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To Remember Captivity: The *Congados* of Southern Minas Gerais

> O congado é do tempo dos escravos . . . Na libertação dos escravos, . . . fizeram a festa . . . Foi daí que surgiu o congado. A única coisa que eles tinham pra bater era a caixa, aonde nós temos as caixas. . . . Foram dançar pra Nossa Senhora do Rosário e São Benedito, . . . que São Benedito é o verdadeiro congadeiro e Nossa Senhora do Rosário foi a rainha que cuidava deles, protegia eles no cativeiro. . . . Disso aí criaram, né, evoluiu, e hoje o congado tem bastante instrumento.
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> The *congado* is from the time of the slaves. . . . When the slaves were freed, . . . they held a festival. . . . That's how the *congado* emerged. The only thing they had to play was a drum, which is how we have our drums. . . . They went to dance for Our Lady of the Rosary and Saint Benedict, . . . because Saint Benedict is the true *congadeiro* [*congado* participant], and Our Lady of the Rosary was the queen who took care of them, protected them in captivity. . . . From this they created, right, it evolved, and today the *congado* has a lot of instruments. (Pedro Cigano, Campanha, Minas Gerais)

Congados–or *congos*[1]–are drum-based music and dance ensembles that typically perform during festivals in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary, Saint Benedict the Black, and other popular Catholic saints. *Congados* are common

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in many small Brazilian towns, particularly in the southeastern regions of the country. In southern Minas Gerais, where this project was undertaken, the most widely known myth to explain the origin of the tradition claims that *congados* emerged to celebrate the abolition of slavery, which was proclaimed in Brazil in 1888. Although historical records attest to the existence of such associations long before abolition, *congados* today are privileged sites for the construction, preservation, and transmission of black social memory.

For Paul Connerton (1989), social memory is composed of the recollections and images of the past that a particular social group considers worthy of remembering, and the way in which the past is conceptualized impacts how the present is experienced and interpreted. Connerton highlights the role of ritual enactment in conveying and sustaining social memory, arguing that the efficacy of enactment resides in its performativity; rather than simply reminding the community of its master narratives, the actions performed during rituals habituate the body to its most cherished values and categories. Every group, Connerton (1989, 102) claims, "will know how well the past can be kept in mind by a habitual memory sedimented in the body."

Connerton's basic argument is that "bodily social memory"–that is, unreflected culture-specific bodily practice–is a highly conservative force which creates an inertia in society's structures, and therefore it is commonly implicated in the legitimization of the present social order. While I am also inclined to view the body as the basic cultural substrate, Connerton does not adequately account for the complexities in the processes of bodily inscription. It is precisely because bodily automatism limits the scope for critical evaluation that the body is a site of intense struggle over the control of what gets inscribed upon it. The very physical violence perpetrated upon bodies, especially subordinate bodies, to habituate them to submissive postures, attests to their unwillingness easily to submit to inscription. Indeed, subordinate groups actively engage in countering the sedimentation of hegemonic inscription upon their bodies through bodily practices of their own. Many of the "weapons of the weak" described by James Scott (1985), such as foot-dragging, pilfering, and sabotage, have a distinct anti-hegemonic bodily base. In a later work, Scott (1990) extended his inventory of subaltern weapons to include structured forms of expression with a certain degree of public visibility. Scott focuses upon text-based expressive forms, such as folktales, song lyrics, jokes, and the like, but the inventory could–and should–also include music and dance, prime sites for the acquisition of bodily consciousness (Cowan 1990, 24).

Although the body is not the central focus of Scott's work, his discussion of subaltern expressive forms is pertinent here. He notes that subaltern groups strive to carve out autonomous peer-based social spaces away from the direct gaze of the powerholders, in order to create dissident– or hidden–subcultures, which are kept separate from the public interclass arenas. Scott notes that subcultural discourse is formalized through

expressive repertoires that contain what he calls "hidden transcripts," that is, critiques of power that articulate subaltern experiences of social injustice. Scott emphasizes the experience of assaults upon one's dignity and self-esteem that typically accompany material exploitation, pointing out that these themes are prominent in hidden transcripts. They often express cathartic fantasies and social visions, which invert and re-invent the social order, portending alternative–and more dignifying–social arrangements. Given their potential subversiveness, the public manifestation of hidden transcripts typically involves forms of disguise that veil their content behind a veneer of innocuousness and harmless playfulness.

The social memory of subaltern groups bears all the hallmarks of hidden transcripts, such that one could refer to "hidden social memory," in which the events of the past that are singled out as worthy of remembering are precisely those which heighten awareness of and critique present circumstances. Hidden social memory is most effectively conveyed and sustained through performance, allowing the subaltern classes to gain unmediated bodily experiences of alternative social arrangements at the same time in which they habituate bodies to a world governed by these alternative principles. The media of music and dance performance constitute efficient mnemonic devices for the preservation of hidden social memory; while the sensual bodily activity of singing and dancing counter the inscription of submissive postures, it can be publicly paraded as harmless entertainment. Indeed, ethnomusicologists have long noted that it is often possible to voice in song and dance that which cannot be declared openly (cf. Merriam 1964, 190–97).

In this paper I shall be looking at the *congado* tradition as a site in which subaltern communities of southern Minas Gerais strive to assert control over their bodily social memory. *Congados* base their activities on recollections of the abolition of slavery, an event sanctioned by the saints, thus affirming its moral correctness. The historic cover for the tradition has been its connection to the official religious system. Though repressed at times, the clergy and the powerholders have been more inclined to take ambiguous stances toward these ensembles, perceiving them as little more than innocent, if unorthodox, forms of entertainment. For the participants, however, the recreation of the celebratory atmosphere of abolition serves as a forum for the enactment of their versions of the black experience, and it places their bodies within their visions for society.

This investigation is based upon the activities of the *congados* of Campanha, a charming little town in southern Minas Gerais, where the *congado* tradition is particularly strong. As in other towns in this region, the focus of *congado* activity is the local festival of Our Lady of the Rosary. In Campanha the festival takes place sometime in August, the actual date determined each year by the parish priest. I note, however, that my familiarity with the *congado* tradition extends beyond Campanha. Since the

early 1980s, I have been conducting research on *congados* and other forms of popular Catholicism throughout southeastern Brazil (Reily 1994b, 1995). I have used some of this material here, but the discussion centers upon Campanha because it was the focal point for the dissemination of the tradition in the wider region of this discussion.

Campanha, *Congados,* and Class Relations

Campanha was founded as a clandestine mining town in the early eighteenth century, but it was brought under colonial jurisdiction in 1737, when it was "discovered" accidentally on purpose by the colonial authorities, anxious to insure the region paid its taxes to the crown.[2] At that time Campanha was clearly a well established settlement with a population of around ten thousand people, including seven thousand black slaves who worked the mines for the white minority (Casadei and Casadei 1989, 14–15). Almost immediately Campanha became the region's cultural and economic center, and its dominance lasted well into the nineteenth century. The wealth generated by gold is still evident in the colonial and imperial architecture of many of the buildings, and today some active citizens are trying to develop the town's tourism.

As in other mining regions, the decline in gold production led to an economic emphasis on cattle, and by the turn of the twentieth century on coffee. More recently, coffee groves have begun to give way to citrus fruit production. The agricultural crisis of the 1960s left the local economy in a state of relative stagnation, and the population fell dramatically as locals moved to the more prosperous economic centers of the southeast, particularly São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Belo Horizonte. The current population stands at 12,500 people. Alongside agriculture, which absorbs around 37 percent of the local work force, a few small craft-based industries, commercial establishments, the municipal government, and institutions connected to the Catholic Church are the primary sources of employment.[3] Because of the limited job opportunities, out-migration is still common, particularly among the younger generations.

Campanha's social space is marked by a strong class divide. The local elite represents itself as "enlightened" (*esclarecidos*) and "cultured" (*gente de cultura*) in opposition to the lower classes, which are seen as "simple" (*simples*) and "uncultured" (*gente de pouca cultura*). The lower classes, on the other hand, define themselves as "poor" (*pobres*) in opposition to the "rich" (*ricos*) and "refined" (*gente fina*).[4] Viewed in terms of the criteria used in the national census, however, most members of the local elite would hardly be classed as rich, fitting more comfortably within the category of middle class, or even lower middle class. They live primarily around the central core of the town, while the lower classes are concentrated in peripheral neighborhoods.

The members of the *congados* are recruited from the poorest sectors of the town. Most are manual laborers, particularly *bóias-frias* (agricultural day-laborers), but also janitors, street cleaners, construction workers, and other low-paying jobs. As in other parts of Brazil, the troupes are associated with blacks, and a black presence is evident in most of the groups. None of them, however, exclude people on the basis of skin color. Rather, social class also determines participation. In Campanha, blackness is as much a social as a racial category; as a social category, it is constructed through an identification of the experience of poverty with the historic subjugation of blacks in the country.

In the last few years there have been from three to five active *congados* in Campanha at any given time. Like other such ensembles in the region, the groups are dominated by drums of all sizes, including several large bass drums known locally as *treme-terras* (literally earth-quakes) or *surdões*, various *caixas* (cylindrical double-headed drums) of different sizes, and a few snare drums (*tarois*). Other percussion instruments used include tambourines (*pandeiros*), *reco-recos* (cylindrical scrapers) and shakers. *Congados* are not exclusively percussion ensembles; they also employ string instruments, such as *violas* (five double-coursed instruments slightly smaller than guitars), guitars, *bandolins* (mandolin-type instruments with four double courses), and violins, as well as an accordion or two and a pair of brass instruments, such as cornets, trombones, or tenor saxophones. Over the instruments, short verses, rarely more than four phrases in length, are sung responsorally by two duos, first in parallel thirds, then in parallel sixths.

Since colonial times, Campanha has prided itself in its musical life, and one version of this story is told by the celebrated local musician, Marcello Pompeu (1885–1988), in a small booklet entitled *Subsídios para a história da música da Campanha* (1977). This document, however, makes no mention of the *congados* or of any of the other musical traditions patronized by the town's lower classes;[5] it focuses exclusively upon the musical activities of the local elite, describing the processional bands, church choirs, orchestras, pianos, serenades, and parlor dances that entertained the more prosperous sectors of Campanha during his long life.

In omitting the *congados* from his account, Pompeu's representation of Campanha's musical life is entirely coherent with the dominant attitudes of the local elite toward these organizations. I was repeatedly warned to be cautious during my research, because the social space of the *congados* was considered to be dangerous. This notion is premised on the perception that violence and fighting occur frequently amongst *congadeiros,* instigated by excessive drinking and rivalries between the groups. But fear of the associations amongst the elite also rests heavily on the belief that *congadeiros* practice black magic–or *macumba*–and this is taken as a self-evident justification for their disqualification.

These disparaging attitudes, however, are offset by yet another set of local discourses, which have been borrowed from nationalist cultural ideologues. Here the *congados* are placed in the category of local folklore, which represents them as valuable repositories of local heritage and potential tourist attractions. Respected voices within the local elite feel that "their" *congados* should receive local support, but because they are represented as local heritage, or collective town property; the responsibility for supporting them is made a matter for the state, exempting the individual citizen. In recent years the municipal government has become the major patron of the *congados,* taking on some of the financial responsibilities associated with the Festival of Our Lady of the Rosary. Authorities now serve meals to the *congadeiros* during the festival, provide transport for the ensembles from their neighborhoods to the church yard, and supply each group with a few instruments each year.

For their part, *congadeiros* are aware of the disparaging attitudes held by the elite toward their cultural activities, and on occasion they express regret at the lack of support they receive from the wider community. Yet by the same token, they do not seem to make any deliberate efforts to dispel the depreciation of their ensembles; in fact, at times they appear to openly encourage it. A few local politicians spoke to me of the exasperation they experienced whenever they attempted to consult with the *congadeiros* to assess their needs. The *congadeiros,* they claimed, would not respond to their inquiries with straightforward demands, and their own suggestions were systematically met with resistance. This ambiguity highlights a dilemma facing the *congados:* finding ways of encouraging support for their associations without losing their autonomy.

The most powerful weapon in the arsenal of the subaltern classes of Campanha is the widespread suspicions in the *congadeiros'* ability to manipulate the forces of black magic. It is important to note that in Campanha there are no organized Afro-Brazilian religious communities, such as *candomblé* and *umbanda* temples, such that any magic practices, if practiced at all, are covert individual affairs. All of the town's *congadeiros* I interviewed on the matter denied any personal engagement with *macumba,* but they had no reservations in implicating others in such practices. Similarly, many members of the elite claimed they did not believe *macumba* to be powerful, and many of those who said they did think it could affect people's lives considered themselves to be well protected against such forces. Yet practically everyone contended that most people feared the powers of *macumba,* even if they denied it.

Macumba is a secretive and anonymous force, which defies any form of objective verification; its power resides in the *belief* in its power. In Campanha, these beliefs are sufficiently entrenched to affect the dynamics of inter-class relations. On the one hand, the possible threat of falling victim to the forces

of *macumba* leads members of the elite to avoid any unnecessary contact with members of the lower classes; on the other, it insures that where contact cannot be evaded, care is taken to avoid offending the subaltern party during the interaction, if only as a precautionary measure. Thus, as some community members contended, reasonable requests on behalf of a *congado* made by *congadeiros* considered to be particularly powerful *macumbeiros* (*macumba* practitioners) are rarely denied by local businesses, more out of the fear of *macumba* than out of a sense of social responsibility toward the poor. Local ideas pertaining to black magic, therefore, constitute one of the primary means through which *congadeiros* safeguard the autonomy of their organizations; but they also deploy them to insure that they receive at least some financial support for their activities from the wider community.

The folklorization of the *congado* tradition might also be viewed against the backdrop of the forces of *macumba.* Folklorization has transferred responsibility for the support of the *congados* onto the state, creating a legitimate avenue for putting local funds, however limited, at the groups' disposal, in a manner which precludes interaction between *congadeiros* and ordinary respectable citizens. Although the dispensation of municipal funds is mediated by individuals through clientelistic networks, state representatives can–and do–invoke the complexities in the structure of government to distance themselves from any direct link to the funds held by government. Given that their positions are achieved through electoral processes, government officials have a vested interest in attending to at least some of the demands of the electorate, many of whom are directly linked to *congado* communities; but the institutional nature of government is sufficiently diffuse and impersonal as to be impervious to the forces of magic. One could say, therefore, that, in the local context of Campanha, folklorization has become the elite response to *macumba,* serving to articulate the top-down mediation of cultural patronage.

The "balance," if one can call it that, achieved through the complementary roles of *macumba* and folklorization is extremely fragile, as it does little more than mask the tensions and frustrations that derive from the social and economic divisions cross-cutting the population of the town. In a context of limited wealth, the resources that are made available to *congados,* however generous, will inevitably be considered insufficient. But any increase in support also entails an increase in external control. The ambiguities and contradictions in the discourses and attitudes of the diverse social sectors of the town attest to the complexities involved in the co-existence of asymmetrical but inter-dependent social sectors in a highly divided society.

Historical Reconstruction

It is generally believed that the ensembles that are now known as *congos* and *congados* developed during the colonial era as a means of celebrating

the coronation of black kings, which slaves in urban areas were allowed to elect from time to time (Alvarenga 1982, 100; Bastide 1985 [1960], 173). The earliest documents referring to the coronation of black kings in Brazil date from the early eighteenth century, but several researchers (Bastide 1985 [1960], 173; Travassos Lins 1992, 232) contend that they were probably taking place well before that. Following the coronation, the slaves processed through the streets dancing and singing to commemorate their new leadership, and these processional ensembles were named after the African nation to which their members belonged. Coronations were most frequent amongst Bantu slaves of Congolese origin, such that eventually black kings throughout the colony came to be referred to as Kings of the Congo, and around them elaborate courts developed.

The courts were organized within the black confraternities (*irmandades*), particularly the confraternity of Our Lady of the Rosary. In the colonial period, religious confraternities were the dominant institutions linking church and society, and their main activities involved charity work, but they also promoted religious and social activities.[6] Most *irmandades* were organized along racial lines, with separate associations for whites, *pardos* (colored people) and blacks, and each confraternity promoted an annual festival on the feast of its patron saint. Patron saint festivals were the focus of colonial religious life. On the one hand, they stimulated competition amongst *irmandades*, each striving to out-do its rivals in its display of ostentation (Priore 1994, 25); on the other, they were one of the few "opportunities for the mingling of all classes on terms approximating equality" (Boxer 1964, 134). Throughout Brazil, the *irmandade* most commonly associated with blacks, both slaves and freed slaves (*forros*), was the confraternity of Our Lady of the Rosary, and the festival of Our Lady of the Rosary became the most important date on the black calendar.

The organization of slaves into confraternities was encouraged by the colonial officials, who often also had a hand in the selection of the members of their courts. It has been claimed that the King of the Congo had the political role of mediating between the black population and the local officials (Bastide 1959, 19); thus, Tinhorão (1975, 44) has argued that, through their confraternities, blacks had a means of participating, albeit from a marginal position, in the wider colonial society. Others, however, contend that the courts had a fundamentally compensatory role, providing slaves with an illusion of autonomy (Scarano 1976). Regardless of how effective they may have been as political organizations, the black confraternities engaged actively in raising funds to buy the freedom of their members (Boxer 1964, 177) and to finance their burials (Bastide 1985 [1960], 167–68). They also served as a focus for black recreational activities, and on Sundays and free days slaves and *forros* gathered in the churchyard to sing and dance.

In the mining regions of southeastern Brazil, *congados* first emerged in Ouro Preto and São João del Rei, and then diffused throughout the region, wherever

there was a large concentration of slaves (Almeida Barbosa 1965, Corrêa Giffoni 1989). The wealth of the mines allowed the *irmandades* in Minas Gerais to flourish, and religious festivals were staged very ostentatiously. Even the festivals organized by blacks could be extremely lavish, serving as a legitimate context in which slaves would publicly display their organizational potential and numerical strength (Priore 1994, 83). For each festival a couple was elected, generally from the white population, and they acted as patrons for the festival under the title of King and Queen of the Year. Their primary obligation was to raise funds to provide food for the attendants.

The legacy of the black colonial courts is still evident in contemporary festivals in honour of Our Lady of the Rosary. In some areas of Minas Gerais, all of the *congados* in a particular town form the local *congada,* an institution which unites the *congados* into a federation, or kingdom. This is the case in Itapecerica, Minas Gerais (Giffoni 1989). Some *congadas* have quite elaborate courts, including a Perpetual King and Queen, who are almost always black; a King and Queen of the Year, who are generally white; a specific king and queen for each *congado,* judges, ambassadors, masters of the festival poles and so on, all roles that are generally held by blacks or poor whites. Royal insignia, in the form of crowns, scepters, and capes, are very visible within the *congado* tradition. In Campanha the *congados* do not form a *congada,* but they are all united under a Perpetual King and a Queen of the Congo. Although the colonial courts may have had a distinct political role, contemporary courts are entirely symbolic; as Carlos Rodrigues Brandão (1985, 41) has put it, they rule over an "empty kingdom." The royal symbols have persisted, however, because they ennoble those who wear them and dignify the culture they represent. Furthermore, as Travassos Lins (1992, 226) has pointed out, "[r]itualized inversions focus attention on social hierarchies."

There are no documents to pinpoint when the first *congados* emerged in Campanha, but black dance associations dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary have probably been performing in the town since at least the early nineteenth century. The Church of the Rosary was completed in 1759, which suggests that the *irmandade* of the Rosary was already in existence at the time. Constructed out of stone, the church was located on the periphery of the town, which is where churches of the Rosary are usually to be found to this day, just as their patrons occupy marginal positions within society. In the memoirs of his youth in the town, Francisco de Paula Ferreira de Rezende (1987) described the festival promoted by the black confraternity of the Rosary in the 1830s as "the most joyful" of the annual religious festivals of Campanha. There were two black dance associations at the time, one made up of urban slaves and the other of rural slaves; the two groups competed with one another for the attention of the attendants at the festival. Woven between their musical performances there was the enactment of the "embassy" (*embaixada*), representing a battle between Christians and Moors.

The main event of the festival was the Ascent of the Rosary, in which the King and Queen of the Year were accompanied by the musicians from their homes to the Church of the Rosary, located on the highest peak of the town. He described this procession in the following terms:

> *As negras iam vestidas com o que elas tinham de melhor ou que podiam arranjar emprestado; e como, de ordinário, aquilo que mais se aprecia é justamente aquilo de que menos precisamos; muito raro era a negra, que embora não houvesse sol nem chuva, não subisse de chapéu de sol aberto. Os pretos faziam também o que podiam* para bem aparecer *naquele dia; e muitos havia que tudo quanto ajuntavam durante o ano, nesta festa o consumiam.* (author emphasis)
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> Black women went [to the festival] dressed in the best clothes they owned or were able to borrow; and since that which we most treasure is that which we need the least, it was very rare for black women not to be wearing wide brimmed hats even if it was neither raining nor excessively sunny. The blacks also did what they could *to be seen* on that day, and there were many who spent everything they had saved over the year during the festival. (Rezende 1987, 192; author emphasis and translation)

It seems that the basic template of the festival remained fairly stable until 1950, when the old Church of the Rosary was demolished, allegedly because its roof was caving in. The local historian, Vinícius de Vilhena de Morais (1988, 47), however, claims that it was in "perfect health" when it was torn down, lending credence to local gossip suggesting that the town priests had it demolished in the hope of curtailing the activities of the local *congados.* It was not until 1975 that a new chapel in honour of the Rosary was built on the outskirts of the town, and this is where the festival is currently held.

Despite the absence of a fixed location for the festival before the new church was built, the *congados* continued promoting their festival in a vacant lot, and those that lived through the trauma of this period were proud to say that there was not a single year in which the festival failed to take place. Even though the local *congadeiros* resisted the eradication of their tradition, the structure of their celebration changed significantly during this vacuum. First, the "embassy" stopped being staged some time during the early 1950s, and now many local *congadeiros* are convinced that "the book" containing the script of the enactment has been lost and fear that it will never be reconstructed again. Despite these claims, there are copies of the script to be found in Campanha, as I was able to locate two of them, and on several occasions *congadeiros* recited sections they could still remember.[7] It would seem, therefore, that the *congadeiros'* resistance toward the revival of the embassy rests upon their awareness that to stage the play again they would have to call upon the assistance of a literate member of the local elite, thereby losing a degree of autonomy over their activities. Indeed, the past rehearsals were conducted under the supervision of a local school teacher, whose rehearsal techniques were described as strict and demanding.

The demolition of the original church also had a strong impact on the organization of the patronage system of the festival, for it was during this period that the *congados* found it increasingly difficult to engage the wealthier members of society in the roles of Kings and Queens of the Year. Thus, unlike festivals in neighboring towns, the festival in Campanha has become a "festival without an owner," to use Roberto daMatta's (1991 [1975], 87) phrase, so there is no distribution of food to all participants, a veritable anomaly for a Brazilian popular Catholic festival. It was during this period that the municipal government first began providing financial assistance to the festival, justifying the action in terms of the folkloric value of the *congados* to local heritage. Even though this intervention has not provided an incentive for the local elite to begin re-investing in the festival and the *congados,* it has created the infrastructure to attract peripatetic vendors to the town during the festival, and the stalls (*barracas*) they set up attract large numbers of people to the church grounds.

In other towns in the region, there are still members of the white social sectors willing to take the crown for a year. However, the Festival of the Rosary in Campanha represents an extreme example of the general folklorizing trend of this celebration in southern Minas Gerais. With the exception perhaps of Monsenhor Paulo, where the festival is subsidized annually by a local coffee baron with considerable national political clout,[8] in most other towns the courts are shrinking and elite interest focuses almost exclusively on the commercial enterprises surrounding the festival. Even during the Ascent of the Rosary, the most important event of the festival, in which the *congados* process through the town on their way to the church with the sound of their drums completely dominating the soundscape, the ensembles attract limited attention outside their own communities.

This has not gone unnoticed by the *congadeiros,* who are quite articulate in discussing their perception of elite attitude toward their performances, and it has even affected the structure of their music: since the late 1970s and early 1980s, *congados* have progressively enlarged the size of their drums. In fact, *treme-terras* are a recent addition to the ensemble; previously only *caixas* and a snare drum were used. Initially only one *treme-terra* was placed in the center of the ensemble, behind the accordion and violin players. From then on, more and more bass drums were added, and today most *congados* have at least four or five of them, though some have as many as eight. The inclusion of these instruments has dramatically increased the volume of the ensembles, practically rendering the vocal parts and stringed instruments obsolete. For this reason brass instruments were added to the ensemble, doubling the melodic line at every other repetition.

As the *congadeiros* themselves concede, once one ensemble added a *treme-terra,* other groups were compelled to follow suit, so as not to be drowned out by the louder groups during festivals. Thus, competition between ensembles has been a major force propelling these changes. But the desire to

attract the attention of the wider community has also played a significant part in instigating them. While through the pageantry of their performances *congados* demand to be seen, as Ferreira de Rezende so appositely noted, through the volume of their music-making they now also demand to be heard.

Social Memory

Social memory and historical reconstruction can, at times, cross paths, particularly in relation to eyewitness testimonies, as in the *congadeiros'* recollection of the changes that took place within the festival and the *congados* after the demolition of the local Church of the Rosary. Other aspects of social memory, however, stand in direct opposition to historical "fact." With regard to the *congados,* this is made especially clear in relation to the widespread notion amongst *congadeiros* that the tradition emerged to celebrate the abolition of slavery, an idea which is demonstrably inaccurate when viewed in relation to historical documentation. In fact, the local historian, Roberto Jefferson in a personal communication, claimed that there were only six slaves left in Campanha on the day of abolition; anticipating its declaration, most slave owners had already freed their slaves, switching to share-cropping systems and indentured labor. Regardless of whether the recollections of social memory are congruent with or opposed to versions of the past which might be acceptable to an academic historian, their significance resides in the manner in which images of the past impact upon understandings of the present. By establishing a relationship between the *congado* tradition and abolition, blacks in southern Minas Gerais have constructed a forum for collectively negotiating the past as a means of constructing critiques of their present experience.

The events and images of the past that make up the black social memory of the region of Campanha are transmitted through countless narratives circulating within *congado* communities. These stories often begin with stock phrases, such as: "the *congado* comes from Africa"; "the *congado* is from the time of the ancient ones"; "the *congo* was the dance of the slaves"; or "we dance the *congo* to remember captivity." In some cases *congadeiros* expound further, and provide origin myths similar to the narrative with which this paper begins. In many such narratives a contrast is drawn between the covert activities of blacks during slavery and the freedom of expression following abolition. One such version is told by Seu Paulo, the Perpetual King of the Congo of Cordislândia, a small town situated 30 kilometers from Campanha:

> *O congo é uma coisa que os pretos não tinha condições de se adivertir, é uma coisa inventada por eles. . . . Então eles mesmo fazia os instrumento deles: reco-reco de bamboo, . . . e ali à noite, depois que os senhores deles se deitavam, . . . eles ia fazer a festa deles, porque a senzala era no terreiro, no curral, assim. Ali eles ia dançar. Eles fazia o batuque deles lá, dançava. Depois que eles terminava a dança deles tudo, eles*

> *pegava aquilo ali, . . . fazia um fogo ali, queimava, . . . que se não, no outro dia, que o patrão visse aquilo ali, eles apanhava. . . . Então eles fazia aquilo tudo escondido. . . . Aí quando eles foi libertado, . . . não precisaram mais queimar os instrumento, e sairam tocando pra todo mundo vê.*
>
> The *congo* is something for blacks who had no means of amusing themselves, it's a thing they invented. . . . So they made their instruments themselves: bamboo scrapers, . . . and at night, after their owners had gone to bed, . . . they would have a party, because the slave quarters were in the yard, in the corral, like that. There they went to dance. They played their rhythms there, danced. After they had finished their dance, they collected everything, . . . they made a fire, burned [everything], . . . because if they didn't, the next day, if the owner saw it, they were beaten. . . . So they did everything secretly. . . . Then when they were freed, . . . they didn't need to burn the instruments, and they played for everyone to see. (author's translation)

Some variants of this story integrate elements of divine intervention, thereby establishing the sacredness of the dance and of the divine provenance of the truths it embodies. One *congadeiro* claimed that on the day of abolition, the slaves made their flimsy bamboo instruments as usual, but when they went out into the streets to play them, Our Lady of the Rosary appeared and miraculously transformed them into the sturdier instruments used in the ensemble today. Some narratives attribute the invention of the tradition to the miraculous power of Saint Benedict the Moor, as in the story told by Seu João Osarias, from Monsenhor Paulo, Minas Gerais:

> *O São Benedito, ele era cozinheiro, escravo do senhor. Ele já batia a caixa dele, né? A turma pensava que ele tava cantando, né, ele tava rezando. . . . Até pra fazer macumba é preciso ter a caixa, não é? Ele pegou a caixa, ele era criança. . . . No dia que morreu a filha do rei ele já era mocinho. O rei chorando, triste, reclamando. E ele foi batendo a caixinha dele, batendo a caixinha dele em roda. Quando foi meia noite, ela buliu com os braço. Próximo da meia noite, ela buliu com o corpo, sentou. Ele deu a mão pra ela, levou, entregou ela lá ao pai dela. Bom, aí já conheceram que ele tinha poder. . . . Dispois da caixinha dele foi tirada estas caixa tudo, que tá aí. . . . Nasceu o congo dele.*
>
> Saint Benedict was a cook, slave of the lord. He already played his drum, right? People thought he was singing, right, but he was praying. . . . Even to make black magic you need a drum, isn't that right? He took up the drum, he was a child. . . . On the day that the kings' daughter died he was already a young man. The king was crying, sad, complaining. And he started playing his drum, playing his drum in a circle. At midnight she moved her arms. Around midnight she moved her body, sat up. He gave her his hand, took her, presented her to her father. Well, that's when they recognized that he had power. . . . Afterwards from his drum all the other drums that are here emerged. . . . His *congo* was born. (author's translation)

The narrative repertoire associated with the *congado* tradition encompasses a series of stories in which Saint Benedict and Our Lady of the

Rosary are represented as the protectors of the slaves. In many of these narratives they secretly take food from the big house and give it to the maltreated blacks. Often the benefactors are caught thieving, but they are miraculously saved from punishment by an act of God. Stories of this type critique social inequality, presenting it as a violation of divine will. The miraculous intervention confirms the legitimacy of stealing from the rich to give the poor, if this is the only possible means for achieving the redistribution of wealth. It is precisely because of Our Lady's sympathies toward the plight of the slaves that she is declared a saint; her acts attempt to instate divine will on earth.

In some narratives divine intervention promotes an inversion of the social order, re-dressing the balance in class and race relations. This is the case in another narrative complex which is widely diffused throughout southeastern and central Brazil. In this story an image of Our Lady of the Rosary is discovered in some remote place, and efforts are made to transfer it to a more central location. It is ultimately through the performance of a *congado* that the divinity agrees to be moved. A version of this story was told by Seu Paulo, from Cordislâbdia:[9]

> *Então a senhora vai ver, eles foram tão simples, então a simplicidade deles era tanto que quando achou a Nossa Senhora do Rosário, foram muitas coisas importante lá pra tirar ela, buscar ela, sabe? Ela não saiu. Foi a banda de música, tocou. Foi isso, foi mais aquilo outro, aquilo outro. Ia lá pra ver se ia agradar ela. Que nada. Chegou o coitadinho dos preto lá tocando aquela violinha deles lá, aquela coisinha deles: chim chim, chinhinhim. Pela simplicidade deles, ela acompanhou eles.*
>
> So you see, they were so simple, so their simplicity was such that when they found Our Lady of the Rosary, many important things went to get her, you know? She didn't come out. The music band went, played. This went, and that went, and that. They went to see if they could please her. But nothing. The poor blacks arrived there playing their little *violas*, their little things: ching, ching, chinginging. Because of their simplicity, she followed them. (author's translation)

Such narratives of symbolic inversion undoubtedly embody subaltern fantasies, but they also articulate a moral code premised on the proclamation of a divine immutable truth: the essential equality of all humans in the eyes of God. By invoking divine intervention in the re-arrangement of the social order, the narratives mark a distinction between the saints' vision for the world and that of humans. In a world governed by the divine will of God, the "simple" *congadeiros* are the ones who please the saints.

The *congado* tradition does not, however, rely entirely upon divine intervention to engineer the re-ordering of the social sphere. Even though some narratives attribute the invention of the tradition to the saints, the vast majority of them claim that it was the slaves themselves who invented it. In

a story narrated by Jair Filipino, a *congadeiro* from São Gonçalo, Minas Gerais, the slaves use their drums to exact their revenge on their owners:

> *Quando a Princesa Isabel libertou os escravos, os escravos queriam matar o rei, porque o rei era ruim. . . . Ele judiava; a escravidão era por causa do rei. Mas a rainha, ela era pura. Ela adorava o povo. Então quando libertou, os escravos queria matar o rei, mas como não conseguiram, então eles juntaram todos os instrumento e foram pra porta do palácio pra poder enlouquecer o rei, porque entrar no palácio, eles não podiam, porque tinha a guarda real. Então eles bateram três noite e três dia na porta do palácio, até que o rei enlouqueceu. . . . Então na libertação dos escravo surgiu . . . a congada. Que nem tanto, pode ver, que se ficar fazendo barulho, isso aqui a noite inteira no ouvido, não há que 'güenta. Então essa maravilha aqui significa a libertação dos escravos.*
>
> When Princess Isabel liberated the slaves, the slaves wanted to kill the king, because he was evil. . . . He mistreated; slavery was because of the king. But the queen, she was pure. She loved the people. So when they were freed, the slaves wanted to kill the king, but they couldn't, so they got their instruments together and went to the palace door to make the king go mad, because they couldn't enter the palace because of the royal guard. So they played for three days and three nights at the door of the palace, until the king went mad. . . . So when the slaves were freed, the *congada* emerged. So you see, if one keeps making noise like this all night long in someone's ear, no one can stand it. This wonderful thing here means the liberation of the slaves. (author's translation)

The narrative repertoire of the *congados* evinces a number of oppositions which re-emerge in different contexts from one story to another. Many stories mark a distinction between two historical periods: a period under slavery, governed by white kings and queens, in which black culture is suppressed, and the post-slavery era, in which blacks are able to openly express their cultural legacy. Many stories also distinguish between an evil powerholder, whose actions are governed by his personal interests, and a benevolent, charitable figure, who acts for the benefit of others. These oppositions are mediated by the drum; the drum embodies black culture and it is the medium for instating divine will on earth. When the slaves are freed and finally able to express their heritage in public, they play their drums; the drums are played for the saints, and their appreciation of the music bestows legitimacy upon black culture. It is the sound of the drum which heals the princess, and out of gratitude–or fear–the king liberates the slaves; alternatively, the intense sound of the drum drives the king mad, ending his reign. The drum, therefore, is both a means of healing physical and social ills which affect the whole of society as well as of marking cultural difference; it denounces inequality, which is predicated upon a moral code of universal validity, and it proclaims black identity, which presupposes cultural difference. By establishing the drum as the central symbol of the tradition, *congado* communities denounce the use of human difference as the basis for social stratification. The tradition is able, therefore, to envisage a society in which distinct cultural identities are reconciled with a concept of essential human equality.

The verses of the songs used to accompany the dance are generally structured around a single quatrain, which is repeated continuously for

several minutes. The themes used in these verses are so varied–and even arbitrary–that, at first glance, it would appear that they are little more than structural frames for maintaining the unity of the ensemble during performance. This is perhaps the case for some verses, but many of them make telegraphic references to images which resonate with themes in the narratives. According to Rosaldo (1986, 104–9), telegraphic imagery can communicate a rich body of narrative detail through the allusions it makes to a shared repertoire. For an audience familiar with this repertoire, the motifs in the quatrains function as "metonyms of narrative" (Smith 1975, 97–100), invoking the wider picture. Take, for instance, the following verse, which is sung by practically every *congado* in the Campanha region:

Vamos dançar congo, ai ai.	Let's dance *congo,* ai ai.
Congo vem da Angola, ai ai.	*Congo* comes from Angola, ai ai.
Quem gosta de congo, ai ai,	Those who like *congo,* ai ai,
Nesta terra chora, ai ai.	Cry on this earth, ai ai.
	(author's translation)

For *congadeiros,* this verse is pregnant with meaning: by proclaiming the African origins of the dance, it is defined as an integral part of the black heritage. The legacy of blacks is further established as one of continuous suffering. The experience of the ancestors, therefore, is brought to bear on contemporary experience.

The miraculous powers of Our Lady of the Rosary are invoked in the following verse:

Ô Senhora do Rosário,	Oh Lady of the Rosary,
Seu mistério não tem fim.	Your mystery has no end.
Ô Senhora do Rosário,	Oh Lady of the Rosary,
Vai contar tudo pra mim.	You are going to tell me everything.
	(author's translation)

This verse makes reference to an extensive repertoire of miracles performed by the saint in "mythic" time, but it also invokes memories of the devotees' personal experiences of her miraculous powers, achieved primarily through "promises."[10] Once again the past is made to resonate with the present, and just as the slaves, in their powerlessness, required the assistance of the saint, so too do the *congadeiros* of today.

Many *congado* verses are specifically concerned with the present, their texts announcing what the group is doing as they sing. In this way the *congadeiros* affirm the relevance of their activities in sustaining their collective identity. This is the case, for example, in the following verse, which is commonly sung when two *congados* meet during a festival:

Ai, que encontro bonito	Oh, what a beautiful encounter
Nós fizemos nesta hora:	We made at this hour:
Encontrou dois congadeiro,	Two *congadeiros* met,

Empregados de Nossa Senhora.	Employees of Our Lady.
	(author's translation)

Animals and natural elements feature prominently in many of the verses. Frequently the songs refer to small harmless animals, which could be read as an allusion to the powerlessness of the members of *congado* communities:

Nós estamos chegando,	We are arriving,
Chegando devagarinho.	Arriving slowly.
Chora, canário,	Cry, canary,
Chora, canarinho.	Cry, little canary.
	(author's translation)

In some verses small, powerless animals are juxtaposed to large, powerful ones in an allusion to class relations in the wider society:

Eu sou um lambarizinho	I am a little fish
Que nestas águas já nadou.	Who swam in these waters.
A baleia quer subir,	The whale wants to come up,
Mas a água já secou.	But the water dried up.
	(author's translation)

Other verses make references to the sources of power available to the powerless. In the verse below, for example, an insignificant river becomes a powerful waterfall:

Eu moro lá na mata,	I live in the wilderness,
Encostado na pedreira.	Near the quarry.
Eu me chamo Rio Pequeno,	My name is Little River,
Despejou na cachoeira.	I flow into the waterfall.
	(author's translation)

The animals referred to in *congado* verses are often small wild animals of the sort that invoke reactions of revulsion and fear, such as snakes, frogs, rodents, and spiders. The following verse is structured around the common house mouse.

Camundongo, sai do caminho.	Mouse, get out of the way.
Camundongo, eu quero passar.	Mouse, I want to pass.
Camundongo é um bicho brabo;	Mouse is a mean animal;
É capaz de querer me pegar.	He may want to get me.
	(author's translation)

By identifying with such animals in their verses, *congadeiros* appropriate their power to generate feelings of fear and revulsion amongst the powerholders, despite their small size.[11]

References to *macumba* are also common in *congado* verses, reminding participants of this powerful weapon in their arsenal:

Eu mando, eu mando, eu mando,	I command, I command, I command,
Eu agora estou mandando.	I am now commanding.

Por causa deste mando,	Because of this command,
Eu agora estou girando.	I am now turning.
	(author's translation)

The term "*mando*" is commonly used in the Campanha region to refer to an act of black magic.

While the narratives associated with the *congado* tradition focus upon events that took place in a mythic past, the verses used in performance bring the themes of the past to bear upon the here and now. This juxtaposition creates a heightened awareness of the contrasts between the *congadeiros'* social vision and their everyday experience in a stratified society, which can, at times, be explicitly articulated. To greet a visiting ensemble, Dona Dosinha, the leader of a *congado,* made the following declaration:

> *Nós ainda somos escravos aqui na Campanha. Tem outro nome que eles dão, né, mas é igual escravidão. . . . Nossos antepassados era tudo escravo, então nós também somos escravo. Por isso a gente tem que ficar batendo essas caixa nossa aqui, até liberar. . . . E mesmo quando a gente tiver livre, a gente vai contiuar com o congo, que é pra lembrar do sacrifício deles, os escravos, nossos antepassados.*
>
> We are still slaves here in Campanha; there's another name that they give it, right, but it's just like slavery. . . . Our ancestors were all slaves, so we too are slaves. That's why we have to keep beating our drums here, until we are freed. . . . And even when we are free, we will continue with the *congo,* in order to remember their sacrifice, the slaves, our ancestors. (author's translation)

Congado Performance

The discursive realm of the *congado* tradition is given a powerful experiential dimension through its enactment during performance. As I suggested in the introduction of this paper, music-making and dance are forms of bodily activity in which the memory of social experience can be stored and retrieved. To understand the role of music and dance as repositories of social memory it is important to look closely at the ways in which the body is used in performance, and how it relates to other bodies in the performance arena. In the following section I shall discuss the performance practices of the *congados* in Campanha, basing the analysis both on my observations of *congado* performances and on my own experience as a participant in these ensembles.

The organization of the performance groups is partly related to their processional role during festivals, such that all participants face the same direction. Heading the ensemble there is a group of six to ten or more women and young girls known as the banner bearers (*bandeireiras*), who perform synchronized dance steps to the rhythm of the music. After performing a particular sequence for a while, one of the women begins a new

step, and the others soon follow suit, until they are all synchronized once again. One of the women, usually an elderly one, is known as the "queen" of the ensemble, and she wears a crown and is dressed in regal attire. The queen often carries the banner, while the other women dance around her.

The banner bearers are followed by the "soldiers" (*soldados*), who are exclusively–or almost exclusively–men, and generally they all play a musical instrument. The soldiers are divided into two parallel cues (*cordões*), with a few instrumentalists forming the "center" (*centro*). The two musicians at the head of the cues are known as the master (*mestre*) and counter-master (*contra-mestre*), and each of them has a "helper" (*ajudante*), who stands immediately behind him. These musicians generally play guitars or *violas,* and are the principal singers of the ensemble. If there are any other stringed instruments, they are distributed evenly behind the singers. After the stringed instruments are the small percussion instruments, first the *reco-recos,* then the tambourines. Then come the *caixas,* closing the cues. The musicians in the center include the accordions and wind instruments, if the group has any, and behind them are the *tarois* and the *treme-terras.* Often a particularly agile male dancer is positioned in the center in front of the instruments, and he performs acrobatic dance steps which attract the attention of the audience.

The Campanha *congados* perform two distinct musical genres: the march (*marcha*) (Musical Example 1) and the hot tune (*toada quente*) (Musical Example 2). In both of these genres, melodic lines, or *toadas,* are organized in the same manner. Generally they involve a single quatrain lasting from eight to sixteen measures. The *mestre* and his helper sing the tunes in parallel thirds: the *mestre* at the register of the tonic and the helper at the mediant above it. The *contra-mestre* and his helper then "respond" by repeating the same melody, but the response is generally in parallel sixth, with the *contra-mestre* singing at the octave above the *mestre* while his helper performs at the same register as the other helper. If the ensemble has brass instruments, they double the singers heterophonically only during the "response," but all the other instruments play the whole time. The tune is repeated in this manner for several minutes, until the *mestre* gives a signal to announce the coda (*toque final*).

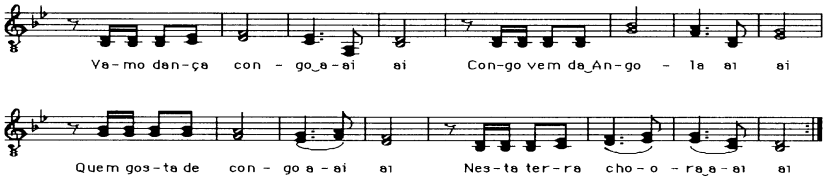
Codas are pre-arranged instrumental sections which function as signatures for the ensemble, and each *congado* has its own coda. *Congados* generally use the same coda for both marches and hot tunes. The women in the front of the group also have a set choreography for codas.

Congado performances are dominated by hot tunes, but for the sake of contrast marches are performed every so often. During the rehearsals in which I participated, about three or four marches were played each evening, while twelve or more hot tunes were performed. In some *congados,* the first piece to be played is always a march, and before the instruments are put away another one is performed. Marches are slow and regal, and

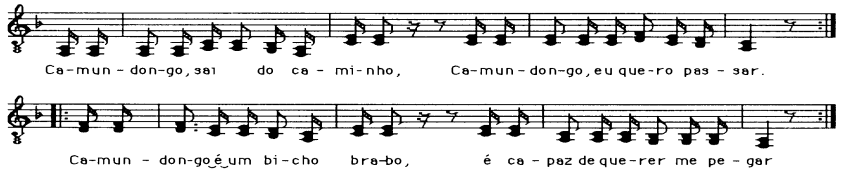
use a pre-determined and unchanging percussion rhythm. The drums and percussion play the rhythms shown in Musical Example 3.

The movement of the dance is highly contained: right foot forward; left foot brought parallel to it; left foot forward; right foot brought parallel to it. For each rhythmic pattern only two paces are taken; it takes two measures, therefore, for the full four-pace foot pattern to be completed. During the performance of marches, the musicians and dancers tend to take on a solemn composure, and there is very little overt interaction among them. The body posture is also somber, with the shoulders curved inwards and the

Musical Example 1. Marcha.



Musical Example 2. Toada Quente.

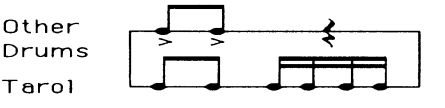


head bent downwards; the knees are kept slightly bent throughout the performance.

In contrast, the emphasis of the hot dance is on the liberation of the legs. The dancers perform numerous kicks and twirls, often with acrobatic flare. The rhythmic accompaniment is based on the ubiquitous 8-pulse timeline (3+3+2). The *tarol* players perform a continuous and simultaneous ostinato, while the rest of the drummers construct the timeline between them (see musical example 4).

Each *treme-terra* and *caixa* player generally has only one beater, which makes it fairly difficult to play the full 8-pulse rhythm at the necessary tempo. This means that each person has to choose a set of beats from the rhythmic sequence to construct their own ostinatos, changing them whenever they

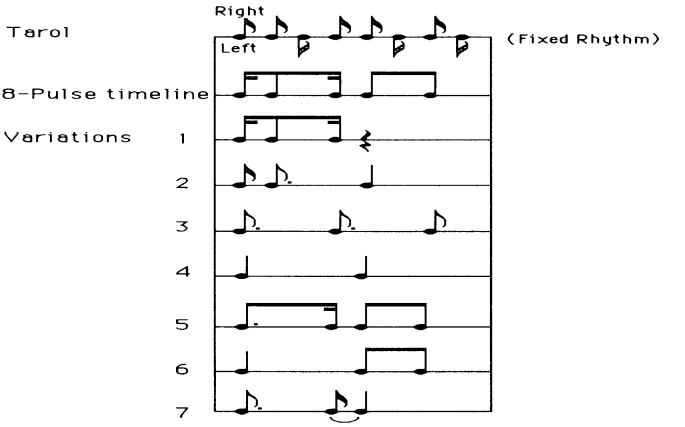
Musical Example 3. Marcha Percussion Accompaniment.



were inclined to do so. The favored rhythm amongst *treme terra* players is variation no. 5, but they can also be heard playing nos. 3, 6, and 7. Caixa players draw on all the variations, including, at times, the full timeline. There seems to be a conscious attempt, among the *caixa* players especially, not to imitate the rhythms of those standing immediately next to them. The experienced musicians are keenly aware of what others around them are playing, and an overt expression of this awareness is fundamental to congado performance practice. Indeed, the drummers use their instruments to enter into dialogues with one another.

During my first experience as a drummer in a *congado,* I was given a *caixa* and placed in the middle of the cue headed by the *contra-mestre.* Because non-verbal dialogues are so much a part of the tradition, the musicians integrated me into their interactions quite unself-consciously. From the very moment I began to beat my drum, I was integrated into my first dialogue. I began by imitating the *caixeiro* behind me, and noted that he realized what I

Musical Example 4. Toada Quente Percussion Accompaniment.



was doing. As we beat the rhythm in synchrony with one another, it was clear that we were both contemplating the uniformity in the movements of our drum sticks. After a few rounds, my concentration shifted to the singers, as I attempted to register what was being sung. After a while I turned back to the drummer, and he was no longer playing the rhythm I had copied from him, but rather a new rhythm which interlocked with mine. For a few moments we acknowledged the relationship between our two rhythmic patterns, and soon afterwards I found myself in a similar momentary dialogue with the *treme-terra* player immediately to my right. When I looked around at all the other drummers, I saw that their beaters all moved in different patterns. Later, when I studied the photographs I had taken of different ensembles I noted that many of the performers had been captured in such dyadic exchanges.

The basic processional movement of the ensemble during hot tunes is fundamentally the same as for the march, but the dancers are not restricted to it. Rather, it functions as a basis for bodily improvisations in which the soldiers perform kicks and twirls, both collectively and individually. Furthermore, dancers generally hold their heads high during hot tunes, with shoulders up-right, in direct contrast to the submissive body posture employed in marches.

One of the few organized choreographic sequences of the hot tune is called the "half moon" (*meia-luas*), in which the two cues changed places, moving around the musicians in the center. On my first round I found I had some difficulty coordinating my feet so as not to lose my rhythm, and I couldn't understand quite why; after all, it should have been easy. I realized that what was disorienting me most was that many of the people I passed were playing different rhythms from mine, and often their accents were set a fraction before or after mine. I found that I had to concentrate quite a bit in the beginning to keep the beat, until I became accustomed to playing amidst continuously shifting rhythmic and timbral inter-relationships.

Often the cues move at a fast pace, and the experience could be likened to being on a rhythmic roller coaster. Some groups capitalize on this potential of the half-moon, and they gallop around the center as fast as they can, bombarded by the sound of the drums coming at them from all directions.[12] When the cues move at a slow pace, however, there are opportunities for occasional dialogic encounters in which one experiences momentary rhythmic meetings as one's own rhythm interlocks with the other passing rhythms. That the slow form of the half-moon is perceived as an opportunity for musical sociability within the tradition is evident; people smile at one another as they pass, and in some cases greet one another as they gesticulate with their beaters.

Within the festival context, half-moons are generally performed in what one might call an academic fashion, compared to their performance at rehearsals. In other words, during festivals the cues exchange places and perform a verse and its response, and then exchange places again, with the musicians returning to their original positions. During rehearsals, however, the *mestre* of the group I played with most often led his cue in various snake-like formations, which the *contra-mestre* attempted to mirror. This provided more opportunities for the two lines to cross paths with one another, enhancing the experience of chance rhythmic encounters and timbral sensations.

These two contrasting genres in the *congo* tradition can be seen as enactments of the distinction *congadeiros* make between the slave era and the post-abolition era in their narratives. The march creates the sensation of what it might feel like to have one's ankles locked in chains to the other people in the cue. This experience is further heightened by the submissive body posture peculiar to marches, and the forceful rhythmic accompaniment of the genre reinforces the sense of bodily defeat. Hot tunes, by contrast, promote a

celebration of the body. The kicks and twirls would be impossible to perform in chains, just as one could not be chained for a half-moon. Furthermore, the musicians have much greater freedom of musical and bodily expression. They choose their rhythms and dance movements, and they engage openly in interactions with one another during performance. In hot tunes the participants experience the sensation of regaining ownership of their bodies.

The *congado* repertoire is made up predominately of hot pieces, for, as participants continuously assert, the tradition emerged to commemorate the abolition of slavery. Indeed, the hot tunes celebrate bodily freedom and sociability, and through performance *congadeiros* take control of the inscription of their bodies, habituating them to a world governed by their moral vision for society. But the ensembles occasionally insert a march into their performances to remember captivity through bodily experience, reminding themselves of the constraints of the slavery that continues to be a part of their daily experience.

With or without the recognition of the local white society, *congados* throughout southern Minas Gerais have continued to crown their Perpetual Kings and Queens, just as they did in that mythic era in which blacks still lived in Africa. Though their kingdoms may be empty today, it is only by preserving their court, and with it the memory of self-determination, that the freedom of movement experienced in the performance of hot tunes may once again reign in their daily lives.

Notes

1. In some regions these associations are also known as *congadas*, but as I shall explain later, in many parts of Minas Gerais this term refers to a group of *congados*.
2. There was a 20 percent crown tax–the so-called fifth (*quinto*)–on all gold found in the colony, so prospectors were anxious to keep their finds from the colonial authorities, just as the colonial authorities were anxious to control all mining sites and export routes.
3. The Catholic Church maintains several institutions in Campanha besides the parish church, namely, the Bishop's palace, a seminary, a French Canadian missionary center, and a retirement home for the Sisters of Sion.
4. Campanha's class divisions are, of course, far more complex and contradictory than this simple dichotomy between rich and poor would indicate, cross-cut, as it is, by distinctions that emerge from the rural/urban divide, race and ethnic relations, gender and generational differences, and the finer markers of distinction operating within each of these categories. Amongst the lower classes, however, as in other parts of the country, a

gross opposition between rich and poor is basic to their understanding of the social order (see Sarti 1995, 117; Scheper-Hughes 1992, 98).

5. Along with the *congados*, there are two other musical ensembles closely associated with the lower classes in this region: the *folia de reis* and the *folia do divino*, both of which are mendicant groups which collect funds for the festivals of the Three Kings and the Divine Holy Spirit, respectively.
6. On the activities of colonial confraternities see Boxer (1964), Cardozo (1947), Scarano (1976), and others.
7. There are also a number of scripts of *congado* embassies in academic publications, folkloristic descriptions, and memoirs. See, for example, Andrade (1982), Brandão (1981), and Moraes Filho (1979) amongst others.
8. According to *congadeiros* in Campanha, the most elaborate festival in the region is held in Monsenhor Paulo, where a new King and Queen of the Year are crowned each year. It seems, however, that the crowning of a King and Queen of the Year is a fairly recent event there, dating back about fifteen years or so. Apparently a large landowner and local politician had himself crowned at the festival and staged a generous event with the distribution of food, setting a precedent for other local politicians. He is now a state representative in the federal government, and continues to subsidize the festival, particularly when his political allies take the crown.
9. Several variants of this story can be found in Brandão (1985, 115–18).
10. Promises are reciprocal contracts made between a devotee and a saint, who is asked to intercede before God on behalf of the promisee. Sickness is the most common reason for entering into such a contract, but they can also be made to overcome other forms of misfortune. Once the "grace" has been achieved, promisees fulfill their part of the bargain by making some form of personal sacrifice. For literature on the promise in Brazilian popular Catholicism, see: Brandão (1981, 84–92), Maués (1995, 352–57), Zaluar (1980; 1983, 80–106) among others.
11. According to Priori (1994, 49–50), blacks and Amerindians were commonly represented as wild animals associated with danger and evil, such as alligators, snakes and dragons.
12. These rapid half moons promote a certain kind of bodily sensation, which undoubtedly Mário de Andrade (1962 [1928]) would have seen as an example of the Brazilian propensity to search out experiences of torpidity in musical performance. On Andrade's notion of torpidity in Brazilian music, see also Reily (1994a).

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