

The Muses of Chaos and Destruction of *Arena conta Zumbi*

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Eshu turns right into wrong, wrong into right.
 When he is angry, he hits a stone until it bleeds.
 When he is angry, he sits on the skin of an ant.
 When he is angry, he weeps tears of blood.

 He throws a stone today and kills a bird yesterday.
 (Ulli Beier, *Yoruba poetry* 28)

Ogun realized now that he had been killing his own people. Overcome with sadness and remorse, he decided to leave the world. He told the people that every warrior had to come to rest in the end. But he promised that if ever they were in grave need he would return to help them. He said that where he entered the ground, he would leave a chain; and whenever they were attacked by enemies they should pull it. Then pointing his sword to the ground, he disappeared into the bowels of the earth. Ogun kept his promise, And whenever the people of Ire were in danger, and they pulled the chain he came to defend them. (Ulli Beier, *Yoruba myths* 34-35)

Arena conta Zumbi opened on Labor Day (May 1), 1965, and ran for nearly a year and a half. It was, according to Artistic Director Augusto Boal, the biggest artistic and popular success of the Teatro de Arena of São Paulo ("A necessidade" 198). The epic musical about the *quilombo* of Palmares spawned a series of Arena-associated musical productions.¹ Boal accords *Zumbi* a position of privilege in the company's repertoire not only for its success, but also because it provided necessary chaos in the theatre:

Zumbi culminou a fase de "destruição" do teatro, de todos os seus valores, regras, preceitos, receitas, etc. Não podíamos aceitar as convenções praticadas, mas era ainda impossível apresentar um novo

sistema de convenções. . . . *Zumbi* . . . descoordenou o teatro. Para nós, sua principal missão foi a de criar caos, antes de iniciarmos, com *Tiradentes*, a etapa da proposição de um novo sistema. ("A necessidade" 198-99)

Chaos, in this sense, is the destruction of codes, necessary for the imposition of his new system of performance, the *Coringa* or Joker System.² Boal formulated the system in the series of articles published as an introduction to *Arena conta Tiradentes* and reprinted in *Teatro do oprimido* after the experience of *Zumbi*. The Joker System is not the concern of this essay, since it was the result rather than the cause of *Zumbi*. *Tiradentes* was the sole instance of Arena's application of this system, and the play bears the subtitle *Coringa em dois tempos*. *Zumbi*, then, was not a Joker play, but rather facilitated the creation of the Joker System.

In this respect, *Arena conta Zumbi* functions much like the Yoruba *orisa* Exu, viewed as the deity of transformation. Exu introduces chaos into a steady state, and conversely, helps new states emerge from chaos. Only those supporters of the established order need fear Exu. It is for this reason that slave owners, founders and beneficiaries of plantation society, often fearful of slave revolt, associated Exu with the Christian Devil. In the world of mid-twentieth-century theatre, Exu, through *Arena conta Zumbi*, threw a stone that killed a bird the day before—the realist theatrical code. It is interesting that Exu is sometimes called a Trickster deity. The later Joker System can be seen as a codification of that Trickster motif.

The theatrical "chaos" of *Arena conta Zumbi* has led some critics to refer negatively to the fragility or fragmentation of the play's text (Schoenberg 401-02; cf. Campos 157-64). However, when critics frame their analyses in ideological or aesthetic terms that are too narrow, they fail to explain why this musical was so popular in spite of this supposed chaos and fragility. I want to explain why what Cláudia de Arruda Campos calls "this strange congratulation of a defeated left" (148) remained on the bill for a year and a half and why a play, whose revival five years later intrigued audiences in New York and Nancy, remains, despite its defeated ideology, a cornerstone of contemporary Brazilian popular culture.

The analysis will begin with a review of the stages of Arena's development in order to appreciate exactly what *Zumbi* attempted to transform. We will see that prior criticism tends to emphasize aesthetic or political motives for Arena's development. The essay proceeds to give examples of the destructive techniques listed by Boal in "A necessidade" (separation of character and actor, unity of narrative point-of-view, eclecticism of style and genre, and use of music and

song) in order to reveal how the play destroyed existing theatrical codes. We will see the indices that guide interpretations referential to Arena's milieu and the coding of a type of symbolic performance new to the contemporary Brazilian stage, yet already familiar to the history of the theatre. We will conclude with observations on how the destruction of existing codes served the production's special celebratory purposes.

Boal was the artistic director of Arena from 1956 to 1971. In his fifteen years of association with the company, he led young playwrights and actors through a series of aesthetic developments nurtured in Arena-associated projects such as the Acting Laboratory and the Dramaturgy Seminar.³ In 1958 Arena opened Gianfrancesco Guarnieri's *Eles não usam black-tie*, which brought to the Brazilian stage a novel brand of realism and reference to working class reality. Between 1958 and 1961, the company built upon the success of *Black-Tie*, elaborating a realist theatrical code which itself was a rupture with the Eurocentric esthetics of the Teatro Brasileiro de Comédia, the pacesetter of the Brazilian theatrical establishment. That code, which Boal called Selective Realism, found a variety of applications in productions of the period (Boal, "Etapas" 190). The essential feature of Selective Realism was the sustained opposition between indexical or symbolic set (foregrounded by the arena stage space) and iconic acting.⁴ As a corollary, the Arena realist code positively valued Brazilian texts referring to Brazilian topics and ideologically progressive representation of that object world.

Nevertheless, Arena's esthetics during its first decade were never solely limited to realism. Only two years after *Black-tie*'s premiere, Boal cartwheeled over the new realism with a little bit of Lukács and a lot of Brecht in mind. Arena staged Boal's *Revolução na América do Sul* for the first time on September 15, 1960, breaking significantly with the realist code (Magaldi 46-48). The later phase of Arena that Boal called Nationalization of the Classics departed from realism with symbolic adaptations of classic plays, like *A mandrágora* (1962), *O melhor juiz, o rei* (1963) and *Tartufo* (1964), that successfully exploited the ambiguity of their reference (Boal, "Etapas" 192-195). To this list of Arena's nonrealist experiments, one could add the number of farces, satires, and one drama by Brecht produced before *Black-tie*.⁵

Yet it was the *Arena conta* series of musicals that broke most significantly with the realist code established by *Black-tie*. In 1964 and early 1965 Boal had collaborated on productions with former members of the Centros Populares de Cultura who had founded a new theatrical company in Rio, Grupo Opinião.⁶ Schoenbach sees these dramatic spectacles as a melding of the musical review, documentary theatre, and the golden age of bossa nova, and as the prototypes for Arena's political musicals (395). After these experiences Arena began the line

of musicals with *Arena conta Zumbi* in 1965 and, aside from revivals, ended it with *Arena conta Tiradentes* in 1967.

Why does this aesthetic rupture occur in the mid sixties? Before 1964 this meandering theatrical exploration had never effectively been constrained by political events. The 1964 coup changed that. Censorship forced a change in the shape of the theatrical sign. It also forced a reordering of Arena's communicative priorities, which before 1964 had been the representation and critique of Brazilian reality. The result of the coup and subsequent repression by the government was the regrouping of the liberal national theatre within a common sphere of concern: rallying the resistance of the intelligentsia. One can understand the remaining trajectory of Arena's production (indeed most Brazilian theatre in this period) and much of the later work of Boal and Guarnieri outside of Arena as a function of the gradual intensification and centralization of censorship.

The fact of the dictatorship has provoked a split in the critical treatment of Arena's post-coup theatre. One trend sees Arena's production in this period as part of an ongoing aesthetic experiment. Boal himself best articulates this position.⁷ The other trend sees this period as determined by political and ideological facts.⁸ Analyses typically acknowledge both sides of the question, but are skewed to one side or another in their discussion. The political realities of military rule did indeed foreclose certain realist options. This forced Arena to innovate with regard to the signs it chose. Nevertheless, Arena's theatre, whatever its political determinants, stems from an urge that is pre-ideological and pre-semiotic in the narrow sense. That is the urge to grow, to create, to celebrate, suggested throughout Arena's history. The company's new communicative goals, a reaction to political events of the mid sixties, simply gave renewed value to an ancient function of the theatre: ritual celebration. This function had been obscured by the contemporary concern with realism.

Arena conta Zumbi covers in a broad sweep the founding and growth of Palmares, the attacks by Dutch and Portuguese forces, the vicissitudes of Portuguese colonial policy toward the maroon state, and the final attack by *bandeirante* Domingos Jorge Velho. In writing the play Boal and Guarnieri made use of the novel *Ganga-Zumba*, in some cases drawing on material not used in Santos's novel. An example is the excerpt from *Diário da viagem do Capitão João Blaer*, describing a futile Dutch attack on Palmares in 1645.⁹ Although the intertextual correlation between *Ganga-Zumba* and *Zumbi* is high, the play opts for economy befitting the dramatic mode; for example, the collapsing of certain characters and events. *Zumbi*'s departures from *Ganga-Zumba*, however, were not always dictated by generic code rules that promote economy of plot and

characterization in the drama. They were motivated by the play's chaotic and destructive character.

Zumbi destroyed, or created chaos in, the theatre in four ways. The first technique was separation of actor and character by having all of the actors play all of the characters. It is important to remember that in *Zumbi* there was not a one-to-one correspondence of actor to character. The actors took turns representing the various characters. The separation of actor and character by having all of the actors play all of the characters had an explicit motivation in the desire to reform the theatrical code. While this separation had precedent in the history of the theatre, notably in the ancient Greek theatre, its importance and novelty lay, according to Boal, in its reaction to realism ("A necessidade" 190-201). The realist code encouraged a close identification of actor with character, with the goal of giving as detailed a portrayal of the character as possible. In the view of Brechtian esthetics, this identification provoked in the spectator an undesirable empathy for the character.

In order to guide the interpretation of such a performance, indeed, to render it interpretable, the actors assumed what Boal termed "social masks," a concept also with precedent in the Greek theatre. These masks were salient features of the character that could be represented by speech tone, gesture, or movement. A change of "mask"—some distinguishing feature of the character—signaled the change of role. For example, whichever actor was playing *Zumbi* would portray the character's violence as a "mask." Boal also cites the severity of Governor D. Ayres, the youthfulness of Ganga Zona, *Zumbi*'s father, and the sensuality of Gongoba, *Zumbi*'s mother, as examples of such character features ("A necessidade" 199-201).

The second of Boal's destructive techniques was the unification of the characters' subjectivity under one narrative point-of-view. This was partly accomplished through commentary and documentary elements, such as slide projections. A large part of the action is narrated in *Zumbi*. Relatively little of the plot is dramatized on stage. Similarly, a minority of the spoken and sung text is dialogue among characters. Most of it is narration and commentary in sung and spoken form. These speeches and songs may be presented by individual actors or by a group of actors functioning as a chorus. Even when not speaking, the other actors remain on the stage. The mode of the verbal text alternates rapidly among dialogue, lyric monologue, song, narration, and commentary. There is also rapid alternation of parts among individuals, groups, or the entire chorus of actors. The result is the montage quality of the play noted by Boal ("A necessidade" 199-201), a quality with its evolutionary precedent in the musical shows like *Opinião*. The mingling of past and present, and of subjectivity and objectivity on the stage shattered the classical unities. This is consonant with

Arena's antirealist goals in this period, and is certainly not valid grounds on which to attack the *Arena conta* series, as some have done (Rosenfeld 21). Thus, the "*Arena conta*" of the title is apt: the collective representation of the story replicates its collective creation. The work is no one's and everyone's. Later we shall see how this collectivity is extended to the audience as well.

The third technique was eclecticism of genre and style ("A necessidade" 201-02). The play juxtaposes farce and melodrama, musical review and docu-drama. This technique is destructive insofar as it conveys the illusion that there are no theatrical codes operating in the performance. In fact, genres and styles of music, verbal discourse, and spectacle can be chosen to manipulate audience interpretation. The eclecticism, then, is not random but functional. Thus, absurdity and *chanchada* are used to satirize the whites, melodrama to provoke empathy with the *palmarinos*, expressionism and symbolism to represent emotional nuances of the drama, and so forth. The eclecticism is chaotic only to the extent that it is novel and, therefore might be misunderstood by an aesthetically conservative viewer. The "chaotic" features of the code became its hallmarks, part of the aesthetic pleasure of the interpretive game that such theatre presented. Lest we think that Boal's "destructive techniques" are simply reiterations of Brechtian Alienation Effects, we should observe that Arena's esthetics diverge from Brecht's in an important way. In a practice prefigured in *Zumbi* and later codified in the Joker System, Arena rapidly alternated between distancing effects and elements designed to provoke identification with characters and catharsis. The eclecticism of genre and style was a technique used to this end.

The fourth destructive technique was the use of music and song ("A necessidade" 199-202). The play begins with music, and it is dominated by Edu Lobo's beautiful score. The role of music in *Zumbi* is vast, and to some extent varies with each manifestation. However, there are some overarching functions. On the function of music and song, Boal comments: "A música tem o poder de, independente de conceitos, preparar a platéia a curto prazo, ludicamente, para receber textos simplificados que só poderão ser absorvidos dentro da experiência simultânea razão-música" ("A necessidade" 202). If I understand Boal correctly in this passage, he has apprehended the defamiliarizing power that music has to restore luster to a cliché or a truism. This is clearly the function of the music in *Zumbi*'s exhortatory songs such as "Venha ser feliz" (46) "O açoite bateu" (48-49), and "Tempo de guerra" (49-50).¹⁰

Often, several of these destructive techniques join with scenic movement for the exhortatory and celebratory purposes of the play. An episode that illustrates this interaction occurs early in the second half after the relations between Palmares and the colonial authorities have taken a definitively nasty turn. King

Zambi and Ganga Zumba in consultation recognize the inevitability of conflict with the whites. The aging king foresees the final battle, and in a lengthy song and prose monologue encourages his young successor in the impending battle with the whites. Zambi acknowledges that he will not see the utopian community envisioned by the freedom-seeking runaways. Zambi's final song and speech, "Tempo de guerra," is a rewriting of Brecht's poem "An die Nachgeborenen" ("To Those Born Later").¹¹ The king then draws a dagger and kills himself, thus allowing Ganga Zumba to assume leadership of Palmares. The people acclaim him and give him the name Zumbi. Throughout this scene, the chorus is in a triangular formation, an indexical representation of a dagger that signifies "attack." A vertex of the triangle is pointed toward the audience. The audience is "threatened" by the kinesic sign in the same sense that Ganga Zumba is threatened by events in the play. The actors' movements force an identification of the public with the *palmarinos*. An alternate interpretation is that the kinesic sign and by extension the audience threatens the forces of reaction and repression outside of the theatre. Another element in this semiotically dense scene is that a young child replaces King Zambi on the stage. This sequence of action represents the cycle of self-sacrifice and resurrection, and reinforces the text of "Tempo de guerra."

Significantly, Zumbi is not killed in the final battle of the play. His final self-sacrifice is implied in the hopeless battle at the end. Zumbi never dies, just like the legend that he spawned. Perhaps this open-endedness is designed to reinforce the interpretant of immortality. Perhaps it is to communicate that the sacrifice is ongoing and that the public is invited to join in. In the final scene he repeats the prose portion of "Tempo de guerra," recited earlier by Zambi. The soliloquy is accompanied by an instrumental arrangement of "Venha ser feliz," which is now interpreted as the hymn of a dream deferred. The chorus, surrounding Zumbi, facing the audience with fists clenched, sings a final refrain of "O açoite bateu," the recurrent theme song during moments of repressive action. The defiant gestures of the *palmarinos* are interpretable as defiant gestures of the Brazilian Left.¹²

What are the metatheatrical interpretants of *Zumbi*? What is the theatrical code for which *Zumbi* is the prototype? After 1964 censorship prevented iconic representation of certain aspects of Brazilian reality. Moreover, it was a policy of the Castelo Branco administration to cut off cultural contacts between the leftist intelligentsia and the general population, and to isolate it in its ghetto. As a result of this isolation, Arena and other artists shifted their communicative goals. Their current need was not to represent the realities of Brazil's poor and working classes to audiences of all incomes; it was to confront enlightened intellectuals with the reality of the threats against them as a class. Finally,

politics aside, the company was predisposed to innovate in order to deautomatize theatrical codes. The musicals were not a necessary outcome of the condition, but they were the solution that the collective creative genius of Arena chose.

Arena reacted aesthetically to the automatized code of its realist phase before it reacted politically to the events of the mid sixties. In a sense, the *Arena conta* series was just another experiment in nonrealist theatre. It partook somewhat of the theatrical code manifest in the Nationalization of the Classics phase. The code of the Nationalization of the Classics theatre was symbolic, foregrounding the spoken utterance. Brazilian audiences perceived the ambiguity of the theatrical utterance of this phase as referring simultaneously to part of the Western canon (for example, *La mandragola*, *El mejor alcalde el rey*, and *Tartuffe*) as well as to the Brazilian context. The Brazilian left saw the underlying structural relations represented in these plays as identical to contemporary Brazilian problems.

The musicals modified this code in several ways. First, all the theatrical sign systems followed the verbal code in operating symbolically. The symbolic interpretations were overdetermined such that even iconic-indexical signs were integrated into the symbolic structure. Thus, the defiant gestures of the *palmarinos* were interpreted as the defiant *gestes* of the Left. The discussion above includes several examples of how the play guides a symbolic interpretation at the expense of one that is iconic and indexical of the reality of seventeenth-century Brazil. The shift of all theatrical systems to symbolic functions, however, was not perceived automatically. This led inevitably to the performance foregrounding its own artistic structure. Gone, then, was the symbolic code that foregrounded only the verbal utterance, as in the Nationalization of the Classics phase. Gone, also, was the sustained opposition of symbolic space and iconic action of Arena's Selective Realist phase.

The deautomatizing effects of *Zumbi* led Boal to speak of destruction because, for the aesthetically conservative viewer, deautomatization tends to destroy interpretability. The four destructive techniques that Boal mentions in "A necessidade" (separation of actor and character, collective subjectivity, eclecticism, and music) threaten not only the existing theatrical codes, they threaten the aesthetically conservative viewer's understanding. It is only for such critics that *Zumbi* will be "fragile" and "chaotic." In support of the claim that the play was not inherently disorganized, I cite the review by Décio de Almeida Prado, who is the only major critic who preferred *Tiradentes* over *Zumbi*. In spite of his preference, he remarked that the performance structure of *Zumbi* resulted in "nenhum prejuízo para a clareza do espetáculo" ("Arena conta *Zumbi*" 68).

There is another difference between the Nationalization of the Classics phase and the musicals. Part of the joy of *Zumbi*'s interpretive game is the possible ambiguity of reference similar to that of the Nationalization of the Classics. Yet unlike that phase, the intertextuality is not with the Western theatrical canon, but with the discourse of national history. The authority of the intertext is not literary but historical.

After *Zumbi*, most Brazilian political musicals are allegories whose vehicle is an incident from national history (e.g. *Tiradentes*, *Calabar*, *O corsário do rei*), although several use classical or contemporary literary vehicles (e.g. *Mulheres de Atenas*, *Gota d'água*, *Ópera do malandro*). I submit that a feature of the theatrical code of the musicals is allegorical semiosis, preferably with a historical intertext. Many politically conservative viewers (and this included many on the Left) misinterpreted this intertext as the sole or primary referent, thence the misguided attacks on *Zumbi* as a distortion of history (cf. Prado, "Arena conta Zumbi"). The spectator who enters this interpretive game aware of the presuppositions of the new code will accept that the final interpretant is not the history ostensibly referred to. Nor is the spectacle "analogy," although this is the usual label for these allegories in the critical literature. 'Analogy' implies that a representation of a segment of historical reality has been juxtaposed to the present for the sake of illustrating their similarities. If *Zumbi* and the other musicals are analogies, then the distortion of facts, the anachronism, the deliberate misappropriation of intertexts is dishonest and poorly motivated. As allegories, however, they are structural diagrams of the present signified as an extended metaphor whose vehicle is the discourse of national history modified as needed.

The historical allegory had the political advantage of being patriotic while harnessing the power of national myths and heroes for the ideological purposes at hand. Also, the indirection of the allegories provided cover under which opponents could continue to attack the government. Initially, that cover worked; *Zumbi* suffered only one cut by the censors in its first run. In the line "A Igreja e o Estado em perfeita harmonia, só faltava o Exército" (*Zumbi* 50), censors required the substitution of "os bandeirantes" for "o Exército" (Campos 15). Thus, censorship unwittingly collaborates in the creation of new metaphors, and the interpretive game is extended to decoding them. Eventually the federal government began forbidding any historical work of art for fear that it might be allegorical!

There is more to the play than the destruction of realist theatrical codes and exhortation to violent resistance to threats against political liberty. There is a curious joy on the stage, a mixture of desperation and ecstasy. Let us recall that much of the criticism that faults *Zumbi* does so on ideological grounds. Even if

those cited shortcomings appear to be aesthetic, they are in fact dealing with ideological implications of the esthetics. Broadly speaking, these shortcomings are of two types: they take issue either with the role of empathy and the hero or with the naive, dated, dualistic world view presented. The analyses that undertake a more formally aesthetic approach still limit any valuative remarks to the ideological debate. Almost none of the criticism explains the success of *Zumbi* despite its shortcomings. Exceptions are Campos, and, to a lesser extent, Mostaço, and Schwarz. What these three share is an awareness that the success of *Zumbi* rested in the lack of distance separating actors and audiences. This lack of distance did not result from any formal techniques of the performance to destroy barriers, although the arena space certainly reduced the distance between performer and public. Distance did not need to be destroyed because there was little difference in the first place between the people on stage and the people in the seats. This population shared a language and a point of view on contemporary events; in fact, they shared an entire culture. It remained for Teatro de Arena to give artful form to that culture.

Mostaço and Milleret have touched on the ritual nature of the first production of *Zumbi* by focusing on the actor-spectator relation. Mostaço situates *Zumbi* within the larger corpus of popular music, musical shows, and musical theatre that spearheaded the intellectual resistance to the 1964 coup. Mostaço notes in the musical show *Opinião* a curious type of communicative model, and this observation applies just as well to *Zumbi*:

Como nos ritos religiosos, onde os mitos subjazem numa forma conhecida pelos fiéis circunscrevendo, portanto, um código todo próprio, *Opinião* operava uma comunicação de circuito fechado: palco e platéia irmanados na mesma fé. Aliás, um raro exemplo de espetáculo brasileiro contemporâneo inteiramente grego em seu espírito. O povo do palco era o mesmo povo da platéia. (77)

This type of communication was perhaps rare in the elite contemporary theatre, but it had a long tradition in Brazil, including Jesuit catechetical theatre, popular spectacles, and musical theatre throughout the years.

Milleret synthesized information on heretofore unexplained aspects of *Zumbi*'s ideological and performance structures which illustrate the closed circuit communication mentioned by Mostaço. Especially illuminating is an interview that she conducted with set designer Flávio Império. In the first production of *Zumbi* the stage or arena was bare except for three platforms, one to the rear and a small one on each side. There was also a red carpet on the stage floor. The actors wore white jeans and brightly colored sweat shirts. Aside from the

optional use of slides, there was no other framing of theatrical space and no other scenic element in the stage set.¹³ This was the same "despoiled" stage of Arena's Selective Realism. The systems of set and costume appeared to be operating symbolically unless one bears in mind Flávio Império's comment that the play's rehearsals reminded him of rich kids in a living room talking about the masses (Milleret 128). He designed the set and costumes with this in mind, and these systems become indexical of that image. The carpet helped to create the "living room" ambiance. The choice of red for the carpet in a Marxist political drama requires no comment. Jeans and sweatshirts were part of the university student's uniform in the sixties. The choice of colors contributed to the casual festivity which is an interpretant of the play.

If Arena communicated within a closed circuit during the mid sixties, it did so not to its detriment. *Zumbi* and its successor plays, in fact, exploited this communicative model and predicated its value. The hermeneutic game could only proceed on discourse from a culture and collateral experience which some shared and which excluded others. The community of this hip culture was Brazilian, educated, often young, politically left of center, idealistic and utopian, and, currently, under attack. This community had its geographic center in the student ghetto around Rua da Consolação in São Paulo. Yet that culture was shared to one extent or another by university communities throughout the country and throughout the world in the mid sixties and early seventies.

The shared culture had every need to affirm itself while it was under attack, even if it later became hopelessly fractured. That affirmation came in the form of the sacrificial ritual of *Zumbi*. That ritual replicated the sacrifices, real or potential, of the student community. The ritual had its liturgy and its ritual space, resembling a middle class home or *república* (student residence). It had its sacred music—bossa nova, often shared at parties or rallies. It had its vestments—the jeans and sweatshirts. It had its mythology, expressed here as the dying and rising, immortal kings of Palmares.

King Zambi and Zumbi, whose self-sacrifice incarnates the sacrifice of the community, justly belong to the community. The community, by witnessing the ritual sacrifices, shares in the ritual victims' transformation into heroes. The collective creation of the *Arena conta* series elicits the audience's collective participation in a ritual of heroic initiation and sacrifice: "Venha ser feliz" sings the chorus, with arms open to its public, at the end of the spectacle when the *palmarinos* are under their final attack. Rather than substituting for political action, this ritual was empowering, as Campos notes, exacerbating the desire for participation (163). The enactment of the ritual of the spectacle was a tug on Ogun's chain; the performance put Ogun's sword into the public's hands. This empowerment could only occur in a theatrical setting that destroyed the realist

code, breaking the spell of spectator inaction and rupturing the illusory barrier between actor and audience.

The sacrifice was joyous. That the 1964 coup was perceived as a setback and not a total defeat explains some of the mood of optimism in *Zumbi*. Many who find that optimism incongruent do so from the perspective of the years after 1967, when the military had entrenched itself, and tightening repression plunged Brazilian society into the dark night of dictatorship. Even so, *Zumbi* continued to be a favorite showpiece in Arena's repertoire throughout the sixties and early seventies. The popularity, even in the darkest of times, stems from the renewing and empowering nature of the sacrificial ritual, the celebration of which was made possible by the shift in theatrical codes.

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Notes

1. These included *Este mundo é meu* (music by Sérgio Ricardo, with Toquinho and Manini, directed by Chico de Assis, opening August 5, 1965); *Arena conta Bahia* (written and directed by Boal, music by Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, with Maria Bethânia, Gal Costa, and Tomzé, preview in the Teatro Brasileiro de Comédia on September 8, 1965); *Tempo de guerra* (written by Boal and Guarnieri on texts by Bertolt Brecht, directed by Boal, with music by Gilberto Gil, Gal Costa, Tomzé, and Maria Bethânia, opening in the Oficina on October 23, 1965); *Arena conta Tiradentes* (written by Guarnieri and Boal, and directed by Boal, with music by Gilberto Gil, Caetano Veloso, and Sidney Miller, and set design by Flávio Império, opening on Tiradentes Day—April 21, 1967) (Magaldi 71-72, 74).

2. I substitute 'code' for Boal's similar 'sistema de convenções.' Here 'code' is an inferential and nonobligatory set of relations. See Eco (passim) for a discussion of codes and Fischer-Lichte for an approach to theatrical codes.

3. Boal's "Etapas do Teatro de Arena de São Paulo" presents a highly schematized history of the company. For a fuller discussion of Arena's history as well as Boal's and Guarnieri's work outside of Arena, see Anderson, as well as other critical studies cited in this essay.

4. See Pladott's Piercean framework for theatrical codes.

5. In the midst of its musicals phase, on May 13, 1966, Arena opened its production of Gogol's *O inspetor geral*. This production fit clearly within the esthetics of Nationalization of the Classics, demonstrating once again that Arena's evolutionary phases could alternate.

6. These shows were *Opinião*. (written by Armando Costa, Oduvaldo Vianna Filho, and Paulo Pontes, starring João do Vale, Zé Kéti, and Nara Leão, opening on December 11, 1964, in the theatre-in-the-round at the Copacabana Shopping Center) and *Liberdade, liberdade*, by Flávio Rangel and Millôr Fernandes, opening on April 21, 1965.

7. Magaldi, Schoenberg, Fonseca-Downey and Quiles cleave most to Boal in emphasizing the esthetic character of this theatrical development.

8. Schwarz, Soares, Mostaço, and Campos represent this trend. Milleret goes further than any other critic in attempting to balance treatment of Arena's internal esthetic and external socio-political concerns.

9. Both novel and play diverge substantially from the historical record on Palmares. Cf. Freitas.

10. All references to the text of *Zumbi* are from the edition published in *Revista de Teatro*.

11. Magaldi was impressed with the violence of the original production, describing it as the strongest protest against the dictatorship thus far (67).

12. In the published version of *Zumbi* the script of the spoken and sung text, along with directions for sound and media, precedes a script for lighting and choreography. A description of costume and stage set are at the beginning of the second part.

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