

Zumbi of Palmares, the Malungo
[*Zumbi dos Palmares Malungo*]

Solano Trindade & Miécio Tati

Translation and critical introduction by

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Zumbi dos palmares malungo is an unpublished and unedited play in three acts, which dramatizes Afro-Brazilian memory and agency through the iconic maroon figure of Brazil, Zumbi, his life in the maroon enclave of Palmares, and his death in battle against the colonial authorities and subsequent apotheosis. Written in Portuguese and cast in a classical mould with recognizable structuring elements drawn from Greek tragedy, it is equally infused with Afro-Atlantic lexis and cultural practices that cover quotidian, performative, and sacred realms. Hence land cultivation, culinary traditions, Afro-Brazilian dance and percussive practices, and invocations to and appearances of Yoruba religious divinities all animate the play, bestowing on it an astonishing richness of cultural texture. While in themselves elements worthy of investigation, this evident literary quality and density of ethnographic detail are not the only reasons we bring this hitherto-unknown play into the scholarly spotlight. Our investigations establish *Zumbi dos Palmares malungo* as the earliest dramatic depiction of Zumbi as Afro-Brazilian protagonist by an Afro-Brazilian dramaturge. In this introduction to the first translation into English of this valuable document, we present the reasons behind our claim. We also survey the play's three-act structure, its thematic focus and lexis, its relevance to Brazilian cultural politics, its place within African diasporic mobilizations of marronage as resistance to capitalism, and of

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Afro-Atlantic diasporic spirituality as collective resource. These discussions are offered as signposts for future readers and analysts of this play.

In 2015, the first author was conducting archival research in The Allan Gray Family Personal Papers of Alvin Ailey, housed within the Black Archives of Mid-America in Kansas City. There, within Series 18 in Box 33 of the catalogued papers, which consists of a completely unstudied dossier of Afro-Brazilian materials, she discovered this play in the form of a typewritten manuscript.³ On the title page of the manuscript are two handwritten names: Solano Trindade and Miécio Tati.⁴ These are resonant names within Afro-Brazilian self-assertion during the 1950s and 1960s: Trindade was the founder of the Teatro Popular Brasileiro (TPB), and Tati, a well-known translator of that period. Through collaborating with the second author to study the dossier's overall materials, Alvin Ailey's interest in them, the history of Afro-Brazilian cultural activism, and close-reading of the play itself, its significance and the role of Solano Trindade within it was gradually unpacked.⁵ This methodology yielded the hypothesis that *Zumbi dos palmares malungo* (ZPM) was (co-)authored by Solano Trindade, who presented the text and the other materials to Ailey during the latter's Brazil tour in 1963. Our hypothesis was strengthened by evidence provided by his daughter, the late Raquel Trindade, to the first author during a field visit (January 2016) to the family home of Trindade and the TPB premises in Embu das Artes, Brazil. It was dramatically confirmed in October 2019 by Raquel Trindade's son, Vitor Trindade, when the second author met him in Embu das Artes, during a group rehearsal of this very play using another copy of the play.

Since at least two recensions exist of ZPM— one in the possession of Vitor Trindade, and the other in the Alvin Ailey archives, a critical edition of the text will require

³ The first author's research visit to the Black Archives of Mid-America (April 2015), the second author's work on the materials (November 2015), the first author's visit to Embu das Artes, Brazil (January 2016), and various follow-up visits by the second author to London and the first author to Lisbon for collaborative work leading to this essay, were funded by the European Research Council Advanced Grant, "Modern Moves" (June 2013-May 2018). The authors are grateful to Michael Sweeney at the Black Archives of Mid-America, Leyneuf Tines, Michael Iyanaga, Vinicius de Carvalho, Roberta Nascimento, Zinho da Trindade, the late Raquel Trindade, Vitor Trindade, and to each other.

⁴ On Miécio Tati's role within this material, we have not been able to unearth any more information at this stage of the research. This is an issue for further stages of the investigation. At the moment, we have retained both names within the transcription of the title page of the manuscript found in the Alvin Ailey archive, but the definite hand of Solano Trindade in the play's composition, and the confirmation of this connection by his family members, have led us to privilege his authorship within the discussion we present here.

⁵ These issues are presented in detail in Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Francesca Negro. "Solano Trindade's Gift to Alvin Ailey: New Evidence from the Black Archives of Mid-America." *The Black Scholar* 49, no. 3 (2019): 6-20.

comparative examination of both manuscripts as well as negotiation of copyright issues surrounding this text's hemispheric travels and subsequent archival deposition. In the meanwhile, we consider it our responsibility to bring notice of its existence to the scholarly community, because it antedates what is currently accepted as the first dramatic rendering of Zumbi's story: the play *Arena conta Zumbi*, which premiered in São Paulo in 1965 (Campos 1988). The typescript of *ZPM* in the Ailey dossier has the date of 1962 scribbled on to it, and Ailey's departure from Brazil with it in 1963 means that it must predate *Arena conta Zumbi* by at least a year. *ZPM* is thus the earliest extant dramatic representation of Palmares, although arising from the same intellectual circle as did *Arena conta Zumbi*. In keeping with the politics of this circle, *ZPM* depicts Palmares along three distinct axes of song and dance, cultivation of land, and the occupation of time. It thereby manifests an approach to labour, spirituality, and the market that is presented as radically alternative to capitalism. These are issues resonant with studies of the cultural, political, and economic history of Brazil and the Afro-Atlantic world, and with intersectional investigations into maroons and marronage. We thus believe that scholars working within these areas will find our translation, and these introductory remarks that follow, useful resources in advance of our critical edition of the play.

Solano Trindade and the quilombo before quilombismo

Trindade would have been around fifty-four years old when he composed *ZPM*, and at the peak of his career as a pioneering cultural mediator. An "organic intellectual," he "forged sites of dialogue through his personal actions, the texts that he produced, and the cultural activities he organized" (Souza 2008).⁶ Born in Recife, Northern Brazil, in 1908, Trindade had, by 1963, amassed a wealth of experience in mobilizing African diasporic arts to activate pride in Afro-Brazilian identity. In the 1930s, he had founded the Frente Negra Pernambucana, and organized in Recife and Salvador two Afro-Brazilian congresses. Moving to Rio in the 1940s, he became closely involved not just with local writers, artists, and dramatists, but also the communist party, for which political engagement he was imprisoned.⁷ By the 1950s, his collaboration with an increasingly prominent group of Afro-Brazilian cultural producers, including sociologist Edison Carneiro and intellectual Abdias

⁶ Translations from the Portuguese are by the authors.

⁷ For more details about Trindade's life, see Moore (1979) and Souza (2004).

do Nascimento, generated a virtuous circle whereby “literature, theatre, journalism, music, and the plastic arts interacted to intervene systematically within hegemonic systems of representation” (Souza 2008, p. 235). Out of this heady atmosphere arose Trindade’s signature mixing of theatre with live music and dance from Afro-Brazilian traditions. The TPB, which he founded, was closely connected with the premier of Vinicius de Moraes’s *Orfeo Negro* in 1956. During the 1960s, Trindade helped set up the artistic commune Embu das Artes which, together with TPB, still exists outside Rio and which the both authors had the privilege to visit, on separate occasions, in the company of his great-grandson Zinho Trindade, a rap artist in São Paulo.

Embu das Artes, a lovely village that has resisted amalgamation into the metropolis of São Paulo, feels, indeed, a bit like a quilombo: a place of refuge and autonomy for maroons, or escaped slaves. It is not inconceivable that the figure of Zumbi and his autonomous kingdom of Palmares served as exempla for Trindade’s vision for this artistic commune. Zumbi was a historical maroon leader of the late 17th century (1605-55), the last king of the quilombo or maroon enclave of Palmares that was situated on the border between present day Pernambuco and Alagoas in North Brazil Freitas (1984) and Galdino (1993). Zumbi is revered in Afro-Brazilian culture as a symbol of anti-slavery and anti-colonial resistance, and more recently— since the 1990s to be precise— also celebrated in mainstream Brazilian culture through the renewed search for Afro-Brazilian cultural autonomy within the movement called “quilombismo” (Afolabi 2012).⁸ But his entry into popular consciousness was in fact part of the cultural assertion spearheaded by Trindade’s circle. In 1947, appeared Carneiro’s scholarly work on Zumbi, *O Quilombo de Palmares*— an important step in the apotheosis of Zumbi from a dangerous, even murderous rebel leader, a menace to (White) society, to Zumbi as an elevated figure, the catalyst for a new reading of Afro-Brazilian culture around Palmares as a mythic and utopian space of resistance to the Plantation Carneiro (1947).⁹ In 1964, influenced by Carneiro’s research, Gianfrancesco

⁸ The term “quilombismo” was coined as such by Abdias do Nascimento, a prominent member of Trindade’s circle, who had founded as early as 1948 the journal *O Quilombo*, but whose articulation of the concept occurred decades later: “Quilombismo and its various equivalents throughout the Americas, expressed in the legacy of cumbes, palenques, cimmarones, and maroons, articulates the diverse levels of collective life whose dialectic interaction proposes completed fulfilment and realization of the creative capacities of the human being.” See Nascimento (1980, pp. 141-178, 151-2). There is a substantial literature on marronage as a hemispheric and transoceanic project of resistance, which is beyond the scope of this introduction to consider in detail; some of these issues are touched on below.

⁹ Earlier historiographic attempts were made by Arthur Ramos, *Notas sobre Zumbi* (1930), Manuscript I-36,32,035, Biblioteca Nacional de Rio de Janeiro, and Ernesto Ennes, *As guerras nos palmares* (1938).

Guarnieri and Augusto Boal co-authored what is considered as the first dramatic rendering of Zumbi's story: the play *Arena conta Zumbi*. With music by Edu Lobo, it premiered in São Paulo in 1965 (Campos, 1988).

As we have stated above, *ZPM* could have been composed no later than 1963. This cut-off date makes it, and not *Arena conta Zumbi*, the earliest extant dramatic representation of Palmares and Zumbi as Afro-Brazilian protagonist. Nevertheless, two Afro-Brazilian musical plays on this topic written within a couple of years of each other indicates their emergence from the same intellectual circle we have described above. Zumbi and his kingdom of Palmares instigated in this circle a poetics of the quilombo— what, in the context of the much more recent “quilombismo” movement, has been called a “poetação quilombola, that is, a poetic imagination that is subject to the ideas and aspirations of the quilombo, of the ultimate desire for freedom” (Lourenço, 1993, pp. 3-5). Already in 1961, Trindade had written “Canto dos Palmares,” one of a series of poems by him that mobilize Zumbi as warrior, wielding the weapons of time through equal invocation of culture and agriculture.¹⁰ The dramatic elaboration of these lyric ideas in *ZPM* represents a key moment in this genealogy of cultural activism and creativity around Zumbi and Palmares, and must be seen in a line of continuity with Nascimento's and Carneiro's ethnologic and artistic research.¹¹ The quilombo in Trindade's works is a space of freedom, a space where a superior law of respect and justice is applied, where everybody can be admitted, but also from which anybody can be expelled if not observant of the rules, despite familial ties or social status. Trindade's Palmares is exemplary of organized and balanced society run along deeply socialist principles (Ferreira 2008).

ZPM as an Afro-Atlantic Tragedy: Saravá!

The narrative, spectacular, and didactic possibilities of theatre allowed Trindade to incorporate within *ZPM* the participatory and performative energy of Afro-Brazilian kinetic, percussive, musical, and sacred traditions. The play interweaves these traditions with the structural conventions of classical genres, making it reminiscent of the postcolonial

¹⁰ On these poems, see Souza (2004, pp. 283-90; 2008, pp. 230-35) and Afolabi (2009, pp. 210-12).

¹¹ This topic emerged especially from the reading of the letters exchanged between Edison Carneiro and the famous ethnologist and anthropologist Arthur Ramos, available at the manuscript session of the National Library of Rio de Janeiro. A collection of correspondence between the two has been edited by Oliveira & Lima (1987).

literary strategies of Derek Walcott's *Omeros* and Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*.¹² *ZPM* is an epic lyrical piece with a tragic dimension. Its Prologue and three acts take us to nodal sites for the quilombo's inhabitants, and their interactions with each other and Zumbi in these sites introduce dramatic tension. The Prologue, set in the quilombo's communal quarters, presents the Chorus which will comment throughout on the action. The first act, set in the central cell of Palmares, shows Zumbi mediating over a land dispute while introducing the complications of his daughter Calú's love for the Young Master, the son of the Plantation owner, and the trickster figure, Bimbo. The second act unfolds in a fair on the outskirts of Palmares, where Calú, Zumbi, and others can come face to face with Young Master and his lily-white fiancée—with disastrous consequences. The final act takes place in Zumbi's court, where confrontations between a contrite Young Master, a Jesuit priest, Bimbo the trickster, and Zumbi's system of justice unfold even while the colonial powers announce war on Palmares. This three-act structure progressively reveals Zumbi's extraordinary qualities as a semi-divine leader, a stern yet patient patriarchal chief, a tragic hero whose fatal flaw will ultimately deprive his people of their leader and plunge them into a chaos that will defer indefinitely his call to liberty.

These features give the play an elevated, *because* classical, air, while functioning as a framework for the insertion of elements denoting the sacred, performative and quotidian dimensions of Afro-Brazilian culture. Its Greek Chorus is divided into male and female groups, and modelled into an African style call and response which allows plentiful incorporation of various Afro-Brazilian kinetic-percussive traditions: the Prologue even invests this call and response mode with the rhythm of capoeira. Within its denouement, the *deus ex machina* is composed of the Yoruba candomblé pantheon. Its adroit fusion of performance with pedagogy makes it the ultimate elevation of Afro-diasporic heritage through recourse to classical antiquity. Extremely important in this context is the play's strategic recourse to Afro-Brazilian versions of Yoruba divinities: from Olorum (one of three manifestations of the supreme Godhead), to the orishas Oxalá, Xangô, Odudua, Iansã, Omolú, Ogun, and Iemanjá.¹³ The copious presence of the orisha pantheon points to Trindade's privileging of that branch of candomblé, nago or keto, of Yoruba origin over the

¹² Solano Trindade, "Canto do Palmares," *Cantares au meu povo* (1981, pp. 23-25). An earlier version of the poem was published from São Paulo by Fulgor Press in 1961. The relationship between these versions and the intervening play on Zumbi needs further philological unravelling.

¹³ The orishas are rendered here, as in the text of *ZPM*, in their Brazilian orthography.

other variants, *candomblé bantu* (of Angolan origin), and *candomblé jeje* (with ethnic origin in Benin, Ghana, and Togo). This emphasis, together with references to the divination practice of *Ifá* and to Amerindian belief-systems through the mention of *Tupa*, supreme god of the Guarani, suggests not practiced belief but intellectualized synthesis of materials gained through unprecedented access to the closely-guarded secrets of *candomblé's* praxis.

At the time of the play's composition, the songs, dances, and percussion styles that it valorises, through their integration into strategic moments within its action, had not yet been subjected to the complementary processes of commodification and folklorisation that would bring them ultimately into the competitive arena of public culture. Their structurally meaningful presence within the play marks thus a watershed in the negotiation of the place of Afro-Brazilian materials within the national cultural corpus. We have already noted the capoeira rhythm that permeates the Prologue's dialogues. Scenes open and close with capoeira, and dialogues include terminology from its kinetic repertoire. But there is more: Zumbi's daughter dies dancing the *lundu*, the matrix of all modern dances from the Lusophone Black Atlantic; there is samba at the fair and at the gathering of maroon forces; the *maracatu* ushers in the apotheosis of Zumbi; percussive instruments — *tambores*, *atabaques*, *berimbau* and *pandeiro* — punctuate the action. The unfolding action on stage thus allows the spatialized realization of Palmares as a special, even consecrated space, where the everyday performative acts of inhabitants gain a mythical dimension in which the audience becomes emotionally invested. Moreover, these semantic clusters literally put Afro-Brazilian heritage in the mouths of the actors. They are augmented by words forged in resistance to the Plantation: from the titular *malungo* (companion, comrade) to the *senzala* (maroon village; slave quarters) of the play's first line, the *quilombo* (maroon enclave) within which it is set, and the greeting, "*saravá!*" that irradiates it.

"Territory without fences" as creative marronage

A felicitous outcome of this "quilombization" of Portuguese is the play's loving nomenclature of vegetables drawn from the Kimbundu language, e.g. *jiló* (a kind of aubergine), *maxixe* (the so-called "maroon cucumber"), *quingombo* (okra), *abuxo* (broad bean), *munganga* (a variation of moganga, a kind of pumpkin), and *mandioca* (cassava), as well as a number of Bahian dishes of Afro-Brazilian tradition: *caruru* (the famous pan-Atlantic "callaloo"), *rapadura* (a sweetmeat made from brown sugar), *acarajé* (black-eyed

bean fritters mixed with palm oil), *quimbembe* (a corn-based drink), *gerebita* (liquor in general), *aluá* (a Bahian drink made from pineapple skin), and the generic *quitutes* (delicacies). If the dishes are known throughout Brazil as part of the creation of a national gastronomy, the nouns describing the vegetables remain restricted to Bahia while, in many cases, continuing to be used in Angola. This differentiated vocabulary conveys the processes of what Fernando Ortiz (1995) called transculturation— the coexistence and mix of different African cultures – in Bahia, home to Brazil’s largest Afro-descendant population. But it also enhances the cosmic and ludic registers of the play with the lexis and performance of the everyday. Significantly, this quotidian dimension is invested in an autonomy over land and its management enjoyed in Palmares, which recalls and exceeds the “creole gardens” that broke through the Plantation’s machinery.¹⁴ Building on this cherished memory of small-scale horticultural autonomy enjoyed by the enslaved, the play presents the quilombo along socialist principles of communal land-ownership, and Zumbi as their guarantor and custodian.

Although one might imagine a play about a maroon leader to foreground warfare, it is instead the community’s relationship to labour that *ZPM* foregrounds. Its first act demonstrates Zumbi’s leadership qualities through his mediation of a dispute over a field and a well. This dynamic presentation of the quilombo’s balancing act between the emergence of private property on the one hand, and Zumbi’s preventive intervention on the other, enacts the return of resources to a sacred and collective use-practice. Palmares, declares Zumbi, should be “a territory without fences.” Only the maroon enclave as fenceless commune can best unify its inhabitants against the biggest threat of all — the White Master. Hence the message of *ZPM* is clear: labour is culture, and it is best shared. Yet the history of slavery also demands that Black labour and Black culture be protected from exploitation. *ZPM*’s use of Afro-diasporic embodied arts to showcase resource management thus manifests a powerful promise of maroon agency. “In spite of the terror and the symbolic sealing off of the slave, he or she maintains alternative perspectives towards time, work, and self” (Mbembe & Meintjes 2003), which are embodied in the maroon. The maroon is distinguished from the enslaved in being unbranded (there is a powerful moment in the first act, when a former slave reminds the audience of his branded and weakened body). In their bodies being their own, maroons are free to exploit time as they will, in accordance

¹⁴ See the comparative account of agriculture in Palmares and the monoculture of the Plantation in Santos (1985).

with the aspirations of a community that enshrines relationships alternative to those of capitalism.

Marronage, in this vision, *occupies* capitalist time. Hence Zumbi's call to arms in *ZPM* comes with eloquent invocations to transform the calendar, the tick-tock reckoning of capitalist time. "Zumbi is the centuries", it declares, and through his call for freedom, "time and the calendar will refashion themselves." *ZPM* thus joins a long lineage of Afro-descendant creative works that *imagine* alternatives to capitalism through the maroon's occupation of time through. This dialectic with temporality is managed by using marronage as a historical fact as a springboard for marronage as an imagined act. As Edouard Glissant observed, after the collapse of the Plantation, "historical marronage intensified over time to exert a creative marronage, whose numerous forms of expression began to form the basis for a continuity." This continuity is itself a sequence of discontinuities, a "derangement of the memory which determines, along with imagination, our only way to tame time." The Plantation generated a complicated play of memory and forgetting that resulted in "coils of time" (Glissant 1997, pp. 71-2). Hence "fleeing the Plantation" implies trying to wriggle out of those coils or finding a way to burst through them (Crichlow, 2009). Using the historical memory of the maroon in acts of creative marronage, as Trindade does in this play, is one way to flee the Plantation and its imbrication with capitalist time. Creative marronage can take many forms, but fundamental to it is an aspiration to shape "a culture that shatters the stone of time" (Glissant 1989, p. 145). This profoundly revolutionary intent of creative marronage resurges in *ZPM*. It is a performance that seeks to infuse audience, reader, creator, and performer with this alternative perception of time.

Creolization, contact zones, and the market

Creative marronage entails the artful deployment of embodied acts that derive from the historical phenomenon of the Plantation as space of encounter, contamination, and creolization. The vocabulary at Trindade's disposal, whether as poet or dramaturge, is, in the end, a vocabulary that can imagine the maroon only through what the maroon was imagined as have resisted. The desire to possess the past cannot help being filtered through a tissue of transculturation, including language itself. The texture of *ZPM* is striated with references to these compromises and betrayals that structure Afro-descendant collective

memory and surface in its most prized cultural possessions. Most poignant of these is the role of Zumbi's daughter, Calú, who falls in love with the Master's son, and embodies the breaching of the quilombo's defences through the woman's body as site of cultural compromise. Unlike countless foundation scenarios that perform miscegenation as the originating fact of the Americas (Taylor 2003), however, the play refuses the possibility of the birth of new culture through creolization. Calú commits suicide on her realization that the Young Master has betrayed her by taking the lily-white Flora as his betrothed. Significantly, she falls on a concealed dagger while performing that venerable Afro-Brazilian dance, the lundu, also a product of creolization, for the happy couple's entertainment.¹⁵ Was this a telling self-indictment by Trindade on the limits and possibilities of converting Afro-Brazilian heritage into performance for an audience? But creolized dance survives.¹⁶ It survives not only Calú's death, but that of Zumbi's in the final act: as noted earlier, a maracatu performance accompanies his apotheosis.

Although Calú and Zumbi both die to keep Palmares intact, therefore, the play underscores its permeability to outside forces. Creolization in this vision interfaces with capitalism along several vectors of labour. On the one hand, the play's action is fundamentally driven by the Plantation, as embodied in the "casa grande and senzala" complex (Freyre 2003);¹⁷ on the other, its self-sufficient and communal economy co-exists alongside the market. The entire second act takes place in a "fair" close to Palmares, accompanied by the stage direction, "Black men and women are buying and selling." The fair is a bustling space where slaves and maroons exchange news as well as goods, announcing their wares through market calls, and each other with music and dance. On Zumbi's unexpected arrival, one seller felicitates him with a "song of my labour," which triggers spontaneous dancing and morphs seamlessly into a "samba," generated by a "rural choir." Now samba "as a coherent rhythm, dance, and musical genre" emerged in Rio de Janeiro only during the 1910s (McCann 2004, p. 44), and by the 1960s it had become involved in a fierce discussion of whether, and how, Afro-Brazilian heritage could be protected while negotiating the popular music market. Spearheading this discussion was Trindade's friend Edison Carneiro, pioneering historiographer of Palmares, who authored the cultural

¹⁵ On lundu, see the extensive discussion throughout in Fryer (2000).

¹⁶ See, in this context, Kabir (2020).

¹⁷"Casa grande" is the archetypal Big House of the Plantation; "senzala," the slave's quarters.

manifesto, *Carta do Samba*, around the same time as *ZPM* was written.¹⁸ The samba's inclusion within a 17th century fair is thus a clue towards how Trindade and his circle viewed the market as space for the considered negotiation (in all senses of the term) of culture.

In the fair, commerce takes place in a manner consonant with the community values of Palmares. It enables diverse transactions between Black populations aligned differently to labour and, therefore, to the Plantation. As contact zone,¹⁹ it functions as a space of Black empowerment and as a proto-tourist attraction: it is to show his betrothed the curiosities of the fair that the Young Master brings her to it, and the lundu the couple request from Calú as entertainment converts it into a meta-theatrical spectacle. But it is precisely during this dance performance that she kills herself. The "house slave" Calú's unrequited love for the Young Master is a vital marker within the play's minimalist representation of colonial society through relations between the enslaved and their masters, and different categories of the enslaved. Its tragic plot sends us back to the unbridgeable social gap that was very much part of Trindade's lived experience. A narrative solution that would predicate the incongruous domesticating of Zumbi resulting from Calú and Young Master living "happily ever after," with the unrelenting maroon leader converted to the White man's son-in-law, succeeded by mixed-race grandchildren, would reduce tragedy to bathos. Killing off Calú is to close emphatically one obvious route to the dilution of maroon power. But Calú's lundu follows the Shakespearean logic of "the play within the play" (Nelson 1958), where ethical dilemmas receive heightened dramatic focus. Here, the dilemma rests in the incompatibility of the play's narrative logic, that cannot support a teleology of creolization, and the play's existence as creolized product on every level.

The ambiguous message of the death-dealing lundu is repeated in the final act. The contact zone here is Zumbi's court, where a Jesuit priest attempts to mitigate Zumbi's condemnation of Young Master through appeals to Christian clemency. Through Zumbi's responses, Trindade offers a lucid and democratic response to the double standards of Enlightenment-based principles of universal humanism, and their convenient collusion with the doctrines of Christianity to perpetuate race-based inequality. Yet even as Zumbi speaks, the colonising armies are gathering off-stage. Ultimately, like Calú, Zumbi is sacrificed to underline the moral message of the play, which, as in Classical tragedy, is left

¹⁸ See Kabir & Negro (2019) for further discussion on Carneiro's *Carta do samba* and its relationship to the market.

¹⁹ For the "contact zone" as concept, see Pratt (2007).

to the Chorus to articulate. Yet the persistence of Afro-Atlantic divine machinery and the music and dance through which its ideas are translated into stage attest to the play's channelling of that message through recourse to signifiers and activated memory of Africanity. Its function as rich archive of Afro-Brazilian music and dances performs its ethical commitment to the act of saving, "salvar," which is also its creolized greeting, "saravá." Through both vernacular and sacral dances and rhythms – from the aluja of the prologue, which is a sacral drum rhythm played for Xangô, to the maracatu of Zumbi's apotheosis, the play takes us to the heart of Afro-Brazilian rituals, with their complex theatrical and musical character. In fact, the importance of these elements in the play derives not from an ornamental role, but from their indispensability to Afro-descendant cultures and religions: their ubiquity within *ZPM* is therefore fundamental to Trindade's representation of the richness and complexity of African-heritage ritual forms, and their natural proximity to dramaturgy.

Note on Translation

The performative density and political importance of creolizing lexis and conceptual apparatus in *ZPM* led us to make a series of considered choices while translating from the original Portuguese and bringing a typewritten manuscript from the 1960s in line with contemporary typographic conventions. The language Trindade deploys is not particularly complex, but it is expressive and emphatic, colloquial and stately in turn. It is mostly in prose, with significant lyric passages, mostly dedicated to moments of heightened emotional and philosophical import. There are also extensive stage directions. We have retained these distinctions of the original text in our translation, reproducing as the typographic choices through which Trindade visually conveys them. His typographic decisions around lineation are adhered to by us because they bear significant rhythmic information, as explained by us above. Long sections of dialogue, particularly around the trickster figure Bimbo, are suffused with Afro-Brazilian colloquialisms that we chose to reproduce through the language of contemporary Hip-Hop, R'n' B, and Urban music. The real challenge lay in capturing in syntactically correct and fluid English all those nuances while carrying over, also, the Afro-Brazilian flavour of words from specific lexical fields: botany and gastronomy, music and dance, maroon life, and sacrality. We have chosen to retain all these nouns, unitalicised for ease of reading, and have provided in each case an

explanatory footnote. The only exception we make is *negro*, whose unmarked usage in prose is not permissible now in Anglophone discourse. The issue was complicated further by Trindade's polysemic use of it within the text. We decided to translate *negro* in three different, context-dependent ways: a) member of the people belonging to the Quilombo, in which case, we translate it as Maroon; b) a mode of address for people within this community, equivalent to expressions such as colleague, mate, companion; in this case, usually embedded within dialogues, we translate it as "brother" and sometimes as "black;" and c) to indicate the political community of Black people, which is usually embedded within the lyrical segments and also within the stage directions; here, we translate it as "Black."²⁰ Among the other untranslated words, we have retained also the most common greeting, Saravá, that is also a wish and a way to welcome another person.

Saravá!

We now welcome our readers to this translation. We hope you will feel, like us, wholly immersed in this reconstruction of Palmares and impacted by the powerful presence of gods, music and dance that characterize this, the first ever Afro-Brazilian musical play on Zumbi.

²⁰ The first author is grateful to Khary Lazarre-White for guidance in these sensitive matters.



Let the Children Play or
Solano Trindade: The Little Boy from Recife²¹
[*Deixem as crianças brincarem, ou
Solano Trindade: O Moleque do Recife*].
(woodcut), by Raquel Trindade
Image published in Solano Trindade's
Cantares ao meu povo.
São Paulo: Fulgor, 1961, non-paginated.

²¹ Original reads: *Deixem as crianças brincarem, ou Solano Trindade: O Moleque do Recife*.

Trindade, Solano; Tati, Miécio. Zumbi of Palmares, the Malungo (translation and critical introduction by Ananya Jahanara Kabir & Francesca Negro)

Zumbi dos Palmares Malungo

by

Solano Trindade and Miécio Tati

Translated by Ananya Jahanara Kabir & Francesca Negro

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Prologue

(Senzala.²² The Maroons, at ease around a fire,²³ listen to the mysterious sounds of the forest. Night. The freedom cry of Zumbi, heard from far away, overwhelms the sounds of nature. The confraternity confabulates: the memory of the Hero, already a legend, is for them a reason to believe in freedom. An old Maroon, the storyteller, explains to the young ones the meaning of Zumbi's voice, accompanied in his narration by a musical base of belly berimbau (four players) and a tambourine. Accompanying the narrator is a chorus of three women and three men.)

NARRATOR: Friends! I will tell you
a very beautiful story
that has been told to the person who told
it to me
when he was a child.
A very beautiful story
I will tell, friends.

NARRATOR: Beautiful because it's true,
the story of Zumbi.

FEMALE CHORUS: He was a good king, a warrior,
he was just, saintly, and humane.

NARRATOR: The story of Zumbi.
beautiful because it's true.

NARRATOR: It's told that he fought

²² *Senzala*: Lodgings of the slaves, conceptually and materially the opposite of the *casa grande* (big house), where the Master lived. See Gilberto Freyre, *Casa Grande & Senzala: formação da família brasileira sob o regime da economia patriarcal*. Recife: Global Editora, 2003: 11-25; 164.

²³ The word used is *negro*. As explained in the Introduction, we have chosen to translate *negro* in different, context-dependent ways; here, we translate it as Black.

against the enemy
with very unequal arms
for ninety years.

MALE CHORUS: In the war against the enemy
with very unequal arms.

NARRATOR: He defended his people
with intelligence and bravery.

FEMALE CHORUS: He was a friend and a mentor.
He was everybody's king.

NARRATOR: He defended his people
with intelligence and bravery.

ENTIRE CHORUS: He was everybody's king.

NARRATOR: It's an enchanting history
Within the life of enslavement
of black people in this Brazil,
who were able to fight so hard.

MALE CHORUS: It's an enchanting history
within the life of enslavement

NARRATOR: As king of his quilombo²⁴
Zumbi governed very well.
He sheltered his brothers
against the hate of the master.

²⁴ Quilombo: hideout of the runaway slaves or Maroons, usually located in the forest or mountains; these were organized communities, which could also include fugitive Whites and Amerindians. Palmares was the most famous quilombo in Brazil, which developed in the colonial period, between 1605 and 1694, in a region belonging to the state of Alagoas; it seems to have reached around 30.000 inhabitants and, according to the anonymous text *Relação das Guerras de Palmares* (1678) was governed by the king Ganga Zumba. In 1676, after being attacked by troops led by Captain Fernão Carrilho, Ganga Zumba tried to sign a peace treaty with the Portuguese, agreeing to their proposed encroachment of their settlements and their demand that runaway slaves should be returned to them. However, Zumbi, Ganga Zumba's nephew, refused to accept these terms and soon became a leader of the rebellion. Due to his bravery, he gained the respect of the Maroons and was elected king of the Quilombo and Ganga Zumba's successor. See Thornton (2008), and Carneiro (1958).

FEMALE CHORUS: As king of his quilombo
Zumbi governed very well.

NARRATOR: He was highly reputed
among the malungos²⁵ of his faction.

MALE CHORUS: He was a god and a wise man
He was a chief and a King.

NARRATOR: He was highly reputed
among the malungos of his faction.

ENTIRE CHORUS: He was a commander and a King.

NARRATOR: In his quilombo there were
Maroons from different clans.
There were good ones and bad ones
loyal ones and traitors.

FEMALE CHORUS: Maroons from different clans
were there in his quilombo.

ENTIRE CHORUS: There were traitors too.

NARRATOR: Selected by the gods
to help his siblings
he was able to follow the orders
to accomplish his mission.

MALE CHORUS: Selected by the gods
to help his brothers.

FEMALE VOICE: He was able to follow the orders

²⁵ Malungo: companion, comrade. We leave this word untranslated, since it was the name that Afro-Brazilian slaves used for each other; it indicates a person of the same condition or of the same country. It derives possibly from either Kikongo “Mualungo” (in the boat) according to Câmara Cascudo (1954, pp. 540-541), or from the word “Mah’ungo,” which means neighbour.

NARRATOR: They believe he came from the Congo.
Some believe he came from Guinea.

FEMALE CHORUS: Sent by Olorum²⁶ God who governs in all Africa
Some believe he came from Guinea.

NARRATOR: They believe he came from Congo.

NARRATOR: Kosi abá²⁷ Olorum!
That's the great salutation.

MALE CHORUS: Kosi abá Olorum!

FEMALE CHORUS: Kosi abá Olorum!

NARRATOR: That's the great salutation.

ENTIRE CHORUS: Kosi abá Olorum!

NARRATOR: Over there, near Alagoas
In the hideouts of Pernambuco
A brave group arose
In the quilombo of Palmares.

MALE CHORUS: In the hideouts of Pernambuco
Over there, near Alagoas

NARRATOR: Zumbi revealed himself to be a great
Governor and judge.
He governed his people
With justice and freedom.

²⁶ Literally meaning the lord of the skies in Yoruba, Olorum, identified with the sun, is one of the three manifestation of the supreme God in Yoruba religion.

²⁷ Kosi abá: Kosi seems to be a mistranscription of Kosè, which means "Amen;" "abá" means "old". See José Beniste, *Dicionario Yorubá-Português*, (São Paulo, Bertrand Brasil, 2011). This phrase is more likely to be part of the better known "kosi oba afi Olorun," a ritual salutation which means "there's no other lord apart from god," where "oba" means "King."

- FEMALE CHORUS: As great Governor and Judge
Zumbi revealed himself.
- ENTIRE CHORUS: With justice and freedom.
- FEMALE VOICE: With justice and freedom.
- NARRATOR: In Zumbi's justice
There was no racial hatred.
- MALE CHORUS: Just the right to live
Without enslavement.
- NARRATOR: There was no racial hatred
In Zumbi's justice.
- NARRATOR: Wherever he appeared
The impossible didn't exist.
He had the calm of Oxalá
He had the strength of Xangô.
- FEMALE CHORUS: The impossible didn't exist.
Wherever he appeared.
- NARRATOR: He encouraged love and unity
Amongst the quilombola²⁸
He punished the betrayer
And paid homage to the faithful.
- FEMALE CHORUS: Love among the quilombola.
- MALE CHORUS: He encouraged love and unity.
- MALE VOICE: He wanted good things for everybody
In the domains of Oduduwa.²⁹

²⁸ Quilombola: members of a quilombo.

²⁹ Oduduwa, or Oduduwa, is also called by the titles "Olofin Aye," "Olufe," or "Olofin Oduduwa." he represents the power of the womb, that brings forth existence, and is one of three manifestations of the supreme god. Historically, he was the

NARRATOR: Let us now remember
The great love of Calú
The great love for a White man
Who was the master's son.

FEMININE CHORUS: The great love of Calú.
Let us now remember.

NARRATOR: If the White man is an enemy
The son is an enemy, too.

MALE CHORUS: This was the law of the people
Against the master their executioner.

NARRATOR: The son is an enemy too
If the White man is an enemy.

MALE CHORUS: This was the law of the people.

NARRATOR: We also have in this story
The presence of a traitor.

FEMALE CHORUS: This is character called Bimbo
A bad and reckless man
In the service of the master.

NARRATOR: The presence of a traitor
We also have in this story.

NARRATOR: Bringing disharmony
Amongst all the malungos
– A traitor to his brothers –
He favoured the enemy.

MALE CHORUS: Among all the malungos
Bringing disharmony.

first king of the city of Ile-Ife in the ancient Yoruba kingdom, now in the territory of Nigeria.

NARRATOR: Now ladies and gentlemen--
Pay full attention
To this famous tragedy
That is just about to start.

FEMALE CHORUS: Pay full attention
Now ladies and gentlemen.

ENTIRE CHORUS: Pay full attention.

(The last words of the chorus are heard from afar along with the beating of the drums, while women lose themselves in the dance of Xangô's Aluja.)³⁰

NARRATOR: Xangô is he who will open the show,
Beating on his drums

(The Aluja dance continues until when, once again, Zumbi's cry for freedom fills up the night from afar).

NARRATOR: Zumbi! peace and freedom!
Zumbi! Zumbi! Zumbi!

(The berimbau and pandeiro players start moving, beating out excitedly the dance rhythm of the capoeiristas, superimposed on the distant sound of the drums, while the curtain falls slowly. The pandeiro and berimbaus keep on playing against the increasingly loud shouts of the maroons who, in the following scene, will appear around the capoeiristas, egging them on to battle.)

³⁰ Song and dance for Xangô, divinity of Yoruba origin.

ACT I

The central cell of the Macacos,³¹ in the Quilombo dos Palmares,
Alagoas, Serra da Barriga – 1692 -

(Cries and provocations. The berimbaus resound.
Pandeiro. The capoeiristas traverse the stage with their
jumps).

VOICES FROM THE CHORUS: Hey, good scissors!³²
– Come on Quelemente!
– A headbutt for him, Ofraso!
– Quelemente, a balloon!³³
– Ofraso, a stingray’s tail!³⁴

FEMALE VOICE: – Don’t say I didn’t tell you! Zumbi is coming.
(heard above the shouting)

OTHER VOICE: And he’s real close!

OFRASO: (tripping up Quelemente)³⁵ take this, you good-for-nothing!

(Quelemente falls into Figenha’s arms)

FIGENHA: Go back, I am not a bench! And nor are you my son that I should take you in
my arms!

QUELEMENTE: (falling sitting on the ground) Never have I hung out with this loafer! I’ve
twisted my foot.

OFRASO: Lazy and shameless black!

³¹ Macacos: either inhabitants of the mocambos (see n. 36), or a species of monkeys.

³² A specific movement in Capoeira, which in Portuguese is called “tesoura.”

³³ A specific movement in Capoeira, which in Portuguese is called “balão:” the movement consists in throwing the
opponent over one’s, but many different kinds of *balões* exist in the current Capoeira repertoire.

³⁴ “Another Capoeira movement, very typical of Angolan-style Capoeira, which in Portuguese is “Rabo de arraia,” similar
to the basic movement “Meia lua de compasso” but without the support of the hands on the floor.

³⁵ The original term used by the author is “Rasteira”, a Capoeira move used to sweep an opponent in response to a kick.

QUELEMENTE: (Taking a knife and going towards Ofraso) I am going to rip into this snout of a pig! Get ready!

VOICE FROM CHORUS: Put your knife back Quelemente, Zumbi is here.

ZUMBI: (Intercepting Quelemente's jump, and snatching away his knife.) The mocambeiros of Palmares don't fear death. In this forest they built the quilombo of freedom, and because of freedom they take up the knife. Quelemente! Where is he hiding, the master you want to kill?

QUELEMENTE: I am quarrelling with Ofraso, Zumbi, because of a well.

ZUMBI: What reason would there be for two brothers from Angola to kill each other, if not for the well dug between them?

OFRASO: And it was I who dug it.

QUELEMENTE: In a plot of land I cultivate.

OFRASO: I never saw any cultivated ground in the place where I dug my well.

QUELEMENTE: Of course you didn't, but I cultivate it. There's jiló, there's maxixe, there's also quingombô.³⁶ I also made my own fence to mark out what is mine.

ZUMBI: And Ofraso did not see your fence?

OFRASO: I saw a fence set in a plot of land I cultivate. I destroyed it.

QUELEMENTE: I never saw any cultivated land in the place where I placed my fence.

OFRASO: Well he didn't see it, but I cultivate it: there's abuxó, there's munganga,³⁷ there's also quingombô. I destroyed your fence and in its place I built another one. The well I dug is on my side of the fence.

³⁶ Jiló or Jiloeiro, very common in Brazil, is known in English as scarlet eggplant. Maxixe is cackrey, also known as maroon cucumber, and quingombô is okra.

³⁷ Abuxó is the African name for a broad bean used also as medical plant and in religious ceremonies of Candomblé. Munganga must be a variation for "moganga," a variety of pumpkin.

ZUMBI: The well doesn't know where it is, if it is on the land cultivated by Ofraso, or on the land that Quelemente cultivated. We will put a fence around the well, because it's enchanted and doesn't know where it's placed.

OFRASO: It's on the plot of land that is mine.

QUELEMENTE: In the place that I cultivated.

ZUMBI: But in the end, not even a drop of water. There's blood of brothers, of neighbours' yards, their souls separated by the thorny fence of hatred amongst brothers. Should the enemy arrive, hunting out the mocambeiros of the forest, there would be no hatred left for him fuelling the brothers' rebellion, since they used up all they had against themselves, all because of a well.

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: He's asking for unity amongst the brothers.

OTHER VOICE: Unity against the white master.

OTHER VOICE: Peace in the strong quilombo.

POLINO (talking to Zumbi): I have an F marked on the body, because I got caught as a fugitive slave. I escaped again and I got caught again. The second punishment is this severed ear. I am weak, Zumbi. I don't know if my brothers' love is enough for me, against so great a strength as that of the master. If I am caught again...

ZUMBI: A cane can be broken with the hands, but a bunch of canes, if well tightened, cannot be broken by the strongest arm. The multitude is invincible.

OFRASO: I am forced to give up the well for the love of Zumbi, our king.

ZUMBI: For love of your sons, Ofraso. For love of yourselves. We are men, not gods, and we have the weakness of men. And because of this weakness, we turn the knife against a brother's chest. Should the enemy attack our house, -- I tell you -- we need to be like the bunch of canes. At that time of war, we shall destroy the fences that divide the yards.

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: It's what Zumbi asks: to be like a bunch of canes during war.

ANOTHER VOICE: And to turn the yards of the mocambos³⁸ into a complete territory without fences.

FIGENHA (Placing herself before Zumbi) However – let me ask: who taught capoeira to these wild blacks? They didn't know how to fight, they used to debate politely. Now this is what we see, nobody should give a big knife to two ruffians because they would simply kill some innocent person.

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: Who taught Quelemente how to fight?

ANOTHER VOICE: Who taught Ofraso?

QUELEMENTE: It was Zumbi who taught him.

OFRASO: It was Zumbi.

ZUMBI: I learned from my father how to fly like an arrow. I always won competitions amongst the children of my nation.³⁹ But nobody ever saw Zumbi using his legs to escape from the enemy's weapons, or to persecute a weak person. Ofraso and Quelemente are an embarrassment to their master.

OFRASO: I am brave, Zumbi.

QUELEMENTE: I know all the capoeira moves.

ZUMBI: You are brave for what? What's the purpose of knowing all the moves if you're not able to beat the enemy? Our war is outside of Palmares. Palmares is a fortress. I taught bravery and these moves to Ofraso and Quelemente, keeping in mind the white master that they need to defeat. But instead of fighting in that war, they are bold enough to practice my moves in Figenha's arms.

³⁸ Mocambo: literally "hut." Its etymology is disputed: while the Priberam online dictionary of Portuguese language doesn't mention any foreign origin for this word, stating only that it can mean a precarious and unstable kind of housing construction, the Michaelis Brazilian Dictionary of the Portuguese language attributes to the word an origin in kimbundu "mukambu," which means rustic/rural construction. During the colonial era in Brazil it used to signify small villages of runaway slaves escaped from mines and plantations. The mocambos were small in dimension, and several of them were agglutinated into the more complex organization of the Quilombos.

³⁹ Nation: Different enslaved people with various African origins were grouped into Nations after their arrival on the American continent, which conducted convivial as well as more secretive religious activities.

FIGENHA: Just let them come here! I can break these canes into half and throw them into the well. Two morons...

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: Zumbi is right.

ANOTHER VOICE: We want to see Ofraso and Quelemente playing capoeira for fun.

OTHER VOICE: And then defeat the master in the war of the quilombos.

(Ofraso and Quelemente, laughing and agile, return to capoeira to the sound of the berimbaus and the pandeiro. Zumbi is enjoying himself. The maroons shout and clap. In the middle of the confusion of the fighting capoeiristas and the joy of the gathered maroons, Calú, kneeling in front of Zumbi, starts to weep. Those present understand what's happening and stop the game. Some return to work, others surround Zumbi).

ZUMBI: Why are you crying, Calú? We meet so rarely and yet the few moments of our meetings are watered by your tears.

CALÚ: Zumbi, I came to say goodbye.

ZUMBI: Where are you going?

CALÚ: I ran away from the Big House. I am going back there. I ran away because of you, driven crazy by nostalgia. I saw Zumbi, I met my brothers again and, now – I bid my father goodbye.

ZUMBI: Instead of living freely with those who love you, you prefer to be a slave amongst those who made my sons suffer so much. I don't agree with your thinking.

CALÚ: I live in the heart of the master's family. I am well treated by everybody, I am a friend of the little daughters of the masters who played with me during childhood, as if I was their equal.

ZUMBI: For your owner's family, you were just a black Calúnga.⁴⁰ Noble daughter of Zumbi, so pure and so virginal, just like the little white girls who used to pull your hair in their moments of anger. I don't believe in the goodness of a love that is made out of humiliation.

CALÚ: Love gives me joy, whatever it may be made out of. I am happy in the Big House, and I'm returning there.

ZUMBI: As a dog who had escaped beating that goes back to the owner.

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: Calú, Zumbi's daughter... how can Calú be compared to a dog?

OTHER VOICE: The drama becomes clear: Calú is speaking as a woman in love.

OTHER VOICE: If Zumbi discovers this, he can well kill her.

OTHER VOICE: He can well kill Calú.

ZUMBI: I also love, Calú. I love peace and freedom. I love the wind and the sea. I love the plants that grow on this earth. I love human beings. There is no measure for the measurement of this love that lives in my heart. But love brings its own disgrace, it brings its own tears, Calú. The voice that it makes audible through the throat of the oppressed is more like a cry of hatred, rather than a song of humanity.

(returning to the chorus) And because of this I say that in these times of war and death, the word is hatred. Once the accounts are settled, love will triumph.

VOICES FROM THE CHORUS: Welcome, Zumbi!

OTHER VOICES: Welcome, saviour!

ZUMBI: My loved ones,
 My love for peace
 Gives me courage against the oppressor.

⁴⁰ Calúnga: here, a little doll. In the Bantu religion, this doll is used as symbol of an ancestral spirit, an image of a divinity. The term Calúnga in some Bantu languages also means Sea.

Announce with your own drums
That the day of liberation has arrived.
I united you.
Forget the differences of your beliefs,
Forget your kings.
And remember that we are brothers
And many are those whose souls suffer
And whose bodies suffer
From enslavement.

VOICES FROM THE CHORUS: Many are those who lament
Many are those who weep
Many are those who despair
Many are those who kill.

POLINO: Many are those who don't believe in life

ZUMBI: But many are those who believe in tomorrow.
Many are those who know what they want
Many are those who have strength to fight
Many are those who have consciences.
Many are those who know how to love.
I came to lead you.
I fear neither rain nor sun
Neither hunger nor thirst.
All my enemies are weak
When they face me.
I wounded more than the sword of Ogun
And cut down more than Xangô's axe.

POLINO: You are Zumbi, we know it.

VOICES FROM THE CHORUS: You are Zumbi.
Not even Iansã's wind can overtake you
Neither can Iemanjá's waters overwhelm you.

ZUMBI: I am a servant of my people
I am as just as Solomon

As brave as David.

VOICES FROM THE CHORUS: You are Zumbi!
You are Zumbi!

ZUMBI: I am the awakening of consciousness!

CALÚ: You are Zumbi, we know that. You are Zumbi, and you are my father. I am a traitor to my blood, and unworthy of your name. I am in love with the master's son.

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: Calú loves the executioners of her persecuted race. Oh! Olorum's anger, punish the lost soul!

ZUMBI: Who was Calú in the world? She was one of Zumbi's daughters: she was black and more beautiful than the night. She allied herself with the oppressor of her people. She accepted him with her body. May Ifá⁴¹ reserve for her a future of suffering, it's a damned generation.

CALÚ: Young Master ... he likes me. He smiles at Calú and requests me to sing and dance for him those songs and dances that I learned from my people. He fights against the oppressors: he is against his father's power. The Young Master told me one night that he wanted to speak with Zumbi, see Zumbi's royal posture, and embrace him.

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: The son of the white master in Zumbi's arms!

ZUMBI: Just like in the arms of freedom itself the image of the oppressor.
(To Calú): Go back, bewitched one! Your master is waiting for you in the bed of perdition. On the sons of this love, plague, hunger and war! May the power of Omolú's bladder⁴² strike her on her face!

VOICES FROM THE CHORUS: Strike her on her face!

⁴¹ Ifá, is a religion and system of divination in some versions of Yoruba religion, is also considered as an Orisha or god of time, and the one who possesses the gift of divination.

⁴² Omolú's bladder could refer to the womb of Omolú, known also as Babalu ayé, god of smallpox and all contagious illness. The most feared of all orishas, he is also god of the cultivated earth, and his favourite offering is popcorn, a product that is still associated with many agricultural rituals in Africa and South America. The reference to the punishment on Calú's face must be related to the smallpox scars.

(Calú runs away. The Maroons start a grim batuke⁴³ and a muttered chant. Zumbi exits. The batuke continues. Some Maroons work. Some women are pounding cassava or washing clothes. Bimbo, an inept youngster who witnessed, hidden, the scene of Calú's departure, starts provoking the inhabitants of the mocambo. He's a dangerous manipulative kid, serving the master of the Big House, to whom he reports what he knows in exchange for profit. In course of his reckless manipulations he will reveal, by mean of a monologue interrupted by short dialogues with the maroons, the evil plot he's hatching.)

BIMBO: This batuke is good, but it could be better. Whoever wants to play batuke can ask me how it is.

(The maroons, slowly, stop playing and return to work. Some try, in passing, to punish the naughty lad with blows that he avoids with the agility of a saci.)⁴⁴

BIMBO: Marissa, give me a kiss!

(Marissa slaps him. He jumps away but maliciously provokes her again).

BIMBO: I am a hustler
A hustler
A sweet-talking hustler

(Talking to himself).

The encounter between father and daughter was full of tears and curses. It was just the beginning, and there will be more to come. When I stir my neighbour's caruru,⁴⁵ the dish becomes even hotter.

(Talking to Fulosina)

⁴³ Batuke: this polysemic word refers to a certain kind of drum, the act of drumming, as well as the the performance, social ritual, and percussive composition that is produced during the ritual.

⁴⁴ Saci is an allusion to the mythical figure of Saci-perere: a young boy with just one leg, who goes around tricking the others in play. He wears a red hat, smokes cigars, and is a little rascal. This figure seems very similar to the provocative Yoruba entity known as Eshu.

⁴⁵ Caruru: common Brazilian plant, and also an Afro-Brazilian dish prepared with this plant, along with okra, dried shrimp, palm oil, chillies, and peanuts or cashewnuts. Versions of it appear throughout the Caribbean as "Callaloo."

Oh, Miss Fulosina, can I borrow some rapadura?⁴⁶ I want to know if this sweet is sweeter than your eyes, or than the honey of your mouth.

FULOSINA: Come here and I'll show you the honey. You reeking skunk! I am going to throw you in a tank of water to get rid of that stink.

BIMBO: I love your swag too. I want to rub against your bowl.
(He tries to approach Fulosina, who doubles back to hit him. He runs away).

BIMBO: You won't catch me!
 (already far away, unaffected by Fulosina).
 I am a hustler,
 a sweet-talking,
 loverboy hustler!

(Talking to himself)

I am going to tell to the master that Calú is getting groovy with the young master, and that she told her father that he is against the power of the old master. We are about to enjoy here a real tearjerker noir!

(Talking to Ciriaco)

Hey Ciriaco, you big-lipped Cabinda,⁴⁷ what do you have on that shoulder, is it a head or a burnt-out log? If you want I can play with fire.

CIRIACO: (Grabbing his arm and twisting him down to the floor) You skanky kid!

BIMBO: I was joking, Ciriaco! Don't snap my wing, I was talking about Fulugenço, about Fulugenço's head, he has got a monkey head... stupid black fula,⁴⁸ ugly black.

CIRIACO (Leaving him) Fulugenço, take him! He's calling you a monkey.

⁴⁶ Rapadura: a sweet made of brown sugar or of the juice of sugarcane.

⁴⁷ Cabinda is a northern province of Angola. Bimbo is using this term to indicate the specific physiognomic characteristic of the Cabinda population, which belongs to the Bakongo ethnic group and is often characterized by particularly evident lips and lengthened head.

⁴⁸ Fula or Fulani is the name of the largest ethnic group of the West coast of Africa. Here the name of the group is used already after its popular meaning: as often associated with nervous temper or bad character, sometimes even with stupidity.

FULUGENÇO: If I put my hands on this squirrel he's going to eat his words and find himself in deep shit.

BIMBO: I am chilli pepper, that's it. I like to see the others burn.

(Talking to himself)

But Calú is really going to suffer. I am going to deliver the young master into Zumbi's hands so that the father of the diva will kill the white guy in front of the daughter, and after that then kill the daughter, and will-be captured as an escaped slave and murderer, and the quilombo will be burned, the mocambos struck down, and the quilombolas captured, beaten and killed!

(Talking to Virisso)

So, Virisso, give me some of your dough. I know you got rich stealing. The end of the world is close. The fire is going to blaze.

(He gets a slap from Virisso and runs away, talking to himself.)

Calú suffering, Calú crying of sorrow.

(leaving the stage)

But this, what does it really have to do with me? "I am a hustler, a sweet-talking, loverboy hustler."

(While night falls and Bimbo exits, the women who are pounding cassava start singing a song of work in a chorus as they finish their chores. Men, reclining on the floor, are waiting for Zumbi, who will gather them at the right moment. Until the women fall silent, they are going to practice a lament in the background, which will become a loud song in the mouth of a soloist. The song of "Malungo" is heard.) (Zumbi reappears, accompanied by his companions, majestic and bright against the deep darkness of the night).

CHORUS: Saravá! Saravá!⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Saravá is a salutation of the "terreiros" of the Afro-Brazilian religion Candomblé. Its meaning is "hello," "welcome," or even "cheers," and it is a creolized form of the Portuguese "salvar," gradually modified under the influence of Bantu phonetics. See Antônio Houaiss, *Grande Dicionário Houaiss da Língua Portuguesa*, (Rio de Janeiro, Objetiva, 2001).

ZUMBI: I am a poet.
And my poem
makes rise
Brothers and beloved ones
That are getting ready for the battle
(The drums aren't peaceful anymore).
Even the palm trees
Are longing for freedom.

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: This is an ancient battle that, in the time of the Dutch, took place in Alagoas.

OTHER VOICE: The quilombolas at that time were more than thirty thousand.

ZUMBI: Time passes
Without dates and calendar.
The oppressor comes back
With weapons and money.
But I'll make him run.
My liberating poem
Is sung by everybody
Even by children.
My poem is simple
They clap their hands
Accompanying the rhythm
Of my voice.

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: Fernão Carrilho⁵⁰ returned, and it was won back once again.

ANOTHER VOICE: Nobody can take Palmares.

⁵⁰ The Brazilian colonial administrator *Fernão Carrilho* (c.1640 - c. 1703) was appointed by the governor of Pernambuco to lead the invasion of Palmares in 1677, during which he was able to capture two hundred people. He then became governor of the province of Maranhão and remained well known for his experience with rebelling slaves. See Bartholomé Bennassar and Richard Marin, *Histoire du Brésil 1500-2000*. (Paris: Fayard, 2000): 76.

ANOTHER VOICE: It's our fortress.

ANOTHER VOICE: A fortress of ridges and palm trees, with its forests of vines and coconuts, and little palms. We built the mocambos, our fans and ropes, we produce our wine, we make our butter.

ZUMBI: The plantations are blooming.
 Children play in the moonlight.
 our men beat their drums
 our women dance to their music.
 We don't want gold
 Because we have life

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: The saints protect us.

(While they are talking, the African gods enter to the low sound of the drums, starting the candomblé. Obatalá sent by Olurum confirms to Zumbi the mission that was established for him: to liberate the maroons. The dances of candomblé will not be interrupted during the scene. The dialogues overlap with the ritual.)

OBATALÁ: Liberate, Zumbi,
 Liberate the Blacks of the world.
 They suffer
 Deep obstacles.
 Liberate them, Zumbi,
 Liberate them!

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: Saravá Olorum!
 Saravá Olorum!

ZUMBI: I will, my lord
 Wherever they will be
 I will be
 To free them.

VOICES FROM THE CHORUS: Saravá Olorum!
Saravá Olorum!

OBATALÁ: Keep for them
Your quilombo
Until freedom comes
To all men.

VOICES FROM THE CHORUS: Saravá Olorum!
Saravá Olorum!

ZUMBI: I will preserve my quilombo
until when freedom comes
To all men
As Olorum desires.

VOICES FROM THE CHORUS: Saravá Olorum!
Saravá Olorum!

ZUMBI: Get united, brothers, get united!
So that we may be strong!
Obatalá sent me to liberate you.

MAROON WOMAN: Oh my beloved Zumbi!
How sad is enslavement!
Free us, free us,
Lord Zumbi!

ZUMBI: Your lord is Olorum.

MAROON WOMAN: Kosi agá kan oji Olorum!⁵¹
Kosi agá kan oji Olorum!

ZUMBI: I have been sent by Obatalá
To deliver from oppression
Those who love freedom

⁵¹ See footnote n. 6.

All that are not cowards
Those who don't betray
Those who don't sell themselves
Those who don't get their hands dirty
Those who love truth.
The world belongs to everybody.
The world belongs to human beings
Of all races.

MAROON WOMAN: Beloved Zumbi,
Your words are enchanting!
They are like birdsong
In the morning.
It's a song of love
And freedom.
God bless you, Zumbi.

ZUMBI: Go!
And tell your brothers
that the time to fight has come
For the last time
Against enslavement.

MAROON WOMAN: I'll go, beloved Zumbi.

(The woman goes away. Zumbi stands, still, in the middle of the dancing. The ritual continues to a quickening rhythm. Curtain.)

ACT II

Fair close to Palmares.

(Black men and women are engaged in buying and selling. Some shouts, here and there. In the foreground, Xicá – who's in love with Calú – and his family: his mother Lucada, his father Saluço, the sister Nana, the brother Caçula, and Ogeno.)

LUCADA: We don't have a family: everybody becomes a good bullock, once touched with a stick.

SALUÇO: Love unites us; the master divides us, as a sword that divides our heart in two parts.

LUCADA: Xicá, what will you do?

XICÁ: I will flee, mother Lucada. I'm fleeing to Palmares.

OGENO: I will flee with Xicá.

NANA: We are suffering, parents pay, and the sister too, for the escape of the relatives. That's how it is, it's necessary. Xicá will have to go.

LUCADA: They sell a son to a new master that will travel with him far from Pernambuco, like a bale of cotton or other thing without soul.

SALUÇO (to Xicá): And you are sure of this? The master is selling slaves? Does he need money?

XICÁ: Many slaves ran away. Plantations are suffering. They say that the master's son wants his father to go with him to São Paulo, to try his luck with mines and precious stones. In time they will sell everything, both slaves and land.

LUCADA: Soluço will be sold, and Nana too. They will sell my son Ogeno, and then Xicá.

NANA: Mother Lucada, I want to die.

OGENO: I will fight with Zumbi.

ZUMBI: (Who was approaching the family, without having being noticed) There's a place in Palmares for all members of the Black Family who are being persecuted.

LUCADA: Beautiful royal figure, he wouldn't happen to be Zumbi, would he?

OGENO: It's Zumbi, our Hero!

XICÁ: My arms belong to you. Here's the only strength I have, and I place it at your feet.

NANA: Oh my beautiful beloved king.

ZUMBI: I am just the sum total of love and strength. Strength of Xicá's arms, and of the love of young Nana. In reality I don't have a name: I am Hope, armed.

VOICE OF THE CHORUS: Fathers and mothers are desperate because the son was sold.

OTHER VOICE: And Xicá is forced to leave to the borders of Pernambuco. The only salvation is Zumbi.

LUCADA: He said armed Hope. He is a lighthouse for suffering Black people.

ZUMBI:
They want to shut my mouth
But they leave my eyes open.
They mistreat my body
But I escape from the grasp
of the damned master.

VOICE OF THE CHORUS: Zumbi's example should be followed.

OTHER VOICE: He's the hero of freedom!

LUCADA: To him I offer my sons: Ogeno and Xicá.

FAIR SELLER: I can't offer anything, since I have neither wealth nor family. So I offer my king as a gift the song of my labour. (he performs a street-seller's song)

(Other such songs follow, creating an unexpected choir in homage to Zumbi. The performance continues to grow until it develops into a samba (by a rural choir) and all the Blacks dance).

POLINO (entering, looking for Zumbi): I'm bringing news, Zumbi, important news. Palmares is in danger.

ZUMBI: Since the time the first slave built his first mocambo in the quilombo of Palmares, Palmares has been in danger. The valour of our men is our rampart.

POLINO: This rampart, Zumbi, can one day fall on the bodies of maroons. Listen to the news I bring.

ZUMBI: Let it fall today, it will rise again tomorrow. Freedom for the oppressed sometimes bear this price: the price of life itself. I will die for it.

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: Ah, woe is us!

OTHER VOICE: Zumbi foretells his death.

OTHER VOICE: Black people's freedom will grow, a gigantic tree from out of the ashes of our hero, wounded in the fight!

POLINO: Zumbi is eternal!

ZUMBI: Freedom is eternal! It doesn't matter if the hero falls, when the meaning of his fight already took root in the hearts of men. We may not yet be a strong tree, but we are the seed.

POLINO: I want to explain why I came.

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: There's some important news that Polino is going to give us.

OTHER VOICE: He's a loyal guy, Polino.

OTHER VOICE: A good friend of Zumbi's.

POLINO: Six thousand determined men have been organized into a regiment to destroy Palmares, which like a fallen branch, blocks the route traced by the Whites for the colonization of Alagoas. Pernambuco's governor, Caetano de Melo e Castro, was the one who ordered the organization of this column.⁵²

ZUMBI: Who's the leader of the expedition?

POLINO: It's Domingo Jorge Velho, that same Paulista who in Souto Maior's time was already in this area, sniffing out Maroon mobilization.

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: Flag-waver of a thankless flag! He even sold himself once.

POLINO: Domingos Jorge Velho is leading the Paulistas, Bernardo Vieira de Melo the Pernambucans, and Sebastião Dias is coming with his troops from Alagoas. Sad times are coming!

ZUMBI: The oppressor approaches our fields.
 His soldiers sing bloody marching song.
 Another onslaught against us.
 The rich ones and the masters conspire together.
 I will make them run.
 My freedom poem
 Is sung by everybody.
 Men and women sing it,
 Rivers and palm trees too.

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: This virile song from Zumbi's mouth is like a breath of life for us!

OTHER VOICE: His voice is a trumpet in the heavens announcing holy war.

OTHER VOICE: It's the echo of Olorum.

ZUMBI: The oppressor gathers new troops.

⁵² Caetano de Melo e Castro became governor of Pernambuco in 1693, in 1694 led an army of 9000 men against Palmares that finally captured the quilombo, killing hundreds of people. See note 46; and Bartholomé Bennassar and Richard Marin, *Histoire du Brésil 1500-2000*, cit., 76.

The palm trees are full of arrows
The rivers, of blood.
They are killing my brothers.
Killing my beloved ones.
Devastating the fields.
Stealing our reserves.
To save the faith
And civilization.
But they didn't kill the poem
That will be sung through the centuries.

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: Zumbi will be the centuries.

OTHER VOICE: Freedom will come!

ZUMBI: Time and the calendar
Will refashion themselves.

POLINO: But there are betrayers here, Zumbi.

BIMBO: (Jumping in front of Zumbi) I know the name of three: three cowardly betrayers, who sold themselves for money.

ZUMBI: You are not part of that threesome. Even if you wished, you could never betray me, since being aware of who you are, I already closed my heart to you.

BIMBO: My mouth, Zumbi, can only sing your praises.

ZUMBI: Nevertheless, I want both men and gods to judge you as a poisonous creeper, that must be crushed underfoot.

VOICES FROM THE CHORUS: We already know that Bimbo is a renegade spy.

OTHER VOICE: Death to the traitor!

BIMBO: (Throwing himself at Zumbi's feet). Confessing my crimes, I beg for your justice and wisdom. I am worse than snake poison! Command them to kill me!

ZUMBI: I don't believe at all in the sincerity of your demand. You will be judged. Bimbo, to live is the worst punishment for a man like you, who knows that he is snake poison. But I believe you will die.

(Bimbo cries out. He is dragged by his arms and taken to the forest. From far off, drums resound)

ZUMBI: There are the atabaques⁵³
Beating strongly
In the sun,
The moans of the palm trees
The cries of the forests.
Our war has begun! (He exits)

VOICES FROM THE CHORUS: Freedom, Zumbi!
Saravá! Saravá!

(The drums continue. The Blacks turn themselves in the direction of Palmares, raising and lowering their arms.)

VOICES FROM THE CHORUS: Saravá! Saravá!

CALÚ: (Entering the fair) Zumbi! Where is Zumbi?

LUCADA: Why is the cursed one looking for her father, who declared her dead?

CALÚ: I came to prevent a tragedy. Where's Bimbo hiding?

OGENO: Crying like a coward he was taken to Palmares, where Zumbi will put him on trial. He's a spy and betrayer.

CALÚ: Following Bimbo's suggestion, Young Master is coming to the fair. That conniver planned to bring Young Master face to face with Zumbi, in order to precipitate a disaster.

⁵³ Atabaque: drumming.

XICÁ: Calú, disaster is your destiny. You don't see him who loves you, you don't see this sad man, who can't erase your feminine image from his thoughts. What you see is the disaster of a love without a name, this love of Calú for a White master, who enjoys himself with her.

CALÚ: I am the owner of my body. I don't control my heart.

XICÁ: Your eyes misled you, your heart betrayed you. In every way, it's a disaster. You made Zumbi suffer, in a moment of war. You troubled our king greatly.

CALÚ: I bear all the pain. Love took me in his arms.

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: The young master is coming.

OTHER VOICE: At the side of his bride!

OTHER VOICE: The sad destiny of Calú!

(Calú hides herself. The young master, nice and communicative, is the beloved of his father's house slaves, whom he protects. He likes Calú, but he ignores her love. He has come to show the curiosities of the fair to Nhã Flora, his cousin and betrothed, recently arrived from São Paulo, where her father, a pioneering settler, had made an immense fortune. With the arrival of the young master, the market songs start once again, and all plunge themselves into the fair that continues noisily).

YOUNG MASTER: Mark, Flora, the beauty of these street-sellers' cries!

(One of the Blacks performs. Flora claps her hands). I bet that in Piratininga there is nothing as beautiful as this.

NHÃ FLORA: (Talking to the Black) – Is it good, this thing that you're selling?

BLACK MAN: These are quitutes, Nhandã,⁵⁴ and some things for babies.

NHÃ FLORA: And what do you suggest that I take?

BLACK MAN: It could only be quimbembé, because the rest is gerebita.⁵⁵

NHÃ FLORA: And gerebita is what?

BLACK MAN: Is cachacinha,⁵⁶ Nhandã.

NHÃ FLORA: And do you like cachaça?

BLACK MAN: when it doesn't bring "muafa!"⁵⁷ (He laughs)
(Nhã Flora laughs. Young Master gives some money to the Black.)

YOUNG MASTER: (to Nhã Flora) Good people are always cheerful, they are miserable because they're enslaved.

NHÃ FLORA: If the masters are bad... not like Young Master.
(Approaching the Blacks' tent). Oh, what a delicious smell!

BLACK MAN: It's the smell of acará.⁵⁸

NHÃ FLORA: Acará! I want one.
(She takes one, puts it in the mouth, she bites it and screams.) Ouch!

(Some Blacks gather, curious).

YOUNG MASTER: Did you burn your tongue, Nhandã?

NHÃ FLORA: (blowing) Ouch, pepper!

⁵⁴ Quitutes: Unique delicacies; Nhandã: A nickname connoting gentle familiarity, but also a familiar name for stubborn children.

⁵⁵ Quimbembé: a drink made of corn, typical of Pernambuco; gerebita: Spirit, liquor.

⁵⁶ Cachacinha: little cachaça, a spirit made from sugarcane.

⁵⁷ Muafa: drunkenness.

⁵⁸ Acará, or Acarajé: a typical Afro-Brazilian dish, a croquette made of mashed black beans mixed with shrimp, and fried in palm oil.

BLACK MAN: It's because Nhanhã's mouth is like a honeycomb. Pepper with honey is weird.

LUCADA: Drink some aluá,⁵⁹ so that the burning passes away.

Young Master: My aunt Lucada, still in good shape?

LUCADA: Suffering for my sins. To what do we owe this honour?

YOUNG MASTER: I brought Nhã Flora, my betrothed, to enjoy the fair.

(From her corner, where she was hiding herself, Calú walks slowly, as if moved by a strange force, in the direction of Nhã Flora. All eyes fixed on her, while at the same time from the Blacks arises a collective lamentation of sorrow.)

CALÚ: (Passing her hand over the very pale face of Nhã Flora, who smiles at her)
Betrothed... Young Master... beautiful...

YOUNG MASTER: This is Calú, the most beautiful of our slaves, the one that my father wants to give you as your chambermaid, when we get married. She's coming with us to São Paulo.

NHÃ FLORA: Calú, would you like that?

CALÚ: If Young Master wishes. (Another collective lamentation from the Blacks) But Iemanjá⁶⁰ is calling me... don't you hear her? (Another lamentation)

NHÃ FLORA: I will ask Iemanjá to wait. Since you are life yourself, so young... so beautiful...

CALÚ: Betrothed... Betrothed...white lily...

NHÃ FLORA: I came here to see the fair, the market songs... and enjoy a dance, if you would like to dance.

⁵⁹ Aluá: a drink typical of Bahia made from pineapple skin.

⁶⁰ Iemanjá: Yoruba Goddess of the salty waters, mother of all the Orishas.

YOUNG MASTER: (to Lucada) What dance can we watch?

LUCADA: The most beautiful is the Lundu. (Turning back to the Black women) A Lundu for Nhanhã!

NHÃ FLORA: (to Calú) And will you dance for me?

CALÚ: I will dance for my father.

(We hear the first measure of a Lundu. The dance starts. Calú captures the attention of the couple and all the Blacks. She's mysterious and seductive. Without taking her eyes off Nhã Flora, at a certain point she bends down at Young Master's feet, as if she wanted to kiss his boots. The Lundu continues for some more measures. Calú doesn't rise up. The Blacks start mourning. Young Master tries to lift up her head, but they realise that she's dead and her hand holds a knife that she had plunged into her stomach.)

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: Calú! Calú has died!

(The laments of the Blacks become more intense. In the distance, the sound of atabaques. Zumbi's war cries from afar.)

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: The girl with stars in her eyes – starlight in the black sky – she has ceased to suffer.

OTHER VOICE: Shipwrecked in the river of love. Iemanjá took her...

OTHER VOICE: Zumbi, from afar, has received the news, with the tender feelings of a father. His men are coming, looking for women who will bear children for Palmares, they will take Calú's body to the mountain.

XICÁ: (Taking Calú in his arms) The one who loved her, she didn't notice. (He walks between two groups of Blacks.) The light of her eyes is now extinguished in mine, my heart has withered. Revenge, Zumbi!

(The drums play louder. Maroons invade the fair. Screams of women taken by them. Young Master is captured. Zumbi's voice, from afar, animates the assailants. The drums, each time ever stronger. Rapid curtain).

ACT III

Courtyard for Zumbi's audience. Palmares.

(Zumbi, surrounded by his right-hand men, holding court for his people. Maroons, in a half circle, play the drums softly. Two Blacks enter, leading an Amerindian man. Responding to a gesture by Zumbi, the drums stop playing and one of them starts to speak.)

FIRST BLACK MAN: (Pointing to the Amerindian man) He wants to talk to Zumbi.

SECOND BLACK MAN: He called Zumbi the king of persecutors.

ZUMBI: I am an avenging arrow. The hand that takes me to the bow and hurls me towards the breasts of the persecutors is the one of those who've been treated unfairly. I am just an instrument of the superior gods in defence of the enslaved.

AMERINDIAN: You are an arrow Zumbi, you are an arrow of emerald light in the air, spreading in the night a light of hope. You are the reflection of a powerful god. The membi of Tupã.⁶¹ Your war cry resounded in the ears of the sons of my nation as advice, as a call.

ZUMBI: Are you alone?

AMERINDIAN: My brothers are in their thousands. The entire tribe, dispersed and defeated, has its eyes turned to the forest where Zumbi governs. The entire tribe waits only to be warmed by the rays of Zumbi's sun in Palmares's sky.

ZUMBI: In Palmares there's war. We accept your soldiers. Women, elders and your younger sons can stay where they are, waiting for victory. That day all the land bathed by the sea, from south to north, from Porto Seguro to Paraiba, will be a land of freedom. The humiliated and the slaves of all races will unify in peace on this conquered ground.

⁶¹ Mambi de Tupã: Tupã means "god" and Membi means "flute" in the Tupi language. Francisco da Silveira Bueno, *Vocabulário Tupi-guarani Português*. (São Paulo: Vidalivros, 2008).

(At the final word from Zumbi the drums start playing again, while the Maroons sing a war song.)

LUCADA: Zumbi, your day of glory has come! Respite for the Black Mother has arrived! You are invisible Olorum's favourite son, and he lights up your way. The moment has come, Zumbi, for you to free the laugh from the throat of all the Blacks that the warriors of Palmares will return, redeemed, to this ground of liberty of yours.

ZUMBI: You, old Lucada, are Ogeno's mother, mother of Nana and Xicá, Soluço's companion. Why do I see in your eyes such poorly-hidden tears? Bitter tears that don't fall?

LUCADA: I spoke about laughter, thinking about freedom. These tears that don't fall are because of you. Because of Calú.

ZUMBI: I know that Calú died, in her destiny as a slave. But I will laugh as you ask me to do, in the name of freedom.

(The Maroons start an almost inaudible lamentation. Zumbi begins a tremendous laugh, that slowly gets louder. Xicá enters, with Calú's body in his arms, Ogeno and Nana by his side, and followed by Soluço. He stops in front of Zumbi, who looks at his daughter's body and releases his deepest fatherly sorrow, converting the laugh into an intense and long scream of pain. The Maroons' laments get more intense. Xicá, in silence, walks back, retreating, followed by a procession of weeping women.)

ZUMBI: (brusquely) Calú! (The Maroons' laments continue inaudibly) In the freedom I imagine, love is life! You've been hurt by the sting of a fatal and forbidden love, that you suffered alone. (Screaming) The White man! Bring here the White master, the murderer! Zumbi wants to look him in the eye!

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: The White master arrives, accompanied by a priest that came to Palmares to defend him.

OTHER VOICE: Zumbi's justice is tremendous!

OTHER VOICE: The Just One doesn't forgive.

OTHER VOICE: And even less so when he's angry and outraged.

(Young Master is taken in front of Zumbi. The Jesuit priest places himself between the two.)

PRIEST: In the name of God, who is the exclusive Lord of men's destiny – the Lord of all men – I beg you, Zumbi not to judge one similar to you, to avoid losing your soul and dirtying your name with the infamy of arrogance.

ZUMBI: First I want you to tell me if you consider me similar to the guilty one.

YOUNG MASTER: We're all equal before God.

ZUMBI: I mean before men.

PRIEST: The condition is temporary: the body gets destroyed. Only the soul counts in God's measures. Your soul Zumbi, is your only treasure.

ZUMBI: You admit that there's a soul in a slave. It's an unexpected concession.

PRIEST: We're all slaves, Zumbi, when our weakness makes us cede to the body's claims, and allows us to introduce a blasphemous rebellion in our hearts. Happy and suffering ones, lucky those who cry because they will be consoled.

ZUMBI: If I suffer I will find consolation; if I don't suffer then I will not need to be consoled. In the end everything is the same in this long-term adventure. But who suffered have already suffered. Equality, if it exists, comes afterwards.

YOUNG MASTER: Think, Zumbi, do you deserve to be judge for the cause in which I am guilty. We're all creatures of God: that is what's important.

ZUMBI: What does the son of the master know about the value of a Black slave? The money that he cost? How much does his arm produce? I have another concept of the value of a slave that acts like Zumbi: I am worthier than you! I am building my freedom: you don't possess this value.

PRIEST: If there is a freedom in the laws dictated by God, it's the freedom for each one of us to choose our own path, to reach Him or the devil's house. We all are free before God's laws.

ZUMBI (To Young Master) What does this enemy of mine have to say about this idea of the priest: to reduce freedom for the pleasure of choosing the path?

YOUNG MASTER: It's the law of our church. But don't consider me as an enemy.

ZUMBI: You are your father's heir. Our abused bodies, or tears without consolation, they're your laughter's sap and moisture. If you were not an enemy you would leave the house of your father, and wouldn't eat of his bread, that we with knead with our suffering fingers.

YOUNG MASTER: I don't fight against my father, it would be like fighting for nothing, against an iron door anchored to a secure rampart. The rampart is the law. I fight against it.

ZUMBI: In which way? Placing a refined slave as your wife's chambermaid? Driving her to despair and finally to her death? Do you have any pity on us? You smile at a Black man. You save the soul of a Black man. You consider yourself equal to a Black man in God's judgment, but you profit from him on Earth. Is this the way you fight? Do you admit that a Black man could be hanged for your judgement? Because I wouldn't accept you as the judge of Zumbi.

PRIEST: Heart full of poison, soul full of grudge! It is you, Zumbi, with these clouds of hate that blind your eyes, who is widening the gap that divine truth allowed to be dug between you and your provisional masters. You refuse to take the hand of the one who shows you friendship. You're not fighting for freedom: you're fighting for Black against White. You could even plot to take these White men as slaves of these slaves.

ZUMBI: You seem to know very well what you invent. White slaves already exist, persecuted like us. They are also mocambeiros of Palmares, our allies. We have Amerindians with us. They will be all freed. The oppressor will fall, no matter what his colour is.

YOUNG MASTER: I will be with you at that moment.

ZUMBI: It's not up to me to reject anybody's friendship. You are the slave of your father, member of your band: I don't need from you anything except your sympathy. You're not a free man... this is your perdition.

YOUNG MASTER: The cause that you fight for has got more friends than it appears.

ZUMBI: In this war of Palmares the army is the Black man: we are our own strength... but we like having friends. The slave, himself, will have to break the chains of his captivity, conquering the enjoyment of sunlight with the vermilion of his blood.

PRIEST: What's your final word on the defendant?

ZUMBI: Let him go back. I will give him what he denies me: Freedom.

PRIEST: Divine mercy inspired your sentence. I am a minister of God. I will pray at his side for you to be forgiven for the blood that will flow, and for which you are responsible.

ZUMBI: Responsible before your God, responsible before the supreme judgment of my god Olorum!

(Young Master and the priest leave while Bimbo, the traitor, arrives at Zumbi's feet.)

BIMBO: Divine mercy inspired your sentence. Don't provoke the fury of powerful God by spilling my innocent blood!

ZUMBI: (To the court) Remove this snake from my feet! Suffocate in his mouth any breath of life so that the air we breathe will be free from the plague he brings with him!

(Bimbo is dragged out by the Maroons)

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: The spy and traitor will die! Zumbi's justice can't forgive him.

OTHER VOICE: But he forgave the White master.

OTHER VOICE: Zumbi does not judge races. He knows what he does.

(Zumbi stands in a majestic posture. The quilombolas come and leave at his feet, as war tributes, the products of their raids in the neighbourhoods: weapons, provisions, baskets with fruits and vegetables, clothes, tools.)

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: The hands of escaped slaves bring to the feet of our king the result of an immense collection of weapons and provisions, various goods, to sustain the war.

OTHER VOICE: These are things stolen from the enemy, the master.

OTHER VOICE: His mortal weapons are turned against him.

(The enslaved people escaped from the distant regions of the mines pour into the bowl the gold that they have hidden in their hair.)

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: this help from slaves who came searching for Palmares, fleeing the far-off mines, are sparks of gold.

OTHER VOICE: Good gold of the prospectors that the escaped slaves hide in their braided hair.

NGOLA:⁶² (Detaching himself from the right-hand men) I salute you Zumbi, in the name of all Bantu, of which Njinga Nbandi⁶³ has been the brave queen, in faraway Angola.

⁶² Ngola: the name of the people of the royal dynasty of Angola. King 'Ngola Kiluanje was king of the most prominent potentate of the 'Ndongo kingdom and founder of the dynasty that would later become the 'Ngola Kingdom. According to some versions of the country's history, King 'Ngola Kiluanje was killed in 1617 by a chief of his military troops. He left an elder son 'Ngola Mbandi, and three daughters: Funji, Kambo e Njinga. Ngola Mbandi, afraid of facing the same destiny as his father, decided to kill all the people that could possibly yearn for power. He killed his younger brother, who should have been the legitimate king, the chief of the army, and some other prominent men around him. He then decided to kill Njinga's son and, to prevent future challenges of succession to his rule, ordered his sisters' sterilization by mean of boiling water or red-hot iron. That this character is Njinga's grandson is thus historically impossible: it could represent the spirit of her son, or there could be a mistake in the text and this character could be one of her ancestors. See: Amaral (1996).

⁶³ Njinga Nbandi: Queen Nzinga Mbande (subsequently baptized Ana de Sousa) reigned as queen of the 'Ngola kingdom from 1624 to 1626. Arriving in Luanda in 1622 as ambassador of her brother Ngola Mbandi, she established from the very beginning a good relationship with the Portuguese government. When, in 1623, Ngola Mbandi was killed, Njinga was the first person to be suspected of his death, since her rule started immediately afterwards. Indeed, she seems to have killed 'Ngola Mbandi's son and then, lacking a possible heir to the kingdom, she tried to organize the union of one of her sisters with João Guterres Ngola Kanini, but the wedding was not permitted. Agualusa, *A rainha Ginga*. (Lisboa: Quetzal, 2014); João António Cavazzi de Montecuccolo, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos do Congo, Matamba e*

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: This is the grandson of Ginga,⁶⁴ the queen who put up fierce resistance to the Portuguese invaders in African lands.

ZUMBI: Noble heir of the great queen! I am honoured, Ngola, to see you by my side.

CHORUS VOICE: “Queen Ginga is a warrior woman.
She’s got two hips like razors!”

OTHER VOICE: She was a wise woman and a majestic figure. Allied to the Batavi she freed her sisters, Cambe and Funge, from the hands of the Portuguese who had detained them in Luanda.

OTHER VOICE: The memory of Ginga hasn’t died out among Black people. All hail Ngola, her grandson!

NGOLA: The memory of Ginga, queen of Angola and heroine of the race, has never been so alive as in Zumbi, our king.

VOICE FROM THE CHORUS: Zumbi resurrects in Palmares the heroism of our forefathers. He’s the heir to Ginga’s glory. He is as immortal as Ginga.

ZUMBI: The drums are playing. Our war will start. (drums beat from afar, which continue to play during the monologue). We will fight with the courage of Black people animated by a great revolt against the enemy fire that falls on us! Even if they win, freedom will never stop rising from the ashes of its martyrs. I glimpse now, from that direction – on the eastern firmament – a new and strange glow, different from ordinary daylight. It’s the crown of light encircling the head of the Gods of the enslaved, wishing for peace and justice, and announcing the kingdom of the glory of bright liberty, bringing dignity to man!

(After Zumbi’s final words, the first measures of Maracatu are heard)

ENTIRE CHORUS: Saravá!

Angola, (Lisboa, Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, 1965); António Brandão de Mello, “Breve história da rainha Zinga Mbandi, D. Ana de Sousa,” *Boletim da Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa*, 63, n° 3/4 (1945): 134-6.

⁶⁴ (sic).

(Zumbi's court dignitaries come, with the noble Ngola in front of them, and place on his head the king's crown. The Maracatu follows and all the Maroons of Palmares who will follow Zumbi's steps, participate dancing and singing, covered by an immense and sumptuous traditional umbrella.)

(The narrator of the prologue enters slowly, while the parade exits. The Maroons surround him. During his speech, we will hear the diminishing echo of the Maracatú music and chanting.)

NARRATOR: Zumbi died in the war
He will be eternal.

FEMALE CHORUS: A real king and companion
He died to give freedom.

MALE CHORUS: Zumbi died in the war
He will be eternal.

NARRATOR: Whenever the Black man is fighting
He is present.

ENTIRE CHORUS: Glorious hero
He will be eternal.

MALE CHORUS: Under the shadow of the Gameleira⁶⁵
The biggest one there is.

FEMALE CHORUS: His eyes now are light,
Sun, shining stars.
His arms are tree trunks.
His words are wind and rain
And thunder, river and sea.

⁶⁵ Gameleira: a leafy tree very common in Brazil, and a holy tree in the Candomble religion.

ENTIRE CHORUS: Olorum Ekê⁶⁶
Zumbi rose up
He's at Obatala's side

NARRATOR: From there he sees Congo
He sees Luanda,
He sees Guinea
From there he sees his Black brothers
He looks to give freedom.

ENTIRE CHORUS: He went to live in
A golden castle
Gold of King Chico⁶⁷
Gold of Minas Gerais
Gold that came from the blood
That came from enslavement.

A VOICE: The thief who steals from a thief
Is forgiven for 100 years. (Laughter from the chorus)

NARRATOR: Zumbi is a cry
Of freedom
Zumbi is a hymn
To love and peace.
Zumbi's words will be fulfilled
We will live
Black and white
In a world of equals.

ENTIRE CHORUS: King Zumbi!
King Zumbi!

⁶⁶ Olorum Ekê: an expression in Yoruba language probably taken from the Prayer to Olorum. Some oral sources reported that the meaning is "people of the warrior saint" but "Ekê" is more likely a contraction of the word *Ekiti*, or *ekubi*, two words that can define people of Yoruba origin. The expression could also derive from the contraction of a part of the first verse: "Alafia kúburú olonu kokeiberé" from the prayer to Olorum. *Olorum Ekê* is also the title of one of Solano Trindade's poems, Zilá Bernd, *Poesia Negra Brasileira. Antologia*, (Porto Alegre: Age, 1992): p. 55.

⁶⁷ Brazilian heroic figure of an African slave who was able to buy his own freedom and a gold mine. See Silva (2007).

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