EDITORIAL

About the cover illustration for Volume 4

Água do céu
Vem nesta cuia,
Paticl vem nesta água,
Moposêru vem nesta água,
Sivuoímo vem nesta água,
Omaispopo vem nesta água,
Os donos da Água enxotem a dor-de-corno!
Aracu, Mecumecuri, Paí que venham nesta água,
E enxotem a dor-de-corno si o doente beber esta água,
Em que estão encantados os Donos da Água!
– Mario de Andrade, Macunaima, 1

Luego salían cuatro sacerdotes, con cuatro jícaras de maíz en las manos; la una de maíz blanco, y la otra de maíz negro, y la otra, de maíz muy amarillo, y la otra de maíz morado. Y poniéndose el que llevaba el maíz negro delante de ellas, metían la mano en la jícara y, como quien siembra, con vueltas hacia el monte, lo derramaban. Acabada la jícara de maíz negro, traían la del blanco, y volviéndose hacia las sementeras de los llanos, hacían lo mismo, y el maíz amarillo derramaban hacia la parte de la laguna y el morado (a) otra cuarta parte que ellos llaman Amilpan.

– Fray Diego Durán (1579), in XICALLI, Gran Diccionario Náhuatl [en línea]. UNAM. 2

Every year, hundreds of people in the city of Campinas – one of Brazil’s most important technological and educational poles – take part in the Feijoada das Marías; a fundraising, cultural,

1 “Heavenly water,
Come into this gourd,
Paticl, come into this water,
Moposêru come into this water,
Sivuoímo come into this water,
Omaispopo come into this water,
Owners of the Water, chase away the horn-pain!
Aracu, Mecumecuri, Father let them come into this water,
And chase away the horn-pain of the diseased if he drinks this water,
Into which are enchanted the Owners of the Water!”
[author’s translation].

2 And afterwards came four priests, with four calabash-dishes of maize in their hands; one with white maize, and one with black maize, and one with very yellow maize, and one with purple maize. And as the one carrying the black maize stood in front of them, they put their hand inside the vessel, and like sowers, they turned towards the mountain, spilling it. When the black maize dish was empty, they brought the white one, and turning to the sown fields in the valleys, they did the same, and the yellow maize they spilled towards the lagoon, and the purple one towards a fourth place they called Amilpan [author's translation].

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and gastronomic event organized at the Casa de Cultura Fazenda Roseira, a nineteenth-century mansion in the grounds of a historic coffee plantation. As Ribeiro Martins and dos Santos Junior (2011) explain, Campinas as a city grew smack in the middle of Brazil’s tragic history of slavery; first as an agricultural and travel station on the road from the port of Santos to Goiás, Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso, and later as an epicenter of the Paulista sugar-cane and coffee industry. With the formal abolition of slavery, segregation nevertheless continued across Brazilian society; for example, in the urban development of Campinas, as the vast territories of the old fazendas were partitioned and either designated, gifted or undersold to local gentry that continued to exploit the new working classes. As the city grew in the twentieth century, urban zoning continued reflecting the same racial and social segregation ubiquitous to Brazilian metropoles (Ribeiro Martins 2011). The Campinas of today has been almost thoroughly cleansed of its historic urban memory and particular efforts are made to disregard its awkwardly obscure relationship between contemporary prosperity and slavery. Indeed, the Bairro Geraldo neighborhood, where the prestigious State University of Campinas where I did a two-year postdoc is located in, is named after a nineteenth-century coffee baron, who is lauded in historical rewrites as a progressive and forward-thinking entrepreneur. Meanwhile, there is historical evidence that Campinas was so well-known for its infamous cruelty upon slaves, that being sold to the wealthy agricultural barons of Campinas was sung about as a slaves’ “purgatory”.

O Rio de Janeiro é Corte,
São Paulo é capitá,
Campinas o purgatórío
Onde os negro vão pená.5

In this context, the Casa de Cultura is currently operated by the Comunidade Jongo Dito Ribeiro, an association that seeks to rescue and promote Campinas’ Black and historical heritage through various activities to which Jongo is central, and thus functions as a place of both cultural memory and resistance within the city: Jongo (also known as Caxambu) is a collective “recreational dance, but permeated by religious elements” that was practiced by slaves from Congo and Angola brought to work the lands of Southeast Brazil (Guerra 2009, 3), and considered a precursor to samba.

In 2018, I was invited to tag along to photo-document the preparations for the Feijoada, which was as a great honor given it’s a closed day in which only the community members are involved. As with many aspects of Afro-Brazilian culture, it was a mix of equal-parts festive and spiritual moods, as my girlfriend and photographer Lara Neves and I peeked and pointed our cameras at different corners, ancient photographs, luminously decorated children’s murals, somber passageways, religious altars, and the semi-feral gardens of the old mansion. Amongst these, we witnessed how bright-colored turbaned matriarchs sang as they cleaned kilos and kilos of uncooked beans for boiling, while the younger ones skilfully peeled bags and bags of oranges (I was invited to do my own fair share of bean-sorting and peeling); in the kitchen, cauldrons were set up to boil and spice the meats that the men had carved all morning; in the front porch, a mother taught her son his first steps of Jongo to the beats of African percussions, soon to be joined by ten other women who

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3https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Geraldo_Ribeiro_de_Sousa_Resende,_Baron_Geraldo_of_Resende.
4https://ihgccampinas.org/2017/11/16/a-escravidao-dos-negros-em-campinas/.
5O Rio de Janeiro is the Court,
São Paulo is the capital,
And Campinas is the purgatory,
Where the black man goes to suffer.
6https://comunidadejongoditoribeiro.wordpress.com/.
began an impromptu frenzy of stomping feet, swinging hips and twirling dresses (see Figure 1). Of the many objects and curios that caught my attention that day around the house, my favorite one made it to the Volume 4 cover: a xequerê (sekere in the Yoruba language), one of several West African percussion instruments made from the bottle gourd plant (see Figures 2 and 3). The bottle gourd is widely used in African music and religious practices, inherited to their Brazilian musical-religious counterparts such as candomblé de rua and maracatu (Amarante Geoatelier2014). For all its urban bleakness, Campinas can still offer its population valuable gems in musical, cultural and personal connections.

The calabash: technology and culture

Gourd, calabash: both names have been used interchangeably for centuries for members of the Cucurbitaceae family (Heiser 1993). The Portuguese/Spanish cabaça/calabaza dominates in Latin America, both common names for several plant species: the African-endemic gourds of the Lagenaria genus (the “bottle gourd”); and the American Curcubita genus alongside the endemic but unrelated Crescentia cujete fruit (the “tree gourd”). Indeed, the cucurbits include so many types of similarly shaped species – the family includes pumpkins and squashes – that sometimes it is hard to tell at a glance whether an instrument or handcraft is definitely made from one or the other species.

There is thus a decisive cultural connection between Africa and Latin America through gourds/calabashes in music and religion, but there is also an equally interesting cultural-
botanical one. Calabashes are known to be one of the earliest domesticated plant species in the world, with fascinating genetic studies pointing to first domestication of the bottle gourd in Africa, subsequent spread to Asia (undetermined whether through natural or human diffusion), and from Asia to the Americas through human transmission of domesticated varieties (Erickson et al. 2005). Archeological evidence for bottle gourds in Mexico is almost 10,000 years old, contemporary with the earliest evidence for locally domesticated plants; meaning that their domestication in Asia must have happened some 2000 to 3000 years earlier. Gourds would then “join the dog as a second ‘utilitarian species’ brought under domestication by humans long before any plants or animals worldwide” (Erickson et al. 2005, 18520); that is, they comprise some of the earliest technological artifacts in existence.

The bottle gourd owes its name to the utility of its hardened shell as a water vessel (amongst other traditional uses, including as flotation devices), which would have been of major technological value for human groups before the invention of pottery. The Cucurbita family and the tree gourd are perhaps even more representative of Latin America. Objects made from the non-edible cucurbits and the tree gourd comprise ‘low-profile’ technological artifacts that are, however, of the highest cultural significance. Gourds are given many names across the Americas and the Caribbean, stemming from local indigenous designations: jícara (xicalli: Náhuatl), guaje (huaxin, Náhuatl), mate (mat’i, Quechua), porongo (purunku: Quechua), güiro (Taíno), totumo (Chaima), cuia (ku’ya, Tupi).

Calabash-made objects are some of the most representative daily-life utensils within many Latin American contexts: the ubiquitous mates of Argentina, Uruguay and Southern Brazil; the decorated, dark-colored cuias for eating tacacá in the Amazonian region; the gorgeously decorated handcrafts, containers and drinking-cups, or jícaras, in Mexico (see Figure 2). The idiosyncratic hero Macunaíma in de Andrade’s modernist masterpiece uses an ubiquitous Amazonian household item, the cuia, to cure his brother Jiguê of a “magic spell” that his unfaithful wife casts on the cuckold every day – in reality, a snapping lobster that Macunaíma buys for her daily, which the subreptions lovers use to continuously disturb Jiguê’s sleep and tire him

Figure 2. Original cover image for Tapuya Volume 4. A xequerê, traditional West African musical instrument made from a bottle gourd and beads.
out. In his *History of the Indies of New Spain*, the Dominican friar Diego Durán describes, in several passages, the use of jícaras in the religious rituals of the Aztecs. Of the *mate*, enough to say that *Tapuya*’s Editor-in-Chief is one of the few natives from the Río de la Plata whom I have never seen obsessing over the herb (then again, the poor soul has also admitted to me that living in Mexico, he dislikes corn tortillas).

The Volume 4 photograph is finally a nod towards some very exciting happenings for *Tapuya* in Volume 4 and 5, mainly, the publication of a first South-South dialogue special cluster from African colleagues. The first, surely, of many similarly stimulating projects.

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