

## FILMAÇÃO AND REPRESENTATION: THE AUDIOVISUAL IN THE MONTAGENS OF PERFORMANCE IN THE BATUQUE OF PONTO CHIQUE – MG

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### ABSTRACT

This article discusses how the production of a film with the *Ponto Chique batuque* and other nearby *batuque* groups, connected by the Sao Francisco river, mobilizes social and aesthetic processes, in other words, how the film while a process of production and exhibition takes part in this relation between aesthetic drama, social drama and ritual drama. From the dialogue with authors of performance theory, the starting point is to discuss categories such as representation, drama and “montagem”, comprehending the ‘*filmacao*’ as the materialization of this fluid space where the *batuqueira/vazanteira* culture builds upon. Using the ethnography method, the article wants to reflect on the relations between the *batuqueiras* montages and the film montage as fiction and friction between the past and the present. The article works with the hypothesis that the fragments of the past organizes the filming timing and can constitute a temporality specific of the *batuques*.

### KEYWORDS

Drumming; filming; performance; audiovisual; montage.

FIGURE 1  
Map of Brazil  
highlighting  
Ponto Chique.



FIGURE 2  
Map of the state  
of Minas Gerais  
highlighting  
Ponto Chique.

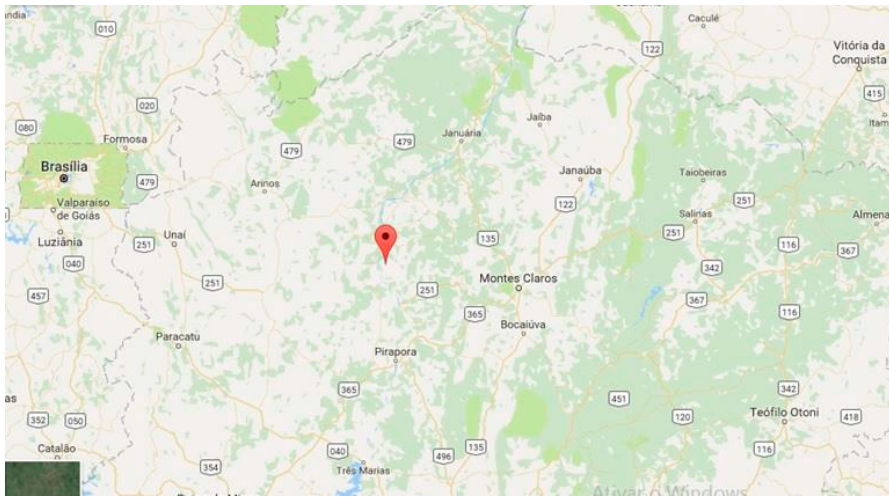
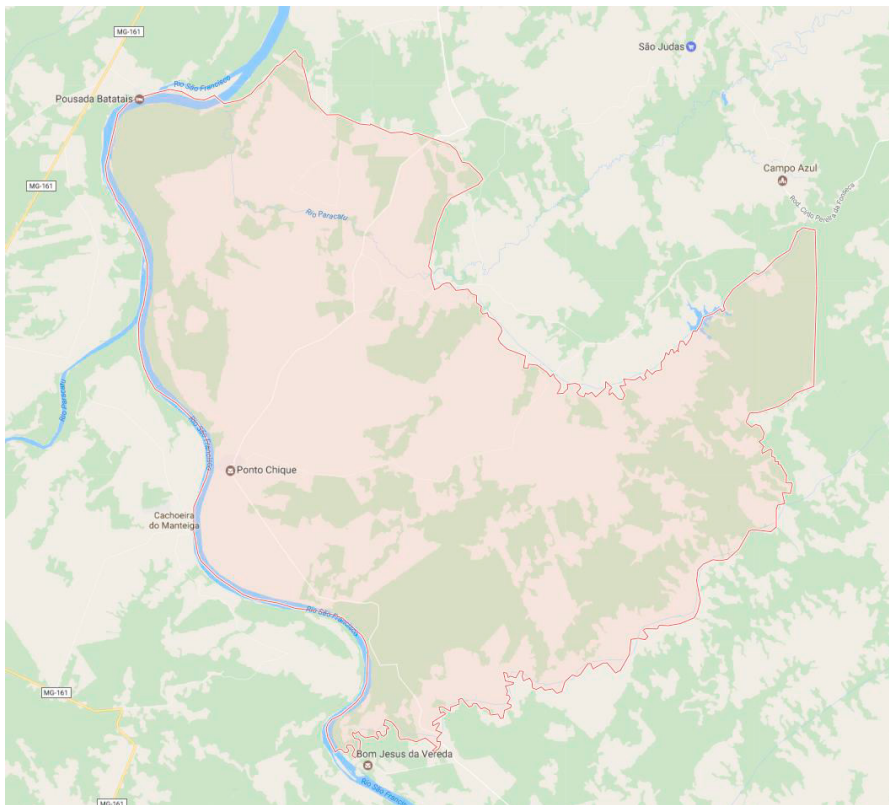


FIGURE 3  
Map of the Ponto  
Chique municipality.



## INTRODUCTION

My first encounter with the batuque of Ponto Chique, a community localized on the bank of a river at the north of Minas Gerais, happened in 2010 when I worked in the project Cinema no Rio São Francisco<sup>1</sup> which followed down the communities at the margin of the Sao Francisco river making short documentaries with its residents which were later shown in a big screen in the city's squares. During that time, I was the one who searched for the “city's characters” and realized the interview together with the filming team. Sailing through the São Francisco river is an experience hard to translate. As the own river landers joke, once you sailed, there is no turning back, you will return again. Following the prophecy, I returned still working for the project in the years of 2011, 2013, and 2014.

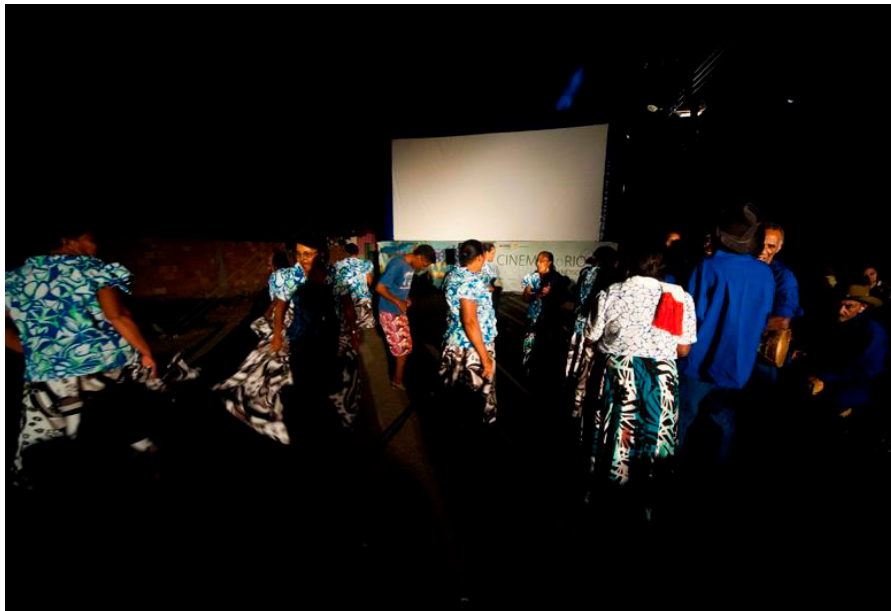


FIGURE 4  
Batuque  
presentation  
before the  
movie session  
(2010). Picture of  
André Fossati.

I was from this experience and the encounter with the batuque of Ponto Chique, that I in 2015, entered in the master program in Anthropology of UFMG to discuss the relation between performance, representation and the cultural and political categories. This process resulted in the master thesis “THE LIFE IS A REMANSO: Performance, culture and politics in the batuque of Ponto Chique (MG)” defended in May of 2017.

The batuque of Ponto Chique has as its main members Agripina, Raimunda, Pascoalina, Maria José, Francisca, Rosinha, João de Lió, Ademmar, Valeriano, Olímpio, Nilson, Neusa and Pretinha. The main members are the ones involved the longest with the group, but there are still the granddaughter and daughter of Olímpio that sometimes participate

1. More information about the project: <http://cinemanoriosaofrancisco.blogspot.com/>

in the encounters. There is also the little grandson that, as Olímpio explains, was born for the batuque. He used to be at the front of the group, guiding them. However, his daughter moved to Salvador and took the grandson with her. Until this day he is invocado with samba, Olímpio says. There is also Elenice who entered the group recently and gets goosebumps every time that she watches the DVD that we produced in the *filmação* of the batuque. There is also Juquinha, Olímpio's brother, who passed some years ago.



FIGURE 5  
Some members  
of the batuque  
of Ponto Chique  
gathered during  
the recording of  
the documentary  
(2017). Picture of  
Fernanda Brescia.



FIGURE 6  
Olímpio, Agripina  
and Valeriano  
(Valu) (2010).  
Picture of  
Amanda Horta.

In the field work for the master's thesis I came across the native term *representação* (representation) which is understood by the as (re) presentation, connected to the action of bringing things back to life. The word, repeated in different moments by the members of the batuque, seemed to be a term organized by the thought of the batuqueiros. The understanding about the idea of representation surpass the false and true dualisms or the rupture between the real and its representation still present in some tendencies of the anthropological theory.

For this research it was important to have in mind that the category *representação* is understood by the group in the sense of action, of relation, connection with the past.

This term brings also the power of the batuque as a tradition that reinvents and renovates itself to keep pulsing in the batuqueiro's lives. Agripina and Olímpio always say that the batuque will end. However, at any given time a batuqueiro can emerge in the wrinkles of the river, in the movement of the crôas<sup>2</sup>. It is also in this *representações* that they live, elaborate and bring new meanings to the conflicts of everyday life. To represent it is also to perform to an audience, and can involve a particular experience of the batuqueiros to make present a being or an entity.

This term guided the chapters of the dissertation that wanted to translate different visions of the group surrounding the *representações* and the shaping of the batuque in the different visions. Another native category that emerged from ethnography was *filmação* that the batuqueiros used referring to the action of filming. It was on the day of *filmação*, in which the batuqueiros performed to the cameras, that the ancestors were incorporated in the performance, that the body healing or the effectiveness of the practice happened. Following this flow and realizing the importance of the relation between the batuqueiros and the images, still during the field research for the master's thesis, I created an amateur video with the cellphone cameras and produced a DVD that was given to all the members of the batuque. A part of this first experimental exercise of *filmação* can be seen through the link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_WyRrd-FeqI&t=246s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_WyRrd-FeqI&t=246s)

The DVD then started to develop the role of *re(a)presentar* Dona Neuza, member of batuque and wife of Olímpio, who passed away suddenly one week after this experience of *filmação* with the group. It was possible to perceive, therefore, that the DVD entered in the net of relations and *representações* of the batuque.

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2. It is the name that the riverins give to the sand banks formed in the middle of the river.

After the masters we proposed, collectively, for the State Fund of Culture of Minas Gerais a project for the realization of a documentary together with the batuque of Ponto Chique in particular, and also about its relations with the surrounding batuques. We proposed also a reunion of batuques in the quilombola community of Bom Jardim da Prata, in the municipality of São Francisco, circa of 60 Km from Ponto Chique. As I pointed in my dissertation, the reunions of the riverines batuques are the place of expression of this memory, in fragments, that flows through the São Francisco river. The project was approved in 2017 and at the same year, myself and filming crew spent 15 days filming the batuques surrounding Ponto Chique. The documentary is currently in process of montage, editing and finalization and it will be released in the second batuque reunion in 2019.

During the filming with the batuque of Ponto Chique it was possible to see that the effectiveness of the performance, the collective energization happened even in front of the camera, better saying, it happened especially for the camera. It was not possible then then to separate batuque to be filmed from an “authentic” batuque realized in Dona Izabel’s<sup>3</sup> *terreiros*, considered the queen of batuque. *Filmação* is also an important modality of representation of *levantamento*<sup>4</sup> in the culture of batuque. It reflects this montage in which “pieces” of the past are reconstructed in the present for a future project that culminated in the collective production of this film.

Dias (2001) points that the poetics of batuques is marked by the essentiality and economy of the expressive ways by the short form and concentrated meaning. This encrypted communication, there is a metaphorization of the verbal discourse, by the elaboration of a dubious language built with simple images, whose translation was restricted to the community that celebrated. To the author, during the slavery period, the freedom space of the dances in the *terreiro* enabled a privileged moment of internal communication through the sung chronic. In this space, they sang every kind of messages, articulations, critics, and claims. A very peculiar metaphorical poetic language arises, contrary to the perception of the hegemonic culture of the colonial period that the batuques were something bizarre without further refinements of expression. For the author, these traits are close to the habit of expressing themselves through proverbial phrases, “dear to the old guardians of oral traditions in Africa and who probably would have influenced the poetry of the *terreiros* and *senzalas* in lands of the diaspora” (Dias 2001: 21). For the author the new living conditions imposed different meanings for the arguments, but survives the basic idea of the synthetic and connotative formulation.

3. Dona Izabel is considered the queen of batuque for her atuation and tradition with the practice that comes from her ancestor. To be the queen of batuque is a sort of nickname given by consideration, for the protagonism in the dance, wisdom in singing, for influence in the practice. Therefore, it is not about a monarchic symbolism that imposes some hierarchy or rule.

4. Native term used by the batuqueiros meaning a process to make the practice more powerful and visible.

In spite of the importance of the batuques in the historical constitution of diverse modalities of dances and performances and, simultaneously, as the locus of elaboration of diverse groups or traditional communities, the ethnomusicologist Paulo Dias points to the lack of researches and material on the subject. The name Batuque is something that goes back to the prejudiced view of the settlers when they came across the dances and practices of the enslaved. Batuque is then a generic name that assumes several other nomenclatures depending on the community. In Ponto Chique, for example, the ancients called the practice of Lambero. Already in Geraes Velho, nearby community, the practice is known as Carneiro. It is worth emphasizing that, although the batuques are common in different regions of Minas Gerais and Brazil and refer to this “slavery” past, the researches on the subject, from a sociological and anthropological perspective, are rare.



FIGURE 7  
Batuque of the  
Quilombola  
Community of  
Geraes Velho  
during the  
filming of the  
documentary  
about the riverines  
batuques (2017).  
Photo of Raphael  
Vilas Boas.

An example of this “invisibility” are some bibliographies about the São Francisco River such as “Musicals in the Middle São Francisco” and “Language and Folklore in the São Francisco River”, where none of them mention the batuques. It is very strange to think that the folklorists who dedicated themselves to the study of the cultural and musical practices of the São Francisco river did not have to face the riverines batuques.

Dias (2001) reports that, in 1993, he went to Cunha to look for the local Jongo. He went to a Municipal Museum, where he was informed that the dance no longer existed in the city. At his insistence, the person in charge of the place said that, yes, there was a bunch of “cachaceiros”, but what they did was a “noise”, not the “true” Jongo. On my first visits to Ponto Chic when

I asked about the batuque they told me that there was no such thing as a batuque. Pursuing further batuques from the Southeast, Paulo Dias reports that this model of approach came to show some constancy and that many were efforts to dissuade him from the venture. For the author, the visually crude batuques of terreiro does not attract researchers. For Paulo Dias this attitude still remains between artists and intellectuals. The author also points out that folklorists have not been interested in batuques in the past for the “lack” of aesthetic refinement and for the “absence” of symbolic apparatuses and denounces that this position still remains among intellectuals often inattentive to the importance of the groups in sharing memory, moving the fragments of a story built on the margin.

Araújo (2013) researched the poetic inscriptions in the coconut of Ceará and in the candombe of Minas Gerais, making a mention of the batuque of São Romão de Dona Maria do Batuque. Araújo (2013) calls practices like the batuque, jongo, coconut, of songs danced by the intricate relation between song and dance.

Araújo describes the performance of the dance of Dona Maria de São Romão, a city near Ponto Chique, in which the group presented specific vestments and a singularity in the way of dancing that recalls the greetings carried out in the religions of African matrix.

In addition to the whirls and jumps present in all the manifestations registered in this collection of dancing songs, in the batuque of Dona Maria, the components -man/woman, man/man, woman and children- touch shoulder to shoulder on the left and right side in the dance performance, and rotate by switching pairs randomly. (Araújo 2013: 68).

The performance of Dona Maria ‘s batuque is very similar to the Batuque of Ponto Chique, signaling this relation between the groups of this specific region of the High Middle São Francisco.

I have mentioned two studies that, from different perspectives, deal with, on the one hand, a more historical and ethnomusicological aspect and, on the other hand, a more analytical character of the poetic and stylistic characteristics of the performances of several danced songs, among them, the batuque de São Romão. The present article tries to apprehend the batuque of Ponto Chique and other groups in its most contemporary moment, articulating its performance in fragments of memory and its relation with the images.

In addition, the proposal is to perceive the groups in their specific context impregnated by the importance of the river São Francisco in the ways of life and to think the world. An example of this relationship with the river are the daily performances of the batuqueiros in their



work in the ebbing<sup>5</sup>. In one of my canoe crossings with Seu Olímpio, I came across the following dialogue between Olímpio and a *vazanteiro* colleague: “Who is rich has cattle, who is poor runs to the bush,” jokes Olímpio. Zé da preguiça replies, “Well, I’m going there.” “I’ve come back,” says Olímpio. The *vazanteiros* are constantly being threatened by the environmental police, by the farmers and by the very cattle that enter and trample the plantations to drink water in the river. The dialogue reveals the surrealism of the daily life of those who work this territory. The lands of the ebb are officially of the state, but they have a kind of unofficial use right reaffirmed collectively by the occupation and the relations produced in the space. The *vazanteiros* live in this in-between-place, in the imponderable, in the displacement where they produce relations of work, consumption, conflict and commerce.

In the theater of the *vazanteiros* this displacement is performed, as shown in the above dialogue. The movement of traffic through the ebbing is also done by staging, gestures and manipulation of the forms of language that are privileged objects of studies of performance anthropology (Dawsey 2005: 20). A time when aesthetic experience is at the center. For Schechner (1985), theater and ordinary life would be a kind of Moebius tape (a non-steerable surface), each becoming the other (Schechner 1985: 81). This flow between every day and theater also make tangible the relations produced in this between-place of life in the ebbing.

And it was precisely these performances in the ebbing one of the themes addressed by the documentary. Olímpio performed for the cameras all the way until the arrival in the ebb, the process of planting, the songs of work, etc. These montages were suggested by Olímpio and it was up to the film crew to follow the narrative he created.



FIGURE 8  
Movement of  
riverine on the São  
Francisco river  
(2016). Photo of  
Pâmilla Vilas Boas.

5. A possible translation for the portuguese term “vazante”.

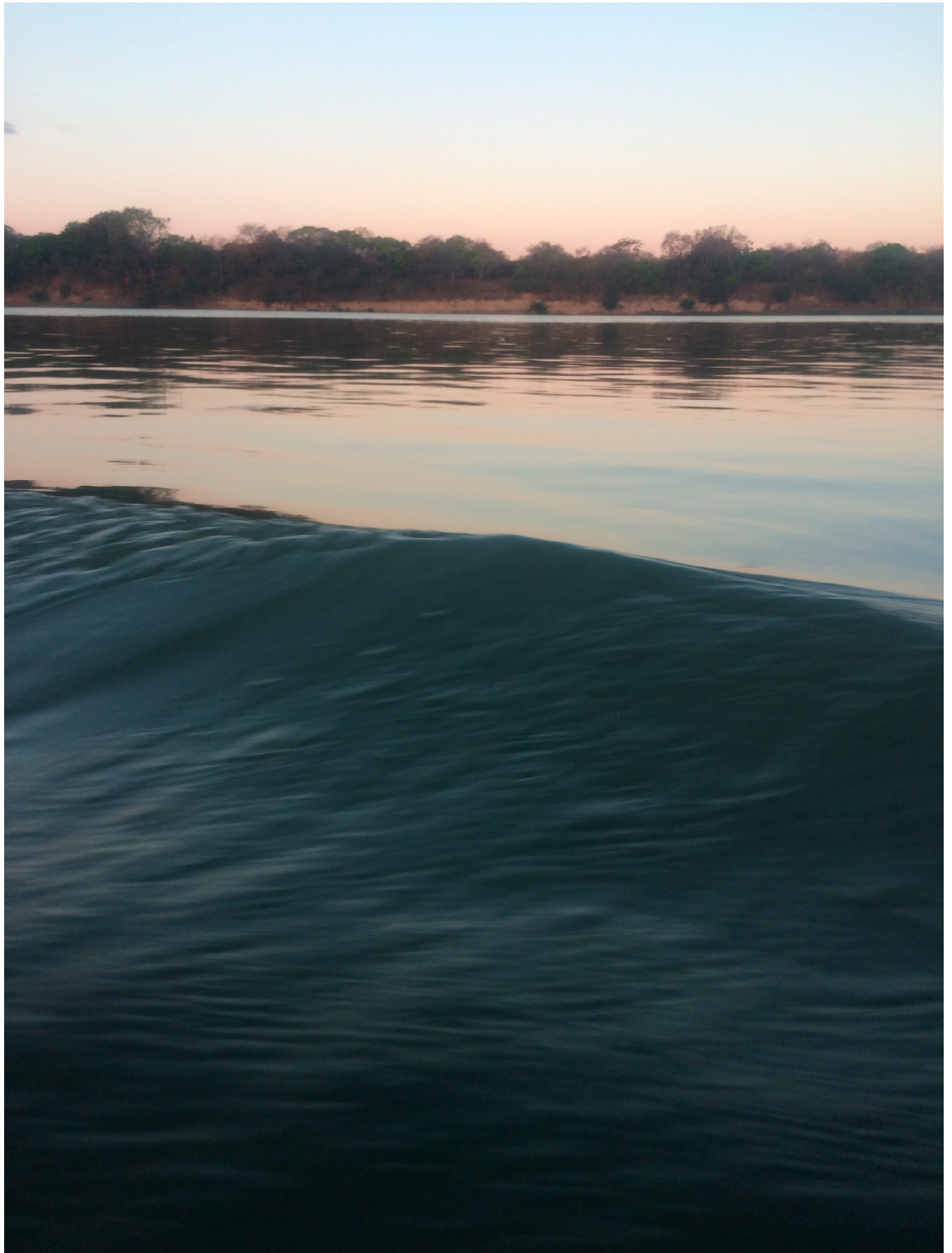


FIGURE 9  
Crossing of the  
São Francisco  
river in the port  
of Ponto Chique  
(2017). Photo  
of Raphael  
Vilas Boas.

This article also discusses elements of a visual anthropology made in a very specific ethnographic context, as a result of a shared production that thinks about the impact of these media to the local groups. The relationship with the audiovisual is something that has intensified in the groups of the region as another modality of raising the batuque. It is another way of making visible a practice that is always about to end, but never ends.

As Ferraz and Mendonça (2014) point out the different research strategies with images that vary according to each research context and the multiple dimensions of the ethnographic encounter, we may think that the batuqueiros appropriated the resources of the audiovisual to express this history of the forgetting and to move the fragments of their memories even more. It is possible to suggest that, just as the songs represent different temporalities, fragments of the past that join fragments of the present, the audiovisual can also represent and reverberate these different temporalities lived in the performances of the batuques. In this sense, the *filmação* is inserted in the perspective of the batuque to leave their memories visible, increasingly present and also to bring to the fore the relationship of the batuqueiros/vazanteiros with the images and the force of their montages, also incorporated by the audiovisual, in the dissemination of a memory that refers to the event of slavery and that, however great the attempts at erasure, it emerges in fragments and remnants of a performance that can never be forgotten. It is relevant to think not only of the importance of the audiovisual to *represent* the batuque, but also to discuss the influence of the batuqueiras montages in the audiovisual and how their categories can bring new understandings about cinema and performance.

### **FILMAÇÃO WITH THE BATUQUE**

The day I arrived at Ponto Chique, in the field for the master's degree in 2016, I went to greet Olímpio and inform him of my stay in the city. He asked me if I would want a *representação*, I said yes and I would even record the audio and film. I decided then to bet on this role of who produces images that the batuqueiros gave me, despite not having a crew or adequate technical equipment. We settled the footage for Saturday, June 4, 2016.

“During all this time, we never asked for a ritual to be performed exclusively for our anthropological benefit, we are not in favor of such an artificial theatrical performance” (Turner 1968, p. 18). This passage brought me some concerns: would it be the *representation* of the batuque for filming something false? What I want to demonstrate is that, from my experience in the field, the word *representação* is not detached from the sense of reality, knowing that it does not make the least sense this separation for the batuqueiros. To represent is to be directed to

action and not to mental representations, and the batuque surpasses in discourse and in performance, the chaotic dichotomy between reality and representations (Peirano 2001).

On the day of the batuque, Valu decides to make a *representação* at his house because it is lighter to get a better footage. Valu actively participates in the assembly of the equipment. He graces the table with the image of Nossa Senhora and asks us to film an image of her in the opening and closing of the DVD. Because he never saw any image of a saint in the performances of the batuque.

I question Valu if the other batuqueiros would not care about the image, but he explains to me that no, they are all devotees of Nossa Senhora. Valu also reports that, in her mother's time, she made a batuque for Saint Peter because she represented the saint, and other batuqueiros who *represented* Saint John performed the batuque on the saint's date. In other conversations, Valu explains that one of the reasons for inserting the image of Nossa Senhora was so that the bishop, who has a relationship with the Pastoral Movement of Fishermen, would feel *represented* if he saw the DVD. Here *representation* appears in its most political sense revealing a widening of the term by native theory.

The group meets in front of the house of Olímpio and Valu remains on the other side watching. Pretinha arrives before 7:00 p.m. for fear the group would start the batuque without her. With the group reunited, they cross the street towards Valu's house. On the house, Olímpio gathers the group and gives the instructions: you four (his daughter and granddaughter - the youngest ones, and Pascoalina who was in a different outfit of the group) stay there and start to twirl around here. Later he explains that they came out first because the younger ones *represent* the older ones, the current batuqueiros *represent* their ancestors and this process has no end.

The batuque brings together these sacred, profane and playful dimensions in their practice, transcending our compartmentalized view of rituals. To think about performance implies not isolating spheres of social life such as aesthetics, ethics, politics, religion, etc. (Hikiji 2005). I have found in the literature on batuque that in many cases, the batuques in the senzalas combined "religious" and "profane" activities in a single event, which transcends our cartesian mental logic which perceives the manifestations of the sacred and profane as static events.

Thus, in agreement with Van Gennep, it is necessary to assume the sacred and the profane not in their static and clearly separated polarization, but to conceive them as dynamic positions. In this sense, in the

batuque of Ponto Chique, there would be no essence in the sacred or profane, but in its relative position in a given context of relations.

It is always Olímpio who pulls the first song, as leader. He is the one who gives the orders and commands the intonation. The *roncador*<sup>6</sup> is what sets the rhythm of the dance. “What I want to drink is cachaça”. Valu bought cachaça that was shared by some batuqueiros in the middle of the circle. Olímpio rejected such an attitude. He explains that there should be no cachaça in the middle of the circle and anyone who wants to drink should absentmindedly take a sip and return to the circle. For Olímpio, if people drink too much they can fall and hurt, in addition to disrupting the dance. Neuza (2016) explained that in the old days, when the batuqueiros sang the song of cachaça, a few cups arrived and each member took a sip. “It was not much, just to cheer up, the music would ask.” Today she explains that almost no batuqueiro drinks cachaça, she herself, stopped drinking.

Music warms the circle. Agripina circulates all over the place with the dance she inherited from her mother. The neighbors joke that she is using crutch and limping all day, but that is just getting into the circle that she even forgets she has problem in the leg. Pascoalina throws her body forward, back, looks, defies with her face, and returns. Pretinha is fast and when she meets Agripina on the circle they have fun in the game.

The feminine identity is then triggered in the performance that subverts and stresses the male pattern. Female corporality gains relevance in dance. Pretinha circles the whole circle with a piercing look and invites each present to hit the shoulder-to-shoulder. Since the time of Maria Catenga, it is in the performance that the women share moments of protagonism, like Maria Catenga, the woman batter drum of the batuque. Dona Pretinha, the woman who dances the batuque, Agripina, the woman who knows how to call the songs.

Corporality was, until then, the place of the feminine, but as in a flash, the past comes to the surface and Olímpio jumps with the box and dances the *carneiro*<sup>7</sup> with the women. The other day I comment on how beautiful it was to see him dance with Agripina, I had never seen this before, and he explains that in the past men also danced, but that Zé dos Passos, coordinator and enthusiast of the group, found it more appropriate that men no longer danced in the performance. Olímpio never questioned the decision. Neuza remembered the old batuqueiros Seu Enó, Seu Antônio do Morro and João do Morro who danced with mastery. Olímpio tells us that the men always danced

6. It is a typical instrument of the batuques of the river San Francisco and that has its origin in the instruments of Central Africa.

7. Carneiro is the name of the dance that mimics the ram animal.

and could not leave all at once. As they are playing the boxes, this could interfere with the rhythm.

The rhythm intensifies to the trance of the boxes, at which point everyone connects in perfect harmony. Rhythm, melody and beat on the same frequency or intonation as they say. The group seems to be in a collective trance. Participants intensely experience performance. A man begins to imitate a ram. The movements of the ram are present in the corporal mimesis of the dance of the batuque and it was just at the moment that they sang the music of the ram that Valu began to shout and to shake the body. Commenting on the batuque the other day, Olímpio remembered his great-grandfather. He and Neuza began to sing: “Look at my sheep, meh - he has been shouting, meh - oh he - oh he - meh. Olímpio says that the great-grandfather was already an old person but at the time of this song he screamed, and trembled the whole body. “There was nothing better. My mother did not learn, no one learned that. Valu started yelling there yesterday. But who is he to shout like my great-grandfather?” As in a flash, Valu incorporates his great-grandfather and the ram in gestures and sounds. In the batuque of Maria de São Romão it is the voice of her mother that appears when she is going to sing, in the case of the batuque of Ponto Chique it is the memories that bring through the corporal mimesis, gestures and songs the connection with a past.

It is at this moment that the past articulates to the present in a “musical relationship” (Dawsey 2012). Valu incorporates, by the sounds of the ram, his great-grandfather who will be remembered by Neuza and Olímpio the other day. The cachaça is ritualized again remembering that the song “I want to drink cachaça” was a kind of catalyst of the performance. Neuza remembers the little cups, the mother and the grandmother dancing until dawn.

It was during the performance for the *filmação* that the images of the past came to the surface in a surprising movement. The “old” batuque in which the men could dance and *amarradas*<sup>8</sup> with the women returns in the performance of Olímpio. The *Carneiro*, which gives the name to the dance and the movement of the shrug, comes to the surface by the screams and tremors of Valu that shows what his great-grandfather’s mimesis was like. If, at the beginning of the research, I sought to understand the differences between a batuque made by the ancestors in Dona Izabel’s terreiros and a current batuque “transformed” by the contact with the audiovisual, they show me, in performance, the misconception of this separation. It also seems to me to deal with what Dawsey

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8. It is a term used by the batuqueiros that refers to the moment in which the dancers slam the shoulder to each other. This movement refers to the mimesis of the ram, which justifies the fact that some groups in the region call the practice of *Carneiro*.

(2012) calls the involuntary memory of the city: “It is also a good image for the anthropologist who tries to be attentive to the surprising movements of social life, when images from the past flash from the depth of the involuntary memory of the city “ (Dawsey 2012, p. 213).

At no point did the group remember that there were cameras and microphones in place and that the presentation was going to be filmed. At that moment, with the camera in hand, I seemed completely invisible. It could be filming or not, it did not matter. A catharsis among the batuqueiros that live side by side, also linked by ties of kinship, and who share dilemmas, histories and a common past in the work on the farms and the ebbing. The next day, as if nothing had happened, everything comes back to normal, they live together, talk about others, tell stories.

This first experience of ethnography from the use of cameras and with a proposal of audiovisual recording during the field points to possible meanings for the term native *filmação*. It is a term that is directed to the action and that seems to refer to the audiovisual, not as a product, but as a performance. We may suggest that it matters more to batuqueiros the moment of performance for the film than the resulting imaging product. It was exactly this imaging exercise with the group that guided the master’s thesis in elucidating aspects of performance that had not been expressed during the research. It was from the moment that I took the place of the filming, attributed by the batuqueiros, that the research reached its potential and it was possible to apprehend elements of relation with the past and collective energization, which until then, I had not noticed. This shows the power of images as an ethnographic method and the power of performance for the cinema to maintain the practice of batuque in the community.

The DVD became more important in the act of *represent* the batuque for entities, in other cities, for other groups, than necessarily for the aesthetic result of the production of the images. We can suggest that *filmação*, not filming or audiovisual, is the performance for the cinema that marked the trajectory of the group since the first passage of the Cinema no Rio São Francisco project in 2006 when the batuque performed before the cinema screening in the main square of the city. This performance was crucial to the batuque’s *levantamento*.

The DVD also entered into the relationship between social dramas and aesthetic dramas. It is possible to think of this relationship from the reflections of Schechner, an author who is manifestly opposed to the dichotomy between ritual and social dramas and aesthetic-theatrical dramas as suggested by Turner.

In the essay “Selective inattention” Schechner elaborates his well-known model of an infinity-loop, to discuss the interactive relations between social dramas and aesthetic dramas: social dramas affect aesthetic dramas, and aesthetic dramas affect social dramas (Dawsey 2011: 208).

An example of this relationship was the seventh-day Mass of Neuza, a member of the group, in which she was sung in the batuque. The batuqueiros made a song to honor her. Neuza then became a batuque and can be sung on other batuques performances. From this interactive relationship, it is possible to understand the incorporation of the audiovisual in the web of relations between social dramas and aesthetic dramas. The DVD, which had images of Neuza’s last performance in life, came to represent it, capable of making her present, as well as the music made in her honor. The DVD also operates in the relationship of making this important member present in the life of the batuqueiros, as well as the songs of batuque that bring elements of the past in a memory that is always updated in the present. The audiovisual seems to operate at this junction of social and aesthetic performances, bringing together aspects of effervescence and collective elaboration to elements of a meta-theater<sup>9</sup> of daily life that expresses tensions and contradictions of reality. These are social dramas, like the death of Neuza, which stimulate the realization of aesthetic dramas and both affect each other.

The very infinity-loop model, which Schechner drew from his Turner readings, goes back to Turner (making a loop) by revitalizing his discussions. The model comes out enriched. In particular, Schechner’s notion of “restored behavior” was central to Turner’s formulations. “I learned from him (Schechner),” says Turner (1985, p. Xi), “that every performance is ‘restored behavior’, that the fire of meaning erupts from the friction between the hard and soft woods of the past [...] and the present of social and individual experience (Dawsey 2011: 208)

#### **BATUQUEIRA'S MONTAGES**

“The mill is mine / the ox is mine / the sugar cane is mine / the bagasse is yours”. The facts reported in rhyme, music, performances and sung are also images, a sequence filled with tensions. When singing this batuque at the time of filming the batuqueiros laugh and have fun. An alienation? Almost as in a displacement they sing the story of their ancestors, the work on the farms. The rhythm is even more frantic as a way of energizing this “slave” past. They distort the bagasse of history, in an imaginary memory in frames of the past that comes to the surface. They are facts reported in rhyme, are stories and music sung.

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9. Dawsey (2006) articulates the approaches of Erving Goffman, who is interested in the theater of everyday life, and Victor Turner, who seeks to capture the moments of interruption, or meta-theater of daily life.



In the batuqueiras montages<sup>10</sup> the objects, the wood, the armadillos<sup>11</sup> are sung and they sing in the roda. We may suggest that in this performance there is a form of an assembly or reassembly of beings. Thinking that these batuqueiras montages translate the various senses for the representation as action, we can say that the action of joining these diverse pieces of the world is the way of giving existence to the beings that populate the river San Francisco.

If we think of documentary fiction as one more form of past and present friction, we can understand this relationship between the film's montages and the batuqueiras assemblages as a kind of restored behavior (Schechner 1985) in which the fragments of the past constitute filmic temporality. "Above all, montages reveal dissonant or unresolved elements of social life" (Dawsey 2013: 70). It is the fusion of conflicts where one creates an image or assembly filled with tensions.

It is possible to exemplify this idea of montage from the own songs of the batuque, where the symbols of the slavery, for example, decompose in assemblages batuqueiras. The music mentioned above draws attention to the imagery of the poetics of the batuques. The verses have their power less by the discursive aspect and more by the force of the images evoked. The verses are more the expression of an assembly, or of images, in fragments than of a discourse to be understood.

It is also in this moment that the collective memory<sup>12</sup> (Halbwachs 1990) collapses into residuals that accumulates and travels along the São Francisco River. It is also possible to think of this communication between the batuques as the expression of an underground memory (Pollak 1992), that is, something unspeakable, inconceivable that does not align with the memory one wishes to impose by the local elite. The emergence of "underground memories" expresses less of an essence or a crystallized tradition and an attempt to re-inscribe memories and traditions under present-day conditions (Mello 2008).

We can suppose that these improvisational songs signify and inform the memory of the group bringing new collective representations on the events that can be passed on by the music. For Halbwachs (1990), musical technical memory depends on the group that dominates its

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10. I use the term montage inspired by Dawsey (2013, 2012, 2009, 2005b).

11. There are some songs of the batuque that sing the armadillos, mainly because they are becoming scarce in the region because of hunting.

12. I use the term collective memory in reference to Halbwachs (1990) for whom memory is a reconstruction in the present of materials of the past.

language, through its codes and conventions, and which gives meaning to them, perpetuating them. He cites the example of the child sweetly packed by the songs of his nurse. Later she will repeat the choruses that her parents sing along to her. “There are songs of roda, as there are songs of work. In the streets of the great cities, popular songs run from mouth to mouth, reproduced once by the realejos, today by megaphones” (Halbwachs 1990, p. 172).

This same author calls attention to the fact that it is not necessary for men to have learned music to keep the memory of certain songs and certain melodies. For him, rhythm just as words remind us not only of sounds, but the way in which we determine their succession. For the author, it is the rhythm that plays the leading role in our memory. Rhythm does not exist in nature, it is a product of life in society. The individual alone would not know how to invent it.

These demands are incorporated into the songs in a fluid way, in the rhythm of the batuque. Other batuques will also produce memories as the product of this shattering. Assemblies generate new assemblies. This idea is interesting to think about this destruction of the symbols in the performance of the batuque that decomposes in fragments that are always reconstituted in the present, in a new performance.

When one thinks of this montage of the batuque as the relation between past and present or as a friction capable of bringing things back to life in performance, it is pertinent to retake some notions of Turner (1986), especially in his characterization of an anthropology of experience. The batuqueiras montages are perceived in the music, in the fragments danced and sung. It is in this musical relation that the past is linked to the present. We can suggest that the time of the documentary is the time of the song.

Turner presents Dilthey’s metaphor to address the five “moments” that constitute the procedural structure of each *erlebnis*, or lived experience: 1) something happens at the level of perception (being that pain or pleasure can be felt more intensely than repetitive or routine behaviors); 2) images of past experiences are evoked and delineated - acutely; 3) emotions associated with the events of the past are relived; 4) the past articulates to the present in a “musical relation” (according to Dilthey’s analogy), making possible the discovery and construction of meaning; and 5) the experience is completed through a form of “expression”. (Dawsey 2005: 164). By joining past and present in the performance of the batuque the flow of experience erupts into an “experience” linking the group. It is at this moment that the past articulates itself to the present in a “musical relation”.

This essay on an anthropology of experience was posthumously published and also reveals Schechner's influence on Turner's work. In the late 1970s, inspired by the essayist, especially by the notion of "restored behavior," Turner elaborates an anthropology of experience based on past-present relationships. These experiences that interrupt routinized and repetitive behavior begin with shocks of pain or pleasure and bring emotions and experiences from the past that are evoked in the present.

Then the emotions of past experiences give color to the images and sketches relived by the shock in the present. Then there is an anxious need to find meaning in what has presented itself in a disconcerting way, whether through pain or pleasure, and which has converted mere experience into an experience. All this happens when we try to join past and present. (Turner 1986:179).

In Dilthey's view, experience incites expression, or communication with others. We are social beings and we mean what we learn from experience. "The meanings obtained by the harsh penalties must be said, painted, danced, dramatized, finally put into circulation" (Turner 1986: 180). This is how, for Turner, performance refers to the moment of expression, a way to complete the experience.

The sense of experience is generated when past and present enter into "musical relationship." In this harmonious<sup>13</sup>relationship between past and present, what to say about soundscapes filled with noise? How to make an anthropology of noise, or the noise that escapes the processes of organization of sound? (Dawsey 2009: 352). Dawsey (2009) offers questions to this model of anthropology of experience and points to possibilities of exploring what he called the "unconscious sound" of cultural landscapes. This discussion of Dawsey is of paramount importance to think of the batuqueiro's assemblages that, in addition to fractioning past and present, also bring to the surface the elements, or the noises of a story read against the grain.

While it is possible to perceive a movement that goes from the ritual to the theater in the work of Turner, in Schechner the movement is opposite, of the theater to the ritual. From Turner's encounter with the essayist, he creates the concept of *liminoid* to think about the relation of social dramas in complex societies to cultural practices carried out apart from the social whole. Schechner in turn will strain the divisions between theater, performance and ritual by proposing an inverse path and bringing the performing arts closer to rituals in traditional societies. For Schechner rite and theater are performances.

13. Dilthey's metaphor seems to evoke the moment when the past is elaborated into an action of transformation into present as a harmonious relationship between musical notes. Dilthey, interested in the German music movement of the eighteenth century, describes the instruments through which Mozart, for example, makes manifest the existential experience.

The friction of the hard and soft woods of the past<sup>14</sup>, it is interesting to think about the life of the wooden instruments that sing, mock, and snore in the performance of the batuque. The *roncador* is the diacritical instrument which points to the recurrent instruments in Central Africa and which assumes new meanings in diaspora lands. It is he who snores and mocks in the performance and, from the friction of its woods, makes this past present. For Turner it's not just an idea of the past, it's really the past that comes to the surface. For Schechner these are pieces of behavior, things and beings that come together in the here and now.

### FICTION AND FRICTION IN THE DOCUMENTARY

In 2017 we spent 15 days filming with the batuques of communities around Ponto Chique. We stayed for a week with the batuque of Ponto Chique that would be the thread of the documentary. I would like to bring, in these preliminary discussions, the relation of the batuqueira's montages and their intentionalities that friction the collective project of the documentary. From the raw material captured during the documentary footage, it is possible to relate the actors of the film, the actors in the performance and the actors in the *filmação*, which can be understood as film while performance and action. It is a relation of mirroring, or a pile of shards.

It is also possible to notice that the process of filming the documentary has different characteristics from the first exercise of *filmação* with the batuque. In the documentary, the batuqueiros were invited to perform their histories, memories and daily life, beyond the moment of the performance of the batuque.

During this experience of filming the documentary it was possible to perceive some intentions of the batuqueiros in relation to their montages thinking about the unfolding film. Olímpio, for example, participated in the filming process and was interviewed by the crew. As much as he was representing himself in the documentary and not exactly a character, since he was talking about his life and performing his daily life for the cameras, it was possible to perceive a "not not me"<sup>15</sup> dimension. He knew the distance between him and what he represented in the film at the same time that the negative duo brought a freedom to reassemble himself in front of the cameras.

14. As noted on page 22.

15. Schechner (1985) created the term "not not me" to translate the between-place of performance. The author explains that an actor never tries to convince himself or the audience that the performance corresponds to a complete transformation. In the representation the actor tries to offer his skills and knowledge to the character, but never becomes himself. Also in ritual, incorporation or trance state, the subject never ceases to be himself to become an entity or a spirit, for example.

“The actor [says Brecht] does not allow himself to be completely transformed on the stage in the character he is portraying. He is not Lear, Harpagon, Schweik: he shows them” (Schechner 1985: 217). According to Schechner (1985), this space between “not” and “not not” also refers to a temporality that transits between the past and the present for the creation of an idea of the future. In this material that will later constitute a film, it is possible to perceive the intentionalities that involve the production of a documentary and the batuqueira’s assemblages that are articulated in multiple temporalities that go back to infinity.

The performance of Olímpio also brings a relevant idea of the filmmaker Eisenstein that approached the importance of the character that is constituted before the spectator, during the course of the action and not with characteristics created a priori. This was revealed in the montages proposed by him, from the scenes of the descent of the port of the city, the entrance to the canoe, the route to his ebb and the performances that he proposed when singing and dancing with the hoe while weeding his small planting space of pumpkins and beans. We were filming his work on the ebb and, suddenly, Olímpio jumped and began to sing and dance with the hoe. He knew he was delivering something we hoped for, an important performance for the film. It was in the course of action and from his actor consciousness about the multiple possibilities of the performance that he stages for the film.



FIGURE 10  
Filming crew  
accompanying  
the daily route  
of Olímpio to  
its ebb (2017).  
Photo of Raphael  
Vilas Boas.

Olímpio counts all the cases in detail, makes a point of singing the songs while narrating the stories in a rich exercise of composing himself for the film in the limits of the act of representing. Zé de Abilio was an influential man in Ponto Chique, he had promised to take the group to represent in a nearby town. The group got all dressed up, waited for the driving that did not come. “Oh Zé de Abilio/are you not the man of the place/you knew that there was car/why did you call?”. Olímpio tells the story, sings the music, laughs and has fun in front of the cameras. Another point that drew attention during the filming was the eruption of laughter, the laughter of the batuqueiros in commenting on the past, on the batuques, on the cases and the *inventions*.



FIGURE 11  
The batuque group of Ponto Chique and the crew have fun during the filming of the documentary (2017). Photo by Raphael Vilas Boas.

Valu, another important character in the film, demonstrates a greater interest in the process of producing the images. He suggests locations that would be more appropriate, have an appreciation for issues such as lighting, framing, etc. Before we connect the cameras at his house, he asks his wife Raimunda to straighten the place, remove the dust and be silent so as not to disturb the recordings.

In explaining the tension between the real and the invented in the batuque, he illuminates a possible discussion about the documentary. “The batuque has a part of a lie and a part of truth. You will correct the lie and always give a true ending in the case” (Valu 2017). Another important point he comments during the interview for the film is the “gossip” that is told inside the circle. In the batuque it is told about the life

of its members, cases of jealousy, betrayals, things that happened. “You will tell the lives of others without them realizing that you are telling” (Valu 2017). This relation between real and invented can be compared to Wagner’s notion of convention and invention. This invention is present in the culture category and also in the performance of the batuque and can be extended to the process of making a documentary with the group. Valu, for example, uses the word *invento* instead of an event to talk about his performances at traditional culture events.

For Wagner, culture can mean both the active invention of the world and of life, as something that conditions (Wagner 2010). He takes this dialectic as the core of all human cultures, since invention transforms things and convention puts them in a recognizable world. This tension between the historical and the invented in the batuque is as if Valu knew that the necessity of the invention is given by the cultural convention and the necessity of the cultural convention is given by the invention (Wagner 2010: 94). We invent to sustain and restore our conventional orientation; we adhere to this orientation to affect the power and the gains that invention brings us (p.96). It is because it is historical that the batuque is invented. The documentary can be thought from this dialectic between convention and invention and also in the tension pointed out by Valu when he comments on the historical and invented in the batuque. The documentary may constitute as another *invention* that incorporates the performances of the batuque.

Raimunda, Valu’s wife, demonstrated great ability with the cameras and used this interview space as a place of outburst against a silencing that she lives indoors and also in the conflicts with some members of the batuque. Skillfully she also traces herself to the cameras, selecting the most dramatic and shocking events. She talks about Neuza’s death, gets emotional and says: “She was our singing canary.” After this phrase she sings the song.

Scenography and costumes were important aspects for the batuques. The batuque of Vila Santos Reis, for example, created a special event for the day of filming. They set up a space, with a specific scenography, and the uniformed members celebrating 100 years of matriarch of the batuque. Maria Ciríaca died with the dream that Zé dos Passos, leader in the quilombola community of Bom Jardim da Prata and a great promoter of the local batuques, would record and film her stories. Before her death, she asked her daughters to communicate with him so that he would register that she was already leaving. For the daughters, the day of filming the documentary was an intervention of the matriarch. “I’m sure she’s there now,” they said.

FIGURE 12  
The batuque  
group from Vila  
Santos Reis  
prepared a special  
scenography for  
the filming day of  
the documentary  
(2017). Photo  
by Raphael  
Vilas Boas.



To sing a person, an being or entity in the batuque is also to realize a double passage: from the transcendental plane to a state of presence next to the people on earth again. We can think of the movie within this passage of bringing people from the spiritual plane into a physical presence. We can still think of documentary as a way of moving between reality and fiction and as a friction between *invento*, the action of producing realities and this movement of making the batuque always visible. To produce a documentary with the batuque groups is to act in the lived, to create collectively, to reinvent the past, to friction the present and produce a fiction that recreates the real and stresses the invented.

#### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS: THE AUDIOVISUAL IN PERFORMANCE

“To deal with an anthropology based on the interactions between social dramas and aesthetic dramas consists in the possibility of seeing the poetic dimension of social life, approaching it in a sensitive way, but not in any way distancing it from its political load” (Noletto 2015: 06). From the ethnography, interviews and analysis of the filmic material it was possible to perceive how the film participates and incorporates the relation between social dramas and aesthetic dramas and how the experience of the batuque can be modified and modify the construction of this documentary.

From the audiovisual it is possible to think of the anthropology of performance understood here as a perspective, that is, a way of seeing social life as a set of performative acts that dramatize, communicate, reiterate and modify social status, considering social life as endowed of a certain dramaturgy that gives it intelligibility (Noletto 2015).



Taylor (2013) believes that we should rethink our object of analysis and pay more attention to scripts as paradigms of meaning construction. The author's proposal is an inspiration for us to be able to take the script proposed by our interlocutors, in this case the batuqueiros, during the experiences of producing the documentary and also during the process of circulation, exhibition and reception of the film. This means that, from ethnography, it is possible to perceive scripts shaping our categories according to what the interlocutors show us in their performances. These scripts find a place of expression also from the incorporation of the audiovisual in the ethnography. From the cameras, new possibilities of diving in the real are possible thinking of the inventiveness and expression of our interlocutors.

The enchanted ones of the river produce action, the snorer, the floods, the nature. The fiction that is produced with the batuqueiros is not an imaginary or unreal narrative, it is not the act or effect of pretending, on the contrary, fiction is the action of producing realities, it is the transformed act, is to put the creativity in the world, it is to unite thoughts and categories into an assembly that can be loaded with tensions. Be it in the terraces of Dona Izabel, queen of the batuque, be it in the stages, in the *filmação*, in the meetings, they are always representing, always giving life to the batuque.

Rocha and Eckert (2014) point out that visual and image anthropology has been placed as a consistent line of research in Brazil and aligned with the challenges of new epistemic forms and imaginative creations. The authors point to the importance of visual anthropology from the beginning of the discipline, whether in ethnographic research as a social fact in Marcel Mauss, through the shared anthropology proposed by Jean Rouch in ethnographic films with the Malians and Nigerians,

to the multiplicity of proposals of an anthropology of cultural and social critique (Cardoso de Oliveira, 2000, Fischer, 2009, Wagner, 2010, Strathern, 2006, etc.) the imaginary heritage produced in ethnographic experiences follows the relational, conscious of its own historicity and the contextual nature of its own concepts and instruments' (Eckert, Rocha 2014: 51).

It is in this sense that it becomes necessary to delve into the ways in which the audiovisual is incorporated into the cosmologies of groups in this movement to make their practices always visible, especially in the contemporaneous with the internet and the multiple possibilities of diffusion. It is not, therefore, a simple and reductionist parallel, it takes a deep dive in these forms of apprehension of the world.

**TRANSLATION**  
Raphael Vilas Boas  
Leonel Ribeiro

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## INTERVIEWS

Olímpio (2016), (2017)

Valeriano (Valu) (2016), (2017)

Neuza (2016)

Raimunda (2016), (2017)

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