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## BIOGRAPHICAL DISPLAYS OF MANUEL HENRIQUE PEREIRA (BESOURO CORDÃO DE OURO/BESOURO MANGAGÁ) AND THE ART OF CAPOEIRAGEM IN SANTO AMARO DA BAHIA, BRAZIL

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### ABSTRACT

The main objective of this article was to investigate some facts, deeds, myths and truths about the Capoeirista from Santo Amaro, Bahia, Manuel Henrique Pereira, popularly known as Besouro Cordão de Ouro and/or Besouro Mangagá. To do so, we used the basic exploratory biographical case study method with a qualitative approach. As for the techniques of data collection and information generation, the interview technique was applied, always aided by the field diary instrument. Concomitantly, research was also carried out in public archives where primary documentary sources were consulted. Regarding the use of analysis techniques, content analysis and critical-reflexive contextual narrative discourse were used. The results show that Manuel Henrique Pereira, Besouro Cordão de Ouro, an excellent capoeirista, was one more victim of social class hatred because of his skin color, social class and because his capoeira art was criminalized in its context. The prejudice of social class, ethnicity, and place of origin is clear. We conclude that, for being a black man, practicing the art of capoeira, criminalized at the time, and for not accepting the judgment of the oppressor, by resisting the demands of prejudice and discrimination, Manuel Henrique Pereira, Besouro Cordão de Ouro, lived a short, fearless and conflicted life.

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## INTRODUCTION

Manuel Henrique Pereira, known and recognized as Besouro Cordão de Ouro or Besouro Mangagá, had his voice and his artistic practice silenced by the directives of the ruling class, the guardians of a history seen from above, which tells the story of great events and honors great figures to the detriment of the great history of the real

subjects from the bowels and essences of the cultural web of the Brazilian people. It is from this perspective that we bring to light the story of Manuel Henrique Pereira, a capoeirista from the popular strata of Brazilian society with his irreverent art of capoeiragem. A corpus that is constituted in the formation of a popular myth. We have the saga of an individual who, leaking his own time on behalf of the justice he believes in, did not fail to take a stand against the Justice of the Old Republic of Brazil (1889-1930), thus performing a shift of

meaning in this polyphonic concept. What is fundamentally analyzed in this research is the genealogy of a just capoeirista, described by the trickery of rascality, deceit and remembrance of his contemporaries or participants of the community of the same language and culture. A world deeply ritualized in the traditional schools of Capoeira Angola. An art/fighting/game that finds in the great Mestre Pastinha the genealogy of a corpus that survives keeping secrets and forming disciples based on merit. It is difficult to enter a world that, in some moments, becomes a monad. It seems necessary to displace the imaginary point of equilibrium. To escape from the center of the world to simply be able to see from another angle, who knows, looking for another point that transmutes the ginga that takes off feet, hands, arms, trunk, and head. It is as if the body took off all the time in a profound equilibrium that dances, interprets, sings, cries, laughs, and, if it is the case kills. Our investigation into the identity and the cultural-artistic practice of capoeiragem by Besouro Cordão de Ouro took place in Santo Amaro, a municipality in the Recôncavo baiano, Bahia State, Brazil. The research assumes that this protagonist is a mysterious capoeirista, a fakist, a demolisher of official norms, born in the last decade of the 19th century, probably in 1895, and living until 1924. Besouro Cordão de Ouro, pseudonym of Manuel Henrique Pereira has his name constantly remembered amidst the songs sung in capoeira rodas and in the countless oral histories, cordéis, legends and fiction in the city. In this light, we quote Zilda Pain (1999),

He was born in Santo Amaro, son of João Matos Pereira and Maria José. The most tricky and malicious capoeirista in Bahia. Capoeira master in the army, from where he quit after the war. He knew no fear, and defeated the police with his famous acrobatic jumps, stilt whipping and stingray tails. He was coldly and cowardly beaten in a maracangalha in a place called Quimbeca. He came to Santo Amaro in canoe, staying at the port in front of the new store, until he was transported to Santa Casa de Misericórdia where he died at the age of 32 (PAIN, 1999, p. 32).

Besouro was feared in his region and, somehow, represented the strength of the black element that claimed the right to exist and, consequently, to perform its cultural practices and honor its divinities. This created a panic in the region, because anyone opposing the power and the customs instituted by the large landowners, the Catholic Church and, especially, the justice system of the Old Republic, was like something from another world. In this sense, the existence of Besouro Cordão de Ouro was still surrounded by dichotomies both by the official history and its representatives and by the popular imagination. Such dichotomies are expressed between good and evil about a black man, capoeirista, sometimes seen by ordinary people as fearless, resistant, and a defender of the weakest, sometimes portrayed by official history as a troublemaker, criminal, outlaw. Thus, the present investigation started from the following question: to what extent can we know the reality about the life, deeds, and facts of Manuel Henrique Pereira (Besouro Cordão) de Ouro from various sources that is presented to us? This question serves, henceforth, as the guiding thread of this investigative research.

**Theoretical and Methodological Basis:** This article is a brief biography or biographical remnants of Bahia's capoeirista Manuel Henrique Pereira (1895-1924), popularly known, especially in the art of capoeiragem, as Besouro Cordão de Ouro, the justiceiro capoeira of Santo Amaro, a town in the Recôncavo Baiano, Bahia State of Brazil. As the very title of this article reveals, we are using the biographical method to bring to light a bit of a person's history and memory, linking his or her biographical identification to a specific theme, the art of capoeiragem. The "biography is related to a person's life story and its imbrication with a theme experienced by that person" (XAVIER; VASCONCELOS; XAVIER, 2018, p. 1022). This research, in addition to biographically identifying the main protagonist, also presents his capoeiragem practice as a beauty hidden in the discursive interstices of an art that dances and theatricalizes its own history, myths, symbols and archetypes participating in the plot that leaks regularities and, at the same time, presents other such regularities intrinsic to the black art and game of capoeiragem and is also previously condemned by dominant state guidelines. It must be

read, heard and felt with the eyes and heart of a capoeirista. To construct this study, we employed ethnomethodology as a methodological resource for a qualitative ethnographic-ethnological study of ethnoscience, a procedure applied at the time of the interviews with the participating subjects. "In fact, what ethnoscience may have as a common perspective is the search for understanding the discourses of the various social groupings about their collective practice, including, and perhaps especially, their body practices" (BIAO, 1999, p. 16-17). Regarding the techniques for collecting/generating data and information, non-directive interviews were applied. Regarding the analysis techniques, the content and discourse interpretations of the third phase of AD (Discourse Analysis) were used, implemented mainly from 1980, whose fundamental basis is critical contextual analysis in the dialectical perspective with respect to the realities investigated in the tripartition of discursive universe, discursive field, and discursive space (MINAYO, 2002; 1994; PÊCHEUX, 1990; ORLANDI, 2001). In the specific case of ethnocenology, the spectacle becomes the great object - if one may speak of it that way - to be investigated; knowing that a spectacle is everything that humanity invents to celebrate life or death, escaping the banality of everyday life, in this great polyphony of human existence and social expression. Capoeira is a spectacle<sup>1</sup> and, in some cases, constitutes characters. According to Pradier (1998, p. 24), "spectacular is to be understood as a way of being, behaving, moving, acting in space, moving, speaking, singing and decorating oneself. A form distinct from the banal actions of everyday life. Capoeira comprises the performing arts. A game plays out a war fight. It advances on the stage of the roda - ginga, malícia and falseness participate in this spectacle. To be able to hit and not to do. To mark the point of unbalance in the compass dancing in the turn that the world takes. It makes and unmakes the enchantment of a character that sways in this dance and dodges from inside to outside in the guard of the other. This spectacular art does not need the canons of theater or closed venues to exist, for as Areias (1983, p. 8) says: "Capoeira is music, poetry, party, play, fun and, above all, a form of struggle, manifestation and expression of the people, the oppressed and man in general in search of survival, freedom and dignity.", in other words: Capoeira is not theater, capoeira is capoeira (PEQUENO, 2000; SALDANHA; BRAGA, 2014).

However, it is necessary to recall once again that in the context of the biographer's life (1895-1924), which is concomitant with that of the Old Republic (1889-1930), the Penal Code in effect at the time criminalized the practice of capoeiragem to meet the demands of the ruling class (SOARES, 1908). It is worth mentioning that well before the context of the Old Republic, in 1830, based on articles 295 and 296, of Chapter IV - vagrants and beggars -, of the Empire's Penal Code, the authorities, fearful of slave rebellions and with a view to punishing the practitioners, implicitly interpreted the practice of capoeira as vagrancy, so that they could frame and apply punitive sanctions to those caught practicing capoeira (SALDANHA; BRAGA, 2014). With the advent of the Old Republic, the Penal Code of 1890, resulting from Decree No. 847, clearly and unequivocally dealt with the practice of capoeiragem, in its article 402, Chapter XII - On vagrants and capoeiras:

Performing in the streets and public squares the exercise of agility and bodily dexterity known as Capoeiragem: walking in ranks, with weapons or instruments capable of producing bodily harm, provoking tumult, or disorder, threatening a certain or uncertain person, or instilling fear of some evil; Penalty of cellular

<sup>1</sup>We do not use the concept of spectacle that became very well known in the 1960s, with Guy Debord. For this author, spectacle is both the result and the project of the existing mode of production. It is not the supplement to the real world, a decoration that is added to it. It is the core of the unrealism of real society (DEBORD, 1997, p. 14). This extremely limited approach to the spectacle affiliates this concept to a material base and, consequently, to a certain mode of production. By spectacle, one must understand the forms of expression of a culture that escape the codes and norms of traditional theater. Ethnocenology is, finally, the concept and the discipline that allow us to give, again [and voice], to the people the means to practice their own.

imprisonment for two to six months. Single paragraph. It is considered an aggravating circumstance to belong to capoeira in any banda or malta.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, capoeira was criminalized throughout the Old Republic. It was not until Getúlio Vargas' administration, beginning in 1932, when he sought to win the support of the populace, that he released certain cultural manifestations that had been prohibited up to that time, and capoeira was among them. However, this action by the government was only a liberation. Capoeira was only decriminalized in 1936/37, when the government of Getúlio Vargas abolished the old decree that forbade the practice of capoeiragem. From then on, Capoeira was considered a tool for Physical Education. Mestre Bimba was the pioneer in obtaining a license and registration from the Secretary of Education, Health, and Welfare to operate his school as a Physical Education center (AREIAS, 1983). To some, this transformation or change in the status of capoeira, from marginalized to legal, meant that capoeira, when practiced in physical education centers, lost part of its essence, for it ceased to be a philosophy of malandragem (rascality) to become a sporting practice included and/or academic venues. Although, the although the decriminalization of capoeira was an important step towards its recognition as a popular artistic and cultural expression, and also as an expression linked to Afro-Brazilianness, until then there was no incentive or policy to encourage the practice of capoeira (SALDANHA; BRAGA, 2014). It is worth noting that it was not until the second half of the 20th century (1953), when Mestre Bimba presented capoeira in Salvador before Getúlio Vargas, again president of Brazil, that capoeira gained definitive recognition and began to be promoted and taught in various states throughout Brazil as an essentially national sport.

From then on, capoeira and its practice began to be not only recognized and disseminated, but also gradually gained its rightful place in the limelight. In 2008, the Institute for National Historical and Artistic Heritage (Iphan) listed capoeira as an intangible cultural heritage of Brazil, and safeguarded it in that status by Law No. 12,288, of July 20, 2010 (BRASIL, 2010). In 2014, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) recognized it as an intangible cultural asset of humanity adding that the "promotion of Capoeira, but above all, stimulate the adoption of public policies to safeguard and sustain this important cultural heritage by governments and organized civil society" (UNESCO, 2014). This study, then, takes a biographical look at the capoeira man, imagined, and historicized as a prodigy, and at his art of capoeiragem. To this end, we have interpreted the contents of this paper based on theoretical references, legislation, and documents from public archives, and supplemented by the narratives of social subjects who participated in this study by means of non-directive interviews during field research. Analysis and interpretation of these sources make it possible to understand capoeiragem as an art/culture among the working classes, and, at the same time, its criminalization by people belonging to dominant groups in the context of the life and death (1895? -1924?) of capoeirista Manuel Henrique Pereira, known as Besouro Cordão de Ouro or Besouro Mangagá.

## DATA/INFORMATION COLLECTION, INTERPRETATION AND RESULTS

The field research took place in the first semester of 2002. We resorted to documental sources in the Public Archives, the State Archive in Salvador, Bahia and in the Municipal Public Archives in Santo Amaro. In addition, we resorted to orality in search of data and information about Manuel Henrique Pereira (Besouro Cordão de Ouro). In this perspective, we started our investigation by collecting narratives, via a non-directive interview technique, from Zilda Pain, a historian living in Santo Amaro da Purificação, State of Bahia.

<sup>2</sup> "Malts were 'made up of three, twenty and even a hundred individuals' and constituted the 'associative form of resistance more common among slaves and poor free men in Rio de Janeiro in the second half of the 19th century'" (BARBIERI, 1993, p. 18).

Initially, Dona Zilda began to speak in a rhythmic way. Her sentences were elegantly constructed, and she had an excellent command of the language. I asked if I could record it. She replied that she was not afraid of that stuff. Our conversation began to flow and the stories about Besouro began to appear in the beautiful cadence of the 83-year-old teacher-researcher's words in a mixture of poetry and musicality expressed in Dona Zilda's voice about Besouro Cordão de ouro, which she began to narrate:

*[...] you know that in the old days faded and colorless people - just like I am, and you are - couldn't see what was black. They always said: don't go, it's black business. They were afraid. Besouro could get us, beat us up, none of that. Besouro invested against the police. He didn't fight. He bought other people's fights. If he passed by a place and saw a person being treated badly and wronged, he would take the front and defend that person (PAIN, 2002).*

The story of Besouro Cordão de Ouro, told by historian Zilda Pain was the story of a vigilante. A black capoeirista who lived in the beginning of the 20th century, who did not fear the police or the landowners. Besouro's life transited through the legal discourse between the troublemaker and the vigilante who protected the underprivileged. It is, in fact, a shift in meaning that is established a line of escape that crosses the binary organizations imposed by the need for segmentarities since "We are segmented on all sides and in all directions. Man is a segmentary animal. Segmentarity belongs to all the strata that make us up" (DELEUZE, 1996, p. 83). However, this same segmentarity that manifests itself in large dual organizations (small/big, ugly/beautiful, hero/villain, etc.) can be leaked, in the field of micropowers emanating from the micropolitical, by always new *lines of escape* that are being formed in the great play of forces imbedded in the polyphonic marks of social expression (FOUCAULT, 1986a, 1986b; DELEUZE; GUATTARI, 1996). The interview with Dona Zilda could then present some clues that could illuminate the path of the research. I started the interview that same evening to return the next day with a gift for the teacher. I already had a cordel about Besouro that Dona Zilda did not know yet. It is worth mentioning that the cordel was produced from the accounts collected by the author and, through poetic language, expressed his version of Besouro's fight with the bully Doze Homens. When we met Dona Zilda - the next day - she was already waiting for us with one of her books - *Relicário Popular* - about the culture of Santo Amaro. One part of the book was dedicated to capoeira and in this part, the historian wrote a short biography of Manoel Henrique Pereira. The account was almost perfect. The age was almost precise. Most capoeira books state that Besouro died at the age of 27.

He was between 27 and 32. The documents attest 29. As far as the year of death, oral tradition is very strict. João Pequeno<sup>3</sup> (2000, p. 20) says in his book: "Besouro died when he was twenty or thirty. I am hearing that he died in 1924. A great event in the life of a community is told as if it had been lived. It is what Pollak (1992, p. 201) called "almost inherited memory." Dona Zilda Pain remembers some events involving Besouro Cordão de Ouro, in the Recôncavo Baiano region, that reveal her sense of justice.

*Besouro was passing by and took a peanut from a vendor. The fellow shook his hand violently. Someone who was passing by warned: it's Besouro. The vendor was very afraid. Besouro dropped the peanut, called all the kids that passed by on the street and told them to eat all the peanuts and he stood on one side waiting and, on the other, the vendor worried about the loss. When the boys finished eating the bag of peanuts he took the*

<sup>3</sup> Also known as Cobra Mansa. He was born in the city of Araci, Bahia, on December 27, 1917. When Besouro died in 1924, João Pequeno was 7 years old. He had contact with capoeira through Barbosa and Juvêncio. Cousin of Besouro Mangagá. He is one of the greatest living references in capoeira, along with João Grande.

*money, paid and said: - there you won't have any losses" (PAIN, 2002).*

The limit between fair and unfair, order and disorder, reveal that Besouro had his own concept of Justice. Certainly, this concept did not fit the sense of justice proposed by the instances of the Judicial Power. His justice was proper of his culture of resistance or of the ways found to leak the justice of the dominant culture. There was not present - in Besouro's conception - an intermediary element between what was said and what was not said, a truth element with the power to decide; a third element called the court. Besouro's justice was popular justice or simply what his desire thought was fair. For Foucault (1986, p. 39), the Tribunal "[...] is not the natural expression of popular justice, but, on the contrary, its historical function is to reduce it, dominate it, suffocate it, reinscribing it within institutions characteristic of the state apparatus." The State apparatus that was being structured at the beginning of the Republic was extremely unfair to the black culture. Besouro stood up against this injustice and, in this case, did not respect the courts, did not submit to the power of the police, nor to the economic force of the plantation owners. The nobleman, according to Nietzsche (1992, p. 172) "drives away from himself those beings in whom is expressed the opposite of these states of elevation and pride: he despises them". This contempt for the police and laws of the Republic was striking in Besouro Mangangá's life; a poisonous animal that manages to radiate its power through the bowels of a context that could no longer cover up the fear of popular culture in general and Afro-Brazilian (black) culture specifically. After much searching and resistance, we managed to locate Dona Dormelina Pereira Santana dos Anjos, "Dona Adó", sister of Manoel Henrique Pereira (Besouro Mangagá) on her father's side, living in Santo Amaro-Bahia, but raised by Dona Edwirdes Leal. Dona Adó (popular name as she is known) appeared to be about ninety years old. She didn't know how old she was. Her birth certificate, she said, was kept with a daughter she raised. When I asked her about her brothers, the lady laughed, as if she already knew the purpose of the visit. As if to say - there's no use fooling me, they want to know about Besouro. She said she didn't know Besouro, because she had been raised by another family. She remembered, However, of a major event - probably very striking in his childhood - that involved his brother:

*Besouro was a bully. His fame was even greater. His fame made the street close. Once the girl who raised me wanted to take me to school. I was very afraid. Besouro was in town and the whole town was closed. The police surrounded the town. They wanted to get Besouro. I didn't want to go to school because I was afraid of Besouro (ANJOS, 2002).*

Dona Adó fear revealed the symbolic construction that was being elaborated around the man Manoel Henrique Pereira, who was no longer himself. It was Besouro who presented himself as a transgressor. A man/myth. The imaginary fields that could separate past and present are mixed, because, according to Deleuze (1999, p. 45), the "[...] past would never constitute itself, if it had not already constituted itself initially, while it was present. There is there as if a fundamental position of time, and the deepest paradox of memory: the past is 'contemporary' of the present that it was" Dona Adó, when she started talking about Besouro, even if she didn't mean it, ended up going through, with the eyes of the present, a past marked by the presence of Besouro Cordão de Ouro or of Manoel Henrique Pereira, her brother on her father's side. The bully Besouro simply wanted justice. There was no possibility of negotiation or submission to the acts of the established Judicial Power. It wasn't about respect for legality. Besouro's justice was of another order. It was the black element wronged by the dominant culture that needed to exist by formulating a new code and, at the same time, a new concept of justice. Besouro's justice reveals his impetuous and, in some cases, "aggressive" temperament. This aggressiveness could be dominated by playfulness, irony, and naughtiness. Sodré (1988), in Santugri, talks about one of these stories that mixes fiction with reality, justice with play. One of the characters in the book - fiction - reveals a story of Besouro that he had heard told as a boy:

When I was little, I was very impressed by the story of a Besouro fight that an uncle of mine liked to tell. It was in Santo Amaro, he said, one afternoon when Besouro was wandering along the riverbank. The lollipop seller passed by - a huge Creole, very strong, but who loved to take the lollipop on the tip of his finger, delicately hand it to the customer and pocket a few pennies. Besouro saw it and didn't like it: "Aren't you ashamed of yourself, strong like this, good for stevedoring, to do menial work? And just like that he grabbed the lollipops and threw them into the river. But then time changed color, because the salesman became one-eyed, began to drool, and advanced like a horned ox towards Besouro. He found no one, of course, because the master was already underneath, pulling in the crawl. And so, it went from there, fall after fall, slap after slap, but the man wouldn't give up, he kept moving forward. It is true that Besouro was having fun, without heavier resources such as a hard headbutt or a blade tied to his toe, but the fact is that the other man held out for hours, and only fell when he was almost dead tired. They say that the body healed quickly from the beating, but that the soul died, because there was never another lollipop seller seen on the riverbank (SODRÉ, 1988, p. 57).

For Besouro, the attitude of the lollipop seller somehow broke a certain concept of work or behavior. He took for himself the right to interfere and, at the same time, it was the possibility of fun, a joke, taken seriously by the black salesman. A fair or unfair attitude? It is difficult to judge. More plausible would be to think about the polyphony that integrates justice or, who knows, remember that Besouro was Ogum's son and, in the same way, had his own concept of justice. He went back and forth between untimely and hasty actions, and then regretted them. Raimundo José das Neves, Mestre Macaco, 36 years old, 28 of capoeira when referring to the story of Besouro Cordão de Ouro's death, about a certain mill in Maracangalha - sugarcane zone - that the owner was in the habit of not paying the workers, claiming that he had broken for São Caetano - patron saint of the mill. Besouro, who liked to take the side of the underprivileged, enlisted in the mill. In the second week, when he went to receive his salary - relates Mestre Macaco - with the other employees, the boss said that he had broken for São Caetano. Mestre Macaco stated:

*Besouro held the boss by the goatee, neutralized the other goons, and made sure that his and the others' wages were paid. That same day he had beaten the landowner's son near the Maracangalha mill. He moves to Santo Amaro and when a period passes, he returns to revisit the call girls he had met. He had a crush on that side. This woman was paid, had the sexual relationship with him. In that case she broke the charms he had. It was all set up. Who paid for this was this owner that he had beaten up (NEVES, 2002).*

Mestre Macaco analyzes the conflict that arose around the death of Manoel Henrique Pereira much more from a political point of view, although he includes the version of the closed body, the mysterious knife and the woman who spent the night with Besouro. He expands the version by including the character who had been hired by the usineiro. According to Mestre, the hired boy was much younger than him, perhaps not even of legal age.

*Another hide was set up. They say that when he went through the fence his shirt ripped. He said it was not his day. When he arrived in the vicinity of the bar, the ambush was set and, they say, he was pierced with a knife prepared for this kind of situation, which is the Ticun knife. Besouro still walked and was brought from Maracangalha - in a canoe - to Santo Amaro. When he arrived in Santo Amaro, at the Santa Casa de Misericórdia there was not much interest in attending him. He had many enemies and he died in the hospital (NEVES, 2002).*

This account is close to that of Mestre João Pequeno, with the difference that Pastinha's disciple concentrates his version more around the mandinga broken when Besouro had sexual intercourse

during the period that he should be obligated to the orixás. João Pequeno points out that his father was Besouro's cousin. However, he insists on the idea that the closed body can be broken when that body is soiled by sexuality. "People with dirty bodies are the ones who have sexual relations, they are unprepared and with their bodies open to any fight, and that is where they took advantage of the late Besouro" (PEQUENO, 2000, p. 17). Mestre Pequeno insists on the version of the dirty body provided by the impurity of sexual activity. He relates the event that precedes Besouro's death:

He slept in a woman's house the other day when he was coming to the house passing under a wire fence, the wire scratched his back and he called out and said, "I'm in a bad way, if anyone attacks me today, I'm lost. And that was the day he got into a fight, which lasted the whole day. Therefore, the capoeirista that uses these prayers cannot have sexual relations; otherwise, it loses its effect (PEQUENO, 2000, p. 17).

Mestre Dimas relates the fact from stories he heard and from research, he did in the region. He assures us that Besouro was drinking at a sale, he does not know exactly where. He had just returned from a party or a woman's house. This maintains the version of the body opened by sexuality. In Mestre's words, he was a vigilante, and the plantation owners did not like him. A mixture traverses between a political field and another that expresses itself in religiosity and in the obligations with the protective saints.

*Nobody could fight with him - who was crazy enough to fight with Besouro or with a knife. There was no way. And he came from a tradition of playing with the foot razor. He had his destiny - the mandinga - that he could not have sexual relations on certain days. He had the right day (DIMAS, 2002).*

It was then that a boy appeared on the scene who was hired to attack Besouro. This same version appears in the speech of Mestre Macaco, Raimundo José das Neves:

*Someone gave Ticum the knife. The boy was prepared to kill him. He toyed with the boy, who unexpectedly pulled out his knife and pierced Beetle. Cut he fell, gurgling, drinking his own blood.*

*The stick not only cuts, but also releases a dye that infects. The boy pierced it and soon ran away. He had just had sexual intercourse with the woman (NEVES, 2002).*

From oral accounts such as Zilda Pain, Mestre Macaco, Contra-Mestre Lampião and Frederico Abreu. All were unanimous in asserting that Besouro never murdered anyone. He was quarrelsome, unruly, but he did not carry any deaths on his back. I remembered that this was the period of his death. João Pequeno (2000) informed that Besouro's death occurred in 1924. For Nestor Capoeira (1998), around 1920. Reis (2000) argued that Besouro lived at the beginning of the century. Rego (1968) prefers not to risk it and tells some Besouro stories without referring to dates. Carvalho (2002) had to opt for fiction and composed stories about Besouro without the slightest chronological concern. Pires (2001, p. 234) states the following: "Besouro died, and the date of his death has not been found, but informants refer to the late 1920s. Sodr , in Santugri - his first fiction book - presents some hypotheses about Besouro's death. However, since it is fiction, there is a mix of collected oral accounts and the fictional license the author uses. In the account of an old man (SODR , 1988), proposed by the author, I find the statement that Besouro's police file gave him as born in 1897, and the account of a saint's mother that ends his life cycle with 27 years old (SODR , 1988). According to the documental and oral sources searched and found in the development of this research, Besouro was probably born in 1895. This date has as a reference the lawsuit filed against Besouro that resulted in his expulsion from the army in 1918. This document states that Besouro was 23 years old at the time. The year of death, which also represented a major dispute, was in 1924, according to a document found in the Arquivo Municipal de Santo Amaro.

This document is another lawsuit filed by Caetano Jos  Diogo, after the outcome of a fight between the parties, which resulted in the amputation of Caetano's little finger (ARQUIVO P BLICO MUNICIPAL DE SANTO AMARO-BA, 1924, No. 104). About the dichotomies between being good or evil regarding Besouro Cord o de Ouro, after analysis and interpretation of the sources, what is revealed about the life of our biographer is not necessarily the life as it is in fact, but a life remembered in the accounts told by the selection of memory. The linked accounts of moments that witnessed and recounted the life of a black vigilante, enemy of the police, the colonels, and the mill lords; a black who died young by the force of betrayal, pierced with a ticum knife - the tree of mysteries, for Ogum's beloved son could not die of iron (BENJAMIM, 1994; PAIN, 1999). This process was filed in 1925, due to the death of the defendant Manoel Henrique Pereira. In this document, we find a statement from the Santa Casa de Miseric rdia with the following data:

I hereby certify that, by determination of the head of the clinical service of this hospital of the Santa Casa de Miseric rdia, upon reviewing the books of incoming and outgoing patients, on page 42v of book No. 3, line 16, bed 418, there is the following entry: Manoel Henrique, dark mulatto, single, 24 years old, natural of the city of Urupey, resident in the Usina de Maracangalha, profession Vaqueiro, entered on July 8, 1924, at 10 and a half o'clock on the day of death at 7 o'clock in the evening, of a perforated-incised wound of the abdomen. (SANTA CASA DE MISERIC RDIA DE SANTO AMARO-BA, 1978).

This means that Manoel Henrique Pereira, popularly known as Besouro, as the prosecutor refers to the defendant, died in 1924. However, the same document states that Manoel was only 24 years old. This leaves another major impasse. It is probable that the document from Baixa de Quintas found and analyzed by Ant nio Liberac Cardoso Sim es Pires is a homonym of Manoel Henrique Pereira. It is also probable that the Santa Casa de Miseric rdia de Santo Amaro did not obtain more precise information about Besouro's year of birth and threw in more or less at random the patient's age. Thus, I prefer to believe that Besouro's birth year is still unknown. However, I will use as reference the document found in Baixa de Quintas, analyzed by Pires (2001, p. 219-234), about the expulsion of the army, to be probably "accurate" (ARQUIVO P BLICO ESTADUAL DA BAHIA, 1918, No. 18). It is one among many possibilities that Manoel Henrique Pereira was born in Urupey in 1895 and died in the Santa Casa de Miseric rdia of Santo Amaro, on July 8, 1924, at 7 o'clock in the evening. According to the death certificate of his brother, Caetano C cero Pereira, Besouro is the son of Jos  Martins Pereira and Maria AUTA Pereira. His mother's name presents a small movement of the sonority that is expressed by oral tradition. According to the now deceased capoeirista Cobrinha Verde, a student and carnal cousin of Manoel Henrique, his aunt - Besouro's mother - was named Maria HAIFA Pereira. For a long time, Besouro's biographers proposed this affiliation; in fact, the name Auta that is expressed by oral tradition as Haifa. What is interesting is that even more recent publications, such as the work of Carvalho (2002), continue using Cobrinha Verde's version without the slightest effort to check, contest or verify the possibility of other versions. It is evident that this charge cannot be made, since this is yet another poetic and fictional reading motivated by the saga of Besouro Cord o de Ouro; a beautiful literary construction that reinterprets events that involved Besouro and other capoeiristas, including outside the context of the Rec ncavo Baiano of the early twentieth century.

Besouro is the beloved son of Ogum; the warrior of Santo Amaro, a vigilante and lover of women. He was not content with the signs of order and the enforcement of the law. The dominant law of the Old Republic did not include his own law. A transgressor by conviction. His keensense of equality and justice went beyond the norm of positive law. The signs of passage would only find encouragement in the great spectacle of his life; the life marked by the strength of his youth; the possibility of launching the power of his existence far beyond the established. His life was above all a

Nietzschean rope tied under the abyss of incoherence. The crossing was dangerous, however Besouro crossed his time distributing everywhere many points of light and signs of force in molecular fields. If Ogum decided that he had lived long enough and lowered the tip of his saber, disappearing into the bowels of the earth, Besouro became a star, illuminating the life and soul of black culture, transvaluing the norm and prohibition, perpetuating through the force of his existence the enchantment of a world danced, staged, and sung by capoeiristas of all times. Only poetic language could capture the finer meaning of his life. Besouro's star lives on.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Beetle's practice is the Art of dodging. Possibility of attack undone and remade. By the circularity of the new movement, it finds the correct time to be fitted into the opponent's belly. However, the capoeira calls the other to the game from within. In a fraction of a second, the outcome of the fight changes. He sings, dances, occupies the circle in the rhythm of a dance walk and prepares the attack. He demonstrates his ability and decides not to hit. He knows he can hit and does not do it because he does not want to. The simulation is part of the theatricality of the fight and, at the same time, of a game and a dance. A swaying game, intoned by the lively singing and chorus. It is the enthusiasm and ecstasy of the god of theater. Dionysus commands the wheel and the stage of a vigilant and attentive drunkenness to the slightest movements and intentions of the other. You hit with your foot, not with your hand. It is the possibility of resting on the banana tree during the fight that unfolds in the constitutive plot of capoeiragem. The softness of the gingado dances with the sound of the berimbau. Cunning in the possibility of falling and integrating with the uncovered points of another character who plays at dodging and attacking. It is dance in the circle. The dance that launches armed, dodges in the cocorinha and invades the other's guard with the inside hammer returned by the tail-of-arrays that in the dodge returns faster with the blessed creep. Bent with the mobility of an Au applies the vengeful - Who never fell is not capoeira. The scenario marked by the joy of an intoxicating passion. Immersed in the preparation of poetic articulations that chant the song of memory. Revisiting other scenarios and other wheels with the deeds of the heroes of vagabondage. It is likely that this mnemotechnical verse explains the art of creating movements danced in the scenario of the game and displaced by the efficiency of the power that launches itself and fits into the body of the other. The capoeira circle has its moments of celebration. Its myths are sung, celebrated, and commemorated by the capoeiristas of the present.

The possibility of remembering the events surrounding the life, history and symbols of capoeira becomes part of this spectacle, danced, sung, and performed. Therefore, to celebrate its symbols is part of this game/dance/fight which, escaping from a time of persecution, survives today with the necessary strength and potency to bewitch those who live in the present. Jumping through time to reminisce about stories, memorable deeds, or pay homage to their deities. Besouro cannot die. He revives in the black art sung and sung by the actions of the justiceiro from Santo Amaro da Purificação - BA. A myth cannot die in such a simplified way. Death celebrates a rite of passage between human finitude, the spectacle of transitoriness, and the eternal constitution of a pure force that, reinvented by the poetic weave of a culture, celebrates the divinity of each element that participates in this cultural community. In this case, the myth can no longer be killed. It will be constantly reinvented by the ever-new needs of the present. It will be acclaimed in moments of need. It will be appropriated in moments of celebration that imply new symbolic (re)codifications. The myth is part of a cultural *corpus* that can be sung, sung, theatricalized, or played in the big wheel or in the turn that the world takes. We must highlight the concept of Justice and, at the same time, the displacement that runs through this concept. The just that is presented to the political body of the Old Republic deprived the capoeira of any social or cultural possibility, since this element was considered dangerous to order and good manners. The "justiceiro" of one capoeira community was turned into a bandit for another community, both cohabiting at the

same time. The capoeira vigilante Besouro Mangangá, who challenged the powerful of his time and, concomitantly, the very concept of justice, included a new meaning to the idea of justice, transmigrating the meaning of his existence to a new contribution. His body becomes part of a great struggle that surrounds a context of great repression of the cultural practices of African descendants. It is in this context that the very meaning of the myth and the *corpus* of malice is detached. What is intriguing, however, is the capacity of the myth of capoeiragem to be expanded. This is due in part to the very meaning of poetic language. Since it is neither true nor false, poetry shines with an intensity that makes it possible to say what is said and what is not said with the same freedom and the same possibility, since truth is not in question. The immense possibility that poetry and musicality find when referring to the Besouro Mangangá can be detected in capoeira circles all over the world. Besouro is the most beautiful poetic trick that popular and Afro-Brazilian culture uses to celebrate life and humanity. Besouro is an always-new meeting point with the sacred world of theorixás. The lightness enchants through the silence of forgetfulness and, at the same time, sings the strength, the bravery and the nobility of the Afro-Brazilian culture.

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