro, and José Vasconcelos. A group that was born in part in opposition to the pressure to self-identify politically as either an afro-descendant or an Indian – but not both – Nação Mestiça promotes the valorization of those who identify as mixed-race.

Nação Mestiça’s main tactics are to publicize the possibility of such a mixed-race identity, encourage scholarship on Brazilian mestizos, and showcase mestizo and Caboclo cultural expressions. Since 2007, the group has celebrated the Week of the Mestizo and the Caboco – which in 2009 was expanded to the Month of the Mestizo and the Caboco – which includes a variety of events and activities. The week in question (and
now, of course, the month) encompasses the 24th of June, the Day of the Caboclo, and the 27th of June, the Day of the Mestiço, which were declared official holidays in the state of Amazonas due to the efforts of Nação Mestiça (Veran 2010). Events included are the yearly Seminar on Mestiço Identity (comprised of scholarly papers, a writing contest for high school and college students, and appearances by legislators sympathetic to the cause), the Festival of the Mestiço, the Manaus Cultural Fair of the Caboco, and a Special Legislative Session (“Sessão Solene”) commemorating the group’s accomplishments.

The performance of expressive culture has been a prominent part of these events. The Festival of the Mestiço and the Manaus Cultural Fair of the Caboco both feature music and dance groups. At one Manaus Cultural Fair that I attended in 2010, visiting anthropologists (who had delivered papers at the Seminar on Mestiço Identity) served as judges to decide which musical event “best typified Caboco culture.” Among those competing were an urban hip-hop group that rapped about life as an urban mestiço, and Beon Barbosa, a singer-songwriter whose music celebrates the everyday life of the rural Caboclo: fishing, growing manioc, fleeing from mosquitoes.

At the 2011 Cultural Fair, music, dance, and folkloric performance were the focal point of the event, this time with no outside judges. This Cultural Fair was held in the northern zone bairro Cidade Nova II, with performing groups from the neighborhood and surrounding areas. Rather than pursuing a high-minded and academically-driven performance and judging agenda, the 2011 Fair’s aim seemed to be entirely one of diversion. As opposed to the sparsely attended 2010 Cultural Fair in the city center, the 2011 version was held in a small neighborhood square and was packed with young working-class couples and families who had clearly come to see their friends, relatives,
and neighbors perform. Neighborhood boi-bumbá groups “Boizinho da 29” and “Estrela do Meu Boi” performed at this Cultural Fair, sandwiched in between other cultural offerings that included forró, a *suingueira* group, and a comic square dance group.

These performances of the boi-bumbá groups at the 2011 Cultural Fair follow a format similar to what I referred to in Chapter 5 as taking place in “tourist show time-space.” These kinds of short spectacles are condensed into their most essential parts, usually the pajê, the Cunhã-Poranga, and the Boi, and sometimes with the addition of the Rainha do Folclore or the Porta-Estandarte. Each of these festival stars, fully costumed (similarly to those in the 2011 Boi-bumbá Garanhão performance described in Chapter 5), performs in turn a characteristic dance, accompanied by their theme music. There is no attempt to tell the story of Francisco and Catirina; the *auto do boi* is generally entirely absent. An even more abbreviated spectacle was performed by only the main female dancers of “Estrela do Meu Boi” at a Special Legislative Session that was part of the 2011 events. Showcasing the most iconic parts of the boi-bumbá, these performances have the ability to stand in for an entire performance. However, while the “tourist show” performances are designed for consumption by outsiders and are probably interpreted as generic representations of “Amazonian culture,” the performances at the Caboclo Cultural Fair were aimed at a different audience. In this context, they were presumably intended by the event’s planners to evoke a sense of Caboclo identity and pride in Amazonian roots. For locals, such a condensed performance also may stand in for a full enactment of the boi-bumbá, bringing to mind memories of past festival performances. Boi-bumbá music, as seen in chapter 5, has the ability to activate memories of personal and family memories transmitted through the generations.
Tellingly, the 2011 Seminar on Mestizo Identity was kicked off by Beon Barbosa singing the theme song of Boi-bumbá Garantido’s performance of that year,

“Miscigenação” [Miscegenation]:

    Our celebration is the boi-bumbá
    Our rhythm is hot, Amazonense
    It’s the mixed, impassioned beat
    It’s the spitting image of Brazil
    You’ve never seen anything like it before
    It’s the rocking that imitates the river waves
    It has the smell of the riverbank
    It has an inheritance from the northeast
    Bumba-meu-boi, cabra-da-pestê
    It has the swing of the quilombo
    It has dust rising up
    It has the call of tribal drums
    I am afro-amerindian,
    Caboclo, mestiço,
    I am
    Miscegenation itself
    I am the percussion corps
    I am the cadence eternalized in the melody

326 Meaning “plague goat,” this is a name given to northeasterners. I have been told that it is a positive expression of admiration for the toughness and persistence of people from that region.
The poetry of a love that is transformed
Into a song that comes from the heart
I am Pai Francisco
I am Catirina, Gazumbá
I am Garantido
The guarantee that this love is infinite
And makes the whole world Amazonia-ize
I am boi-bumbá
I am boi-bumbá
I am Parintins, I am the root
And the heart of a nation.\textsuperscript{327}

\textsuperscript{327} Nossa festa é de boi-bumbá
Nosso ritmo é quente, amazonense
É o batuque misturado, apaixonado
Tem a cara do Brasil
Coisa assim nunca se viu
É o balanço que imita banzeiro
Tem cheiro de beira de rio
Tem herança do nordeste
Bumba-meu-boi, cabra-da-pestes
Tem gingado de quilombo
Tem poeira levantando
Tem rufar de tambores tribais
Sou afro-ameríndio
Caboclo, mestiço
Eu sou
A própria miscigenação
Sou batucada
Sou a cadência eternizada na toada
A poesia de um amor que se transforma
Em um som que vem da alma
Sou Pai Francisco
Sou Catirina, Gazumbá
Sou Garantido
The song is catchy, and the attendees of the congress sing along or at least bob their heads to the rhythm. Its lyrics simultaneously promote Mario de Andrade’s century-old Estado Novo characterization of the brincadeira do boi as a narrative of the nation’s racial mixing and the “most Brazilian” of folkloric dramas, all the while situating the Amazonian Caboclo both geographically and historically. As it collapses all of Brazil into the boi-bumbá, and all of the boi-bumbá into the Amazonian Caboclo, it is clear why this song was chosen as the opening act of the event. This politics of identity and culture invites the world to be like the Amazon, as it dislocates the symbolic center of Brazil and repositions it in Parintins, the “roots and the heart of a nation.”

In addition to promoting academic and cultural endeavors related to mestiço and Caboclo identity, Nação Mestiça has also become involved in legal battles over land rights for Caboclo communities. In the municipality of Autazes (located southeast of Manaus), Helda Castro de Sá reported in 2011 that nine terras indígenas, or indigenous land claims, were in the process of being demarcated, and Nação Mestiça was becoming involved in order to protect the rights of mestiço/Caboclo inhabitants of the area:

They wanted to demarcate [the indigenous land claims] in Autazes, where there are a lot of farms, and so they wanted to demarcate where the farms were, there are already cattle there, there is already a pasture there, understand? [....] There is a farm, where the man didn’t want to leave, so they set fire to his farm and to the

A garantia que esse amor é infinito
É faz o mundo inteiro amazoniar
Eu sou boi-bumbá
Eu sou boi-bumbá
Sou Parintins, sou a raiz
E o coração de uma nação.
[Lyrics by Enéas Dias e Arisson Mendonça, my translation]
cattle. When he returned—because he was trying to go through the legal path, that is the courts. When he returned, they had burned everything. Okay? So—it was the Indians who set fire to the man’s farm and his cattle! And so this is the policy of the federal government. It goes there – because it’s FUNAI,\(^\text{328}\) which is part of the federal government, that does the demarcation. So an anthropologist goes there, “no, an Indian once passed by here in a canoe, he has the rights to this land.” So this is the policy that we are confronting in the interior. So what is it that the Mestiço Movement will do, then? The Mestiço Movement goes there, because it doesn’t just turn the farmer against the Indians. No. It will be an ethnic movement, completely an ethnic movement. Understand? The mestiço is there for years and years, and will be kicked out with a right to nothing. No. [...] So our interest is to protect this mestiço, this Caboco who is there and who will leave without the right to anything. Understand? That’s why we need to go to the interior, to begin to create the centers [of the Movement].\(^\text{329}\) [Helda Castro de Sá, from interview with Leão and Helda 01/09/2011]

\(^{328}\) FUNAI is the Fundação Nacional do Índio, or the National Indian Foundation.

\(^{329}\) “Querem demarcar em Autazes, onde tem muitas fazendas, então eles querem marcar onde tem as fazendas, já tem o gado, já tem um campo, entendeu? [...] Tem uma fazenda onde o homem não quis sair, eles tocaram fogo na fazenda dele e no gado. Quando ele voltou—que ele tentou em via legal, que é a justiça. Quando ele voltou, eles tinham queimado tudo. Tá? Então—os índios que tocaram fogo na fazenda do homem e no gado dele! Então tudo isso é a política do governo federal. Ele vai lá – porque quem demarca é o FUNAI, que é do governo federal. Então vai lá antropólogo lá, ‘não, aqui o índio passou na canoa, tem direito nessa terra.’ Então essa é a política que nós estamos enfrentando no interior. Então o que é que o Movimento Mestiço, então? O Movimento Mestiço vai pra lá, porque ele já não vira o fazendeiro contra os índios. Não. Vai ser um movimento étnico, todo movimento étnico. Entendeu? O mestiço tá lá anos e anos, e vai ser expulso com direito a nada. Não. [...] Então o nosso interesse é proteger este mestiço, este Caboco que tá lá e vai sair sem direito a nada. Entendeu? Por isso que a gente precisa por interior, começar a fazer os núcleos.”
Helda and others from Nação Mestiça approached this project from a life historical approach, interviewing residents of the interior living on the lands in question about their racial, ethnic, and geographical backgrounds. Helda explained, “So it’s this kind of thing that we are doing in the interior, right? Really taking public policy there, the rights and duties so that these people can assert their rights as Brazilian citizens.”

Nação Mestiça, then, is involved in land rights claims for Caboclo communities in the interior of the state, and also presents the boi-bumbá to demonstrate the beauty and complexity of Caboclo culture. This is not to say that Nação Mestiça is specifically using the boi-bumbá to make an appeal for land rights. However, as we saw in Chapter 6, the boi-bumbá is frequently implemented to demonstrate the value of Amazonense culture. On second glance, it is clear why the boi-bumbá is the perfect symbol for Nação Mestiça. While the movement is working to help local mesticos and Caboclos to retain lands that have been in their families for generations, their guiding principle is unification and not division. Rather than pursuing special rights based on extremely subjective categories of racial and ethnic heritage, they instead try to protect the rights of these populations by demonstrating their general rights as citizens of the nation. The boi-bumbá, long before it became an emblem of Amazonense pride and regional identity, stood for Brazil itself, and the miscegenation of those of European, indigenous, and African heritage.

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330 “Então é este tipo de coisa que a gente está fazendo no interior, né? Levando mesmo as políticas públicas lá, os direitos e deveres para essas pessoas conseguem fazer valer seu direito de cidadão brasileiro.”
CHAPTER 9
Conclusion

Introduction
In this dissertation, I set out to answer the question, “What does the boi-bumbá now mean to participants from Educandos with respect to being Caboclo and the performance of Caboclo identity?” I have shown how the boi-bumbá of Amazonas arose in the context of the 1967 implantation of the Zona Franca de Manaus, and highlighted how the resulting social and economic changes transformed the relationship of Amazonenses to the boi-bumbá, which became a way to reframe, contextualize, and comment upon the changing socioeconomic, racial, political, and environmental realities of their lives. In this concluding chapter, I will first briefly review the background for this project. Next, I will summarize the overall primary conclusions drawn from my research regarding the boi-bumbá of Manaus. Finally, I will wrap up this chapter and the dissertation by discussing the implications of my research and suggest possibilities for future exploration.

Review of Project Background
In his 1997 article entitled “The Amazon Caboclo: What’s in a Name?” Richard Pace advocated for social scientists to stop using the term *Caboclo* to refer to the rural, mixed-race riverine peoples who practice subsistence fishing, farming, and collection of forest products, as well as occasional seasonal wage labor. Echoing Nugent (1993), Parker (1985), Slater (1994), and Wagley (1976), Pace emphasized that *Caboclo* was a negative label with which people did not identify, nor did they want applied to them. His conclusion was that unless people began embracing the term *Caboclo*, social scientists should make the ethical choice to avoid the label.
Undoubtedly, Pace’s conclusion still largely holds true for the inhabitants of the Amazon region’s riverine communities, who have long suffered what Nugent (1993) has called “functional invisibility.” As the national and international imaginaries of Amazonia are fixated on the immense natural features of the region, riverine peoples disappear next to “more ‘genuine’ others” such as tribal indigenous peoples (Nugent 1993). Mixed-race rural communities often do not hold legal title to the land that they and their families occupy, and are unable to use their racial or ethnic heritage to assert their right to lands as can tribal Indians or runaway slave descendants (Chernela and Pinho 2004, French 2009). This dynamic may be changing as a 2007 law allows “traditional communities” to claim land rights, though its effects are still unfolding and it remains to be seen how this legal development will progress on the ground.

**Overall Primary Conclusions**

My research suggests that the boi-bumbá of the state of Amazonas has had several effects, especially in terms of the valorization of the rural, racially mixed population known as *Caboclos*. First, I found that the boi-bumbá of Amazonas may have contributed to the development of a positive attitude towards Caboclos as a group and at times the assumption of *Caboclo* as an identity label, especially for urbanites involved in the boi-bumbá. While Amazonianists have long indicated that *Caboclo* was a pejorative label that individuals chose to avoid, today it appears to be undergoing a renovation in the city of Manaus. Second, I found that in the wake of the rapid urbanization of the greater Manaus region, urban inhabitants have come to develop a nostalgic view of rural life, and boi-bumbá participants perceived their own history and that of their families in the lyrics and imagery of the Amazonas boi-bumbá. Third, I found that the Amazonas boi-bumbá,
in showcasing the everyday life of the Amazonian Caboclo, was able to show a version of the Amazon region that was missing from general media representations of the Amazon region in general and of Manaus in particular.

**Positive attitude towards Caboclo identity**

As mentioned above, attitudes about the rural, mixed-race riverine and forest populations of Amazonia have long been negative, leaving Caboclos “invisible” (Nugent 1997) and the term *Caboclo* itself had acquired a meaning “a little like the words hillbilly or bumpkin, with racial overtones” (Slater 2002:229). However, concurrent with the growth of the boi-bumbá of Parintins, Manaus, and the surrounding region has been a shift in these attitudes, focused on the capital city, Manaus. Brazilian anthropologist Maria-Laura Cavalcanti (2007:71) asserts that the boi-bumbá festival of Parintins “expresses a positive statement of a Brazilian caboclo, or mestizo, identity.” What is true of Parintins can also be said of the Manaus festival: Caboclos are universally pictured in these bois-bumbás in a positive fashion. They are hard-working, determined, brave, and persistently joyful in the face of the deprivations of their everyday life. Boi-bumbá songs, or *toadas*, celebrate the life of isolation and rural toil, while staged scenes of Amazonian everyday life depict Caboclos making farinha, harvesting rubber, weaving baskets, growing jute, fishing, planting seeds, and fending off evil outsiders who wish to cut down the forests. While native peoples are shown as the spiritual forefathers of the modern Amazonian citizen, the Caboclo remains the Amazonian Everyman, leading a life that is not glamorous, but noble in its uncomplaining acceptance of an honest day’s hard work.
Personal and family history told through boi-bumbá

The everyday life of the Caboclo is a very prominent theme in the bois-bumbás of Amazonas, and study participants identified strongly with this aspect of the boi-bumbá. While many urbanites may not have themselves ever practiced this way of life, Amazonian extended families generally have some members who still inhabit rural areas. It is common for Manauaras to return to communities in the interior to visit family during school vacations and holidays. During these times visitors may come into contact with “traditional” practices that are still widely followed, such as fishing, hunting, and collecting and processing forest products. Most important and iconic is the planting, harvesting, and refining of manioc into its many end forms: *farinha* [toasted manioc meal], *beijú* [a kind of crepe or pancake], and *pe-de-moleque* [a dense cake studded with brazil nuts, wrapped in banana leaves and roasted over an open fire], among others. The practice of such “traditional” activities, even if only during brief visits, creates in urbanites an affective connection to rural lifeways. Scenes in the boi-bumbá depicting these activities of rural life transform such humdrum daily practices into iconic identifiers of Caboclo identity. Through cross-chronotopic linkages that connect viewer-participants with such scenes of the past, the present, and the mythic, the boi-bumbá of Manaus cultivates the development of a distinctive type of historical consciousness.

The oral tradition remains strong in the Amazon region, and while intense temperatures limits outdoor socialization during the day, Manauaras still congregate post-sunset in front of their houses or in courtyards to talk and tell stories. While these informal moments of sociability may be used to discuss yesterday’s Flamengo-Vasco game or tomorrow’s local elections, just as commonly conversation turns to memories of
childhood vacations spent on the farm, and stories heard as children of grandparents’ exploits. Everyone, it seems, has a grandfather who encountered the mythical *cobra grande* on a fishing trip, a cousin who found the backwards footprints of the *curupira* in the forest, a great aunt who was enchanted by the *boto* and who pined away for her dolphin lover. The telling and retelling of such stories creates pathways by which urban Amazonenses situate themselves in a cultural lineage connected to nostalgic and romanticized imaginaries of rural lives. The mass viewing of fabulously imagined visual depictions of such folktales and legends, writ large as sixty-foot-tall animated, fire-breathing alegorias in the boi-bumbá transforms in grand, shared fashion such personal experience and memory into a spectacular shared sense of history.

*Positive counterpoint to media representations of the Amazon and Manaus*

The boi-bumbá of Amazonas is a highly mediated folkloric manifestation. The Parintins festival is broadcast nationally, the Manaus festival appears on local TV, and boi-bumbá music can be found on the radio year round. My study participants indicated that the boi-bumbá, in contrast to images of the Amazon produced by national media outside of the region, shows an image of life in the Amazon as they understood and had personally experienced it. As indicated in Chapter 6, national and international representations of the Amazon region in general and Manaus in particular rarely reflect the lived experiences of Manauaras. Typified by such documentaries as the 1998 IMAX film *Amazon*, media representations of the Amazon have focused on the natural environment and the perceived ability of “stone age” indigenous peoples to live in harmony with the plants and animals of the rainforest (Slater 2002). Although people from Manaus are proud of the natural beauty and biodiversity of their region, most identify more strongly with rural
Caboclo communities than with tribal peoples. The boi-bumbá mirrors this point of view. While indigenous peoples provide a focal point in this dramatic dance, they inhabit a realm of myth and legend. Whether dancing in feathered costumes or summoning spirits to restore the bull to life, Indians in the boi-bumbá are magical beings who dwell in a half-lit ceremonial time-space. Caboclos, on the other hand, are represented as real people carrying out the necessities of everyday lives: preparing food, building houses, dancing around the St. John’s Day bonfire, marrying, and bearing children. Caboclos are undoubtedly presented in an idealized and nostalgic form, but they are indisputably real people.

**Research Implications**

It is my assertion that the current, nostalgic, form of the boi-bumbá of the state of Amazonas did not simply happen at the same time as the rapid industrialization and urbanization of the state. Rather, it is a direct reaction to urbanization and the overwhelming presence of industrial capitalism in the Amazon region, embodied in the Industrial District of the Zona Franca de Manaus. Anna Tsing’s (2004) concept of “friction,” or “the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference” is a useful lens through which to consider the current state of the Amazonas boi-bumbá and the relationship of Amazonenses to this cultural manifestation. Through the “friction” created by the encounter of the overdeterminedly natural space of the Amazon region with the widespread urbanization and industrialization brought by global capitalism, the Amazonas boi-bumbá was born.

In this space of “messiness” in which disparate entities rub up against each other, urban people from Amazonas have created a modern version of the boi-bumbá that
commemorates the rural lives of their Caboclo parents and grandparents, mourns the passing of that way of life, and lays claim to an new Caboclo identity, that while located in urban spaces, remains firmly rooted in remembrance of rurality. The boi-bumbá’s depiction of Amazonian life is deliberately nostalgic, the remembrance of a way of life that is disappearing as we speak. The people participating in this new boi-bumbá are not in general the rural cultivators themselves, but urbanites consciously bearing witness to this passing. The boi-bumbá, then, although it is a so-called “traditional” folkloric festival, for many people from Manaus, it represents a modern, urban Amazonian identity.

As soon above, widespread rural-to-urban migration frequently results in surges of nostalgia, which is often expressed in musical form (Aaron Fox 2004). Just as country music arose in the urban United States in nostalgic remembrance of rural life, a similar phenomenon has occurred in Brazil, to mourn the passing of rurality there (Dent 2007). As mentioned previously, música sertaneja, música caipira, forró, and the Gaúcho movement are other Brazilian cultural manifestations that provide a nostalgia view of rural life, contrasted to life in the city. As Brazil, like much of Latin America, has urbanized so quickly and dramatically over the last 60 years, it is not surprising that so many of these nostalgic musical manifestations exist. I propose that the boi-bumbá of Amazonas is yet one more example of Brazilian nostalgia brought on by a sudden, unexpected, and unprecedented industrialization and urbanization.

Postcolonial critic Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) has theorized the connection between capitalism and intense nostalgic desires for an authentic past. Jane Ferguson (2010) points to commodification of certain places or “flash points” which become foci
for the selling and buying of authenticity. The boi-bumbá has become such a flash point. At the same time that people from Amazonas are creating a boi-bumbá that expresses their nostalgia for, and a growing distance from, a rural life, these same people are packaging this same festival as an authentic manifestation of jungle folklore. Even as it represents to many people from Amazonas a modern identity, the Amazonas boi-bumbá is also created for consumption by tourists seeking “authentic” experiences in the Amazon rainforest. While local communities profit financially from much-needed tourist dollars, the framing of the boi-bumbá as a “spectacle in the jungle” reinforces deeply ingrained racial beliefs. Urban Brazilians from outside of the Amazon (as well as foreigners) flock to the festival to experience an authentic jungle spectacle; only to consume the nostalgic celebration of other urbanites.

In the following section, I will present an analysis of positive and negative aspects of the commodification of the boi-bumbá. First, through the creation of this new boi-bumbá as a product for tourist consumption, people from Amazonas are able to exert some control over how they are perceived. Second, the boi-bumbá today validates the personal and shared regional history of those who participate in the festival, as it valorizes Caboclo lifeways. Third, boi-bumbá-style competitions may bring needed tourist dollars to economically struggling areas. Fourth, the idealization of the Caboclo in the boi-bumbá as a noble forest guardian may contribute to the ongoing invisibility of actual rural residents. However, while local communities profit financially from much-needed tourist dollars, the framing of the boi-bumbá as a “spectacle in the jungle” reinforces deeply ingrained racial beliefs. Finally, the promotion of a Caboclo identity...
may contribute to the erasure of indigenous identity as it is subsumed into a generic mestizo category.

**Exerts control over how Amazonians are perceived**

Images of the Amazon as a predominantly natural area have been created and circulated for centuries. The natural features of the region—rivers, forest, exotic fauna—are indisputably impressive. However, images focusing solely on this natural majesty have been strategically implemented by various historical players for specific economic and political ends. Imagining the Amazon as a “land without people” allowed it to be carved up and handed out in parcels to “people without land” in governmental colonization and population redistribution projects (Schmink 1982). If there are no people in the Amazon, there is surely no need to provide schools, hospitals, police, or other infrastructure.

The boi-bumbá provides a counterpoint to such outsider images of the region: it is full of people, some of whom resemble actual populations of the state of Amazonas today. It presents images of everyday rural life in the Amazon and recounts indigenous and Caboclo folk stories. At the same time, the boi-bumbá admittedly does emphasize the same theme that outsider versions present as well: the Amazon as a timeless, natural paradise. However, through the production of the boi-bumbá, people from Amazonas are able to exert control over how they are presenting their region, though within the limits of tourist acceptance. There is no doubt that the boi-bumbá is purposefully produced for an audience outside of the region. Jorge Aragão’s 1997 toada “Parintins Para o Mundo Ver,” written for Parintins Boi-bumbá Garantido, is an enduring hit and a hymn to outward-looking positionality of the festival:
Our boi-bumbá, our xipuara\textsuperscript{331} dance
Fell to the earth, and is showing our face
Crossed to the other side of the ocean
And my brave cloth bull became famous
Was just on the old [island of] Tupinambarana
Supported himself on the faith of his [founder] Valdir Viana
Showed the world its folklore, and what it is like
In the \textit{Baixa do São José}\textsuperscript{332}
Soft like rabbit fur
My little bull is all white except for the red on his forehead
He’s dangerous because he steals hearts
That is why he is the bull of the people
I’m Garantido, I’m red, hey
From Parintins for the whole world to see
Come see me, come see me\textsuperscript{333}

\textsuperscript{331} While I was unable to find an exact source for the word \textit{xipuara}, Manaus boi-bumbá enthusiast and history teacher Erick Nogueira indicated that it was a song and dance of welcome, of indigenous origin.

\textsuperscript{332} The \textit{Baixa do São José} is a neighborhood of Parintins and is considered the home of Boi-bumbá Garantido.

\textsuperscript{333} “Nosso boi nossa dança xipuara/Caiu no mundo está mostrando a nossa cara/Atravessou pro outro lado do oceano/Ficou famoso meu valente boi de pano/Que era só na velha Tupinambarana/Que se apoiou na fé do seu Valdir Viana/Mostra pro mundo seu folclore como é/Na Baixa do São José/Macio feito pélo de Coelho/Meu boizinho é todo branco só na testa tem vermelho/É perigoso por que rouba curacao/Por isso é o boi do povão/Sou Garantido sou vermelho ê/De Parintins pra todo mundo ver/Vem me ver, vem me ver.”

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Emphasizing the origins of the boi-bumbá, this song establishes the cosmopolitan (or even extraterrestrial) pedigree of this folkloric drama. It is not merely Brazilian, but of the world, and calls the world to pay homage. The phrase *para o mundo ver* [for the world to see] has been incorporated into the lyrics of later songs, as a reference to this continued understanding that this festival is not only produced for local consumption, but for the world to see, and understand, life in Amazonas.

**Validates Caboclo lifeways and personal and shared regional history**

As Cavalcanti (2001) has suggested, the boi-bumbá is a powerful vehicle for the presentation of a positive view of Caboclos and Caboclo identity. There is a growing acceptance of the contributions of rural Amazonian peoples in terms of the creation of folktales, art, and music, knowledge of cultivation and use of medicinal plants, and a frontiersman’s ability to live off the land. In 2007, Nação Mestiça submitted a proposal to the state legislature for the teaching in Amazonas schools on the theme of *caboclitude* (Veran 2010). *Caboclitude*—a word coined by one Nação Mestiça group member in analogy to the literary and ideological *négritude* movement, which promoted pride in blackness—would valorize the contributions of Caboclos in the state’s history.

The boi-bumbá has helped to pave the way for such ideological actions. Following Cavalcanti (2001:70), I view the boi-bumbá as a “badge of regional cultural identity.” However, I would suggest that the situation is slightly more complicated. The boi-bumbá is indeed used as a badge of regional identity, an assertion that there is worthwhile culture to be found in the region. As Nação Mestiça activist Fernando Fritz suggested in Chapter 6, people from Amazonas strategically use the boi-bumbá to disarm discourse that postulates the region as still a land without people. Often, the boi-bumbá is
used as a rhetorical strategy simply to demonstrate that people in the region exist. This is evidenced by the boi-bumbá, which in its beauty and sophistication indicates that it comes from a culture that is not degenerate or less-than-civilized.

This strategic implementation of the boi-bumbá as a symbol of Amazonas culture, however, is merely a necessary first step to the actual argument that Nação Mestiça member Fernando Fritz was trying to make: that Amazonas should be viewed as equal to the other states of the nation:

And what was our objective with this? It was to say, not just that the culture of Amazonas exists, that there is civilization here, but to say that just because São Paulo has a larger economy than Amazonas, for example, that it is the most important Brazilian state. It’s not. Both São Paulo, which is the richest, and Amazonas, which has the most diversity, need each other.

Pro-Caboclo and pro-Amazonas activists, then, use the symbolic power of the boi-bumbá as a “badge of regional cultural identity” as a rhetorical strategy to engage in this important and exhausting argument: *Yes, there are people here. We are your equals, and deserve recognition and respect.* Conceptions of the Amazon as a “land without people” or as a location of “uncivilized” indigenous people are so entrenched in the national and international consciousness that such conversations will undoubtedly continue, in spite of the efforts of such activism.

**Tourism income to Amazon communities**

The Amazonas boi-bumbá’s status as “badge of regional cultural identity” (Cavalcanti 2001:70) has made it the equivalent of Rio de Janeiro’s samba, the Pernambuco’s *frevo* dance, or the northeast’s bumba-meu-boi. These are among Brazilian expressive cultural
practices associated with particular geographical areas that are brightly colored, showy, and easily packaged for tourist consumption. As outlined in Chapter 7, inspired by the success of the Parintins Folklore Festival, small towns throughout Amazonas and the surrounding states have sought to develop their own version of the competitive dramatic dance. Thus, the Sairé of Alter do Chão has added a boi-bumbá-style competition of dolphins; the Ciranda of Manacapuru has settled into a large-scale arena competition; and small remote towns like Maracanã, Pará have given over their local control of their small festival to experts from Parintins in the hope of attracting tourists. While the Sairé is a tourism success story—undoubtedly in part due to its white sand beaches and pre-existing tourism reputation and infrastructure—it is unclear whether the efforts of other smaller towns can ever be successful. In other words, is there room in the Amazonian tourist economy for more than one Parintins?

In spite of this, the boi-bumbá is now the evitable answer to the question posed by state and city tourist boards in Amazonas: what can we do to check off the “culture” box? Thus, the boi-bumbá is trotted out whenever “something cultural” is needed. A typical example of this was the constant presence of boi-bumbá-related activities and performances available for tourist consumption in Manaus during its stint as a host city for the 2014 FIFA World Cup. This was perhaps even more marked than it would have been otherwise, as the Parintins Folklore Festival took place during the World Cup itself. As Manaus was beleaguered by attacks against its viability as a soccer venue due to its heat and lack of infrastructure, Manauaras sought to entertain tourists with its prime cultural capital: the boi-bumbá. Boi-bumbá musical performances could be found on the stages of Manaus’s Ponta Negra beach during the FIFA Fan Fest, boi-bumbá
performances were offered at main tourist hotels, and World Cup visitors were offered packages to visit Parintins and see the festival for themselves.

May contribute to invisibility of Caboclos; reinforces stereotypes of Amazon

While the boi-bumbá of Amazonas does indeed praise the Amazonian Caboclo as a humble forest guardian, this idealization may actually contribute to the continuing invisibility of actual rural peoples. For example, emphasizing the Caboclo’s frontier know-how may suggest that greater investment in infrastructure is not necessary. Additionally, while Caboclos are sometimes shown in the boi-bumbá as fighting against lawless individuals who wish to destroy the forest, they are depicted as the victors. Actual rural peoples in the Amazon have struggled to maintain possession of their land against legal and physical (at times violent) aggression by interlopers (Schmink and Wood 1992, Schmink 1982). Finally, the boi-bumbá depicts Caboclos as the wise forest guardians, who possess a simple way of life focused on preserving the environment. This obscures the actual agricultural practices of rural cultivators, which are largely unregulated and which growing evidence indicates rely heavily on chemical pesticides (Schiesari et al. 2013). Such unregulated foodstuffs are destined for mass consumption in the urban areas of the Amazon. The effects of heavy pesticide use both on farmers and on consumers have as yet received little attention in the region.

Generic “Caboclo” identity could contribute to erasure of indigenous identity

Conversely, the popularity of the boi-bumbá may contribute to hegemonic national discourses that endorse the weakening and eventual erasure of indigenous identity as it is replaced by a generic Caboclo, mestizo identity. Writing about Nicaragua, Field (1998:431) indicates how the “myth of the […] mestiza […] narrates the transformation
of communities of indigenous peoples into lower-class individuals whose formerly collective ethnic identity is replaced by allegiance to a nonethnic, Nicaraguan national identity.” It is not unconceivable that the valorization of the Caboclo through the boi-bumbá could have a similar effect on rural indigenous communities in the Brazilian Amazon.

**Conclusion**

The boi-bumbá’s vision of Amazonas is one that is heavily romanticized and remains stubbornly pre-modern. Educandos Boi-bumbá Garanhão’s 2011 performance featured as stage sets for the festival common neighborhood landmarks such as the church of Our Lady of Perpetual Sorrow and the Amarelinho pedestrian district. However, these contemporary architectural images only served as a brief backdrop for the customary drama of Francisco and Catirina’s encounter with their colonial master and landlord. No other indications of life in the Amazon in the twenty-first century made an appearance save Francisco’s oddly glowing, neon blue glasses. Cars and buses, computers, cellphones, contemporary clothing, and other trappings of twenty-first century life were all absent. While the boi-bumbá valorizes Caboclo lifeways, actual rural cultivators are increasingly equipped with technology, in part due to the governmental program “Luz Para Todos” [Electricity for Everyone] that since 2003 has provided free or very cheap electrical service to rural areas.

This reality has not yet penetrated into folkloric imagery, however. It is not surprising that the following song, submitted by local musician Sandro Barbosa for consideration by the Manacapuru folklore group Ciranda Flor Matizada (a competitor in the city’s boi-bumbá-style folkloric competition), was not accepted:
A lake, a river
A waterfall at the igarapé
Amazonia, a good land to live in
Nature and faith
A watering can gives water to drink
To the sunflower every morning
A life full of surprises
Some technology, a computer!

Brazil, country of progress and success
Manaus of the movies, the cinema, the festivals (2x)
My theater is my biography
It’s culture, it’s love
The voice and body of an actor
At the St. Sebastian square.\(^{334}\)

While modern folkloric festivals in Amazonas tend to support the promotion of an
Amazonian identity, this identity is carefully curated. I suspect that music promoting an
Amazonian identity that involves both an appreciation of nature and the positive nature of
the technological trappings of a modern life will never be acceptable in the domain of
folkloric performance. While actual Amazonenses may find a balance between

\(^{334}\) “Um lago, um rio/Uma cachoeira no igarapé/Amazônia, terra boa de morar/A natureza
e de fé/Um regador da água de beber/A girasol todas as manhãs/A vida cheia de
surpresas/Uma tecnologia, um computador!/Brasil, país do progresso e do sucesso,
Manaus dos filmes, do cinema, dos festivais (2x)/ Meu teatro é minha biografia/É cultura,
é amor/Voz e corpo do ator/No largo São Sebastião.” [Lyrics and music, Sandro Barbosa,
my translation.]
“tradition” and “modernity,” this may be too much to expect of a nostalgic folkloric performance.

The boi-bumbá has become a cultural emblem that people from Amazonas deploy both to gain tourist income and at the same time challenge the symbolic and economic hegemony of the Brazilian southeast. The purpose of this dissertation is to lay bare the fissures in Brazilian culture that leave these Amazonians, themselves the very manufacturers of the consumer objects associated with a modern life, trapped between a desire to claim their rights as fully modern citizens and a national culture that continues to view them, in Chatterjee’s (1997) words, as mere “consumers,” and not “producers,” of modernity.
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