

XIV March of the Tremembé people: Ritual of affirmation and cultural vindication

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Franderlan Campos Pereiraⁱ

Universidade Federal do Ceará, Fortaleza, CE, Brasil

João Batista de Albuquerque Figueiredoⁱⁱ

Universidade Federal do Ceará, Fortaleza, CE, Brasil

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Abstract

We present an ethnographic interpretation, a decolonial perspective, of the XIV March of the Tremembé people. Cultural affirmation and claim ritual held on September 7, 2017 in Almofala (Itarema-Ceará). We describe the symbolic elements identified by us during the Marcha Tremembé. We intend to demonstrate that the March does not correspond only to a ritual, but to a set of them, all involved in a political, social and psychological dimension, which brings to the fore the claim of the ancestral rights of the Tremembé people. The Tremembé March, in addition to being a “political ritual”, must also be understood as a “sacred ritual”, involving spirituality and beliefs in the Tremembé myths. A Torém was celebrated at the place, pulled by the Pajé’s maraca, as well as many speeches claiming their rights and exhibition of banners and posters. The Torém is known as a game played by the old Tremembé, it represents the cultural symbol of identity and struggle of the local people.

Keywords: Tremembé. Ancestry. Ritual. Social Rights.

XIV Marcha do povo Tremembé: ritual de afirmação e reivindicação cultural

Resumo

Apresentamos uma interpretação etnográfica, uma perspectiva decolonial, da XIV Marcha do povo Tremembé. Ritual de afirmação e reivindicação cultural realizado no dia 7 de setembro de 2017 em Almofala (Itarema-Ceará). Descrevemos os elementos simbólicos por nós identificados durante a Marcha Tremembé. Pretendemos demonstrar que a Marcha não corresponde apenas a um ritual, mas a um conjunto deles, todos envolvidos em uma dimensão política, social e psicológica, que traz em pauta a reivindicação dos direitos ancestrais do povo Tremembé. A Marcha Tremembé, além de um “ritual político”, deve ser compreendida também como um “ritual sagrado”, envolvendo a espiritualidade e as crenças nos mitos Tremembé. No local foi celebrado um Torém puxado pelo maracá do Pajé, bem como, de muitas falas reivindicatória dos seus direitos e exposição de faixas e cartazes. O Torém é conhecido como brincadeira dos velhos Tremembé, representa o símbolo cultural de identidade e luta do povo local.

Palavras-chave: Tremembé. Ancestralidade. Ritual. Direitos Sociais

1 Introduction

And what will be revealed to the people at that moment
Will surprise everyone not because it is exotic
But because it may have always been hidden
When it would have been obvious
Caetano Veloso

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The *Tremembé* of Almofala are heirs to the knowledge of the original peoples of much of the coast of Ceará. During the first centuries of colonization, they had a large part of their territory usurped. Through a unilateral decree in 1854, signed by the governor of the Province of Ceará, José Bento da Cunha Figueiredo Júnior, the *Tremembé* were declared "*non-existent*" in Ceará. Through a pulse of resistance, they have been asserting their existence and their identity (SILVA, 2005). More than a hundred years after this decree, the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) recognized the *Tremembé* as "Indians", precisely in 1980. However, their territory had not been duly regularized. In an attempt to strengthen their identity, the *Tremembé* organize themselves and seek actions to strengthen their traditional knowledge. One of great importance and political significance in demanding rights is the *Tremembé* March. The place where the *Tremembé* March takes place is

(...) an indigenous territory, which is known as the Territory of the Enchanted, or Almofala. The name Almofala refers to a symbolic reworking, which I associate with the countless rituals that evoke the *Tremembé* ancestors, naming this territory as the Place where the Soul Speaks, Almofala. (PEREIRA, 2021, p. 90).

This article presents a decolonial ethnographic interpretation of the XIV March of the *Tremembé* people. A ritual of affirmation and cultural vindication held on September 7, 2017 in Almofala (Itarema-Ceará). The theoretical dialog on which this study is based was designed and constructed during the Anthropology of Rituals and Performances and Anthropological Theory I courses of the Master's in Anthropology associated with UNILAB/UFC.

2 Methodology

As a way of starting this analysis, I describe a series of events as they were recorded by me on a single day. Social situations form a large part of the

anthropologist's raw material, as they are the events he observes. From the social situations and their interrelationships in a particular society, the social structure, social relations, institutions, etc. of that society can be abstracted. Through these and new situations, the anthropologist must verify the validity of his generalizations. (GLUCKMAN, 1987, p.239)

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The method used in this initial research was inspired by Gluckman's (1987) study of a ceremonial inauguration of a bridge in Zululand, South Africa, in 1938. Based on this event, Gluckman constructs a sociological-historical interpretation in which he adds and deepens numerous meanings of the "rituals" witnessed that day. In this essay, we describe the symbolic elements we identified during the *Tremembé March*. In doing so, we intend to demonstrate that the March does not correspond to just one ritual, but to a set of rituals, all involved in a political, social and psychological dimension that brings to the fore the demand for the legitimate ancestral rights of the *Tremembé* people.

The method in question seeks to interpret the social interactions of these rituals, using Victor Turner's (1974) theory of "social dramas and processes" as a tool for understanding this reality. In other words, in a metaphorical and paradigmatic way, how conflicts and political tensions are re-signified and dramatized in complex symbolic ritual performances. According to the author, "Social dramas are therefore units of anharmonic or disharmonic processes that arise in situations of conflict" (TURNER, 1974 p.19). In this way, I describe some of the situations that preceded and others that we observed during the *Tremembé March*, in order to understand the dynamics of the act's emergence and its historical constitution.

3 Results and Discussion

Tremembé of Almofala

The ethnic group recognized as the *Tremembé* occupied a coastal territory that stretched between the current states of Maranhão, Piauí and Ceará at the beginning of European colonization. During this process, the *Tremembé* were described as the "tapuias

of the coast" in reference to their acts of confrontation with the occupation of the region by the Portuguese, French and Dutch (OLIVEIRA JÚNIOR, 1997).

The expropriation of the Tremembé's land is associated with the expansion of cattle ranches and monoculture plantations of coconut, cotton, sugar cane and cashew. As a result, the local people were inserted as laborers through regimes of "subjection", with the obligation to pay income from production, as well as daily unpaid work. In the midst of this reality, uprisings arose to demand rights, especially access to land. In the second half of the 20th century, in turn, these actions were linked to pastoral land campaigns, trade unions, peasant leagues, among others. The retaliation for these uprisings took the form of violent episodes, with persecutions and murders, such as that of the peasant Francisco Araújo Barros, murdered in the 1980s in Itarema, Ceará, who came to be recognized by the region's families as one of the martyrs of the struggle for land.

Traditional *Tremembé* knowledge associated with the local ecosystem is a key factor in the food sovereignty of the Curú and Aracatiaçu valleys, of which Itarema is a part, and could extend to other regions. It is known that the migratory flow of the region's *Tremembé* extended beyond their geographical space. Records show that, due to their enormous marine fishing skills, many fishermen went to work in other fishing colonies in the Northeast. Researchers Gerson Oliveira Júnior (1997) and Eleomar dos Santos Rodrigues (2016) recorded the presence of the Tremembé in Fortaleza's fishing activities. It's important to note that along with the labor force migrated knowledge about the winds, the sea and the fish, integrated with artisanal skills in making the tools of the trade. It's worth noting that some of the paddleboats and canoes used for fishing are made from native woods, and most of the fishing tools were made from local fibers. Today, the same equipment continues to be handcrafted by the *Tremembé* communities, sometimes using external raw materials, such as wood and iron for some boats and nylon to make fishing nets.

In addition to fishing, the *Tremembé* people have a wealth of knowledge about the local fauna and flora. The predominant vegetation in the region is characterized by a semi-arid ecosystem, a tree-covered caatinga in the tabuleiros. In turn, its proximity to the sea

results in greater humidity and the occurrence of sea slopes which, associated with sandy sedimentary soils of low fertility, give the local vegetation endogenous characteristics, interspersed between dunes and mangroves (ALENCAR; SOUZA; VERÍSSIMO, 2002).

The *Tremembé* people have occupied this territory for centuries and are part of this biome. We can say that this ecosystem is part of the *Tremembé* culture, just as the *Tremembé* culture has ancestral knowledge about this nature. We found significant knowledge about native medicinal and food plants, especially batiputá oil and janaguba milk (OLIVEIRA JÚNIOR, 2006).

A latent fact about the problem is the ownership of the territory currently occupied by the *Tremembé* and the constant conflicts over land. It is understood that the territory occupied by these people was much larger in past decades and is being reduced every day as a result of speculation by large enterprises.

The *Tremembé* living in the locality of Batedeira repeatedly pointed to the importance of fishing and agriculture as their main sources of food. The decline in hunting goes hand in hand with the arrival of the squatters and, consequently, the enclosure of the Indians' lands, who were also deprived of fishing in some lagoons. With the land under their control, the *Tremembé* were better able to manage the natural resources and consequently had a more varied diet (OLIVEIRA JÚNIOR, 2006, p. 34:35).

Cultural relations are inseparable from the local environment: the forests, with their streams and lakes, and the sea, with all its diversity. It is plausible to recognize that the areas still owned by the *Tremembé* are relatively conserved, linked to sustainable local production activities. Land ownership is essential for the *Tremembé*'s daily activities. The great web of practices and knowledge associated with each environment undergoes countless changes. This web is affected by an economic and predatory dynamic, and why not say perverse and ethnocentric, but in the context of these native peoples it remains, to a certain extent, within a different logic that is closer to a more sustainable approach. This is the case here.

Context of Our Participation in the *Tremembé* March

The trip to the village on the 6th took place in partnership with researchers from the Freirean Dialogical Environmental Education Study Group - GEAD, linked to the Faculty of Education at the UFC. The group is coordinated by João Figueiredo, PhD, co-author of this essay, who made the ride available and provided excellent moments for sharing knowledge during the trip, which took place together with other researchers. We were joined by Andréia, a student studying Environmental Sciences at the UFC, and Pedro Henrique Camelo, a researcher and partner of GEAD.

We arrived in the municipality of Itarema on the eve of the March, and went to meet Marly, a Methodist missionary linked to the Indigenous Missionary Council - CIMI, who has been involved in the community life of the *Tremembé* village for twenty years, and whom we had already met at other times with the *Tremembé*. Given the dynamics of the preparations for the March and the late hour of the day, she suggested that we take shelter in her house and leave in the morning for the village. At Marly's house we found countless artifacts representative of Tremembé culture.

The evening was enriched by many conversations about the Tremembé's political and cultural processes. One topic of great relevance was the concern about the recent "conversion" of the *Tremembé* shaman to a neo-Pentecostal evangelical church in the community, as well as the many attacks by this religious group against the Tremembé's cultural manifestations.

Along with the first rays of the morning on the day of the March, other researchers arrived at Marly's house, also with the intention of going to the XIV *Tremembé March*. Among them, anthropologist Gerson Júnior - a professor at UECE, John - a professor at UNILAB, Eleomar dos Santos - a doctoral student at FACED-UFC and Arthur - Professor Gerson's advisor on the Geography course at UECE. At this point, some people were still waking up, and over coffee offered by Marly, many conversations and stories about living with the *Tremembé* were shared.

After a short while, everyone got organized and we set off in the direction of the *Tremembé* village, heading for the headquarters of the Maria Venância Beach School, located next to the yard of Cacique João Venâncio's house, the place where the march

would leave from. The journey from Marly's house to the school was quick, just over four kilometers. When we arrived, we found the school still in preparation for the March: there were craft and food stalls being set up, ornaments and banners being hung and the presence of countless people from the community in the process of "filing" the Ritual.

The March activities were scheduled to start at 2pm, and we arrived at the school at around 9am. There were children, young people, adults and elderly people of all ages coming and going at a constant pace, between body painting and body ornaments. We headed straight to the Cacique's residence, where he welcomed us with joy and offered us a taste of mocororó, a cashew-based alcoholic fermented drink that is characteristic of this people. Mocororó is one of the diacritical symbols of *Tremembé* culture (PEREIRA, 2019).

We spent the morning at the school observing, photographing and dialoguing with the *Tremembé*, moments in which they provided data and information for interpreting the Ritual, or rather the rituals. It is worth highlighting the significant fact that I was in the company of Professors João and Gerson, both of whom had witnessed many moments with the community, especially as teachers on the Higher *Tremembé* Indigenous Teaching course - MITS-UFC. Because of this, many *Tremembé* educators approached them to say hello and talk about the expectations of the March, as well as to report on recurring issues and challenges in the local *Tremembé* schools.

Around midday, at Professor Gerson's suggestion, we went for a walk around the community, at which point he described from memory the physical changes that had taken place since his first visits to the place, the houses built only with coconut palms and the absence of beach huts. We had lunch of baked fish with *baião de dois* at one of the stalls in the village, a moment of relaxation and lots of conversation. We returned to the Maria Venância school just as the ceremonies began, with many motorcycles, cars and buses arriving from the neighboring communities.

The ceremony began with games and jokes reminiscent of *Tremembé* skills, followed by a parade and the election of the most beautiful *Tremembé* couple. One of the games involved hitting a target with an arrow shot from a bow. Afterwards, the call for the march began, guided by the *Troncos Velhos* of the village to the sounds of the *maracas*,

with the destination being to travel through a symbolic part of the territory referring to the Encantados *Tremembé*.

Near the community cemetery, a ritual was held for the ancestors. The old trunks evoked the enchanted ones and went to the church of the old village, famous for having been covered up by the dunes and uncovered by the winds. Restored, it is now one of the symbols of identity and demarcation of the *Tremembé* people's struggle for land. In front of this church, in the courtyard opposite, a Torém was celebrated, pulled by the Pajé's maraca, as well as many speeches demanding rights and the display of banners and posters. The Torém is known as a game played by the *Tremembé* elders and represents the cultural symbol of identity and struggle of the local people.

The march took a different route before returning to the school where it had started. Upon arrival, a new Torém was celebrated, this time with the offering of the mocoioró to those present, alternated by moments of games and cultural presentations from the *Tremembé* communities. A long auction was held, where many goods were up for grabs for financial bids; pies, pizzas and drinks were up for grabs, some of which fetched much higher prices than usual. Among the goods put up for auction, one particular item was a bunch of bananas. When it was announced that it had been donated by the chief, its value was greatly reduced in the absence of bids, until someone placed a bid of ten reais, at which point the chief intervened, preventing the bananas from being sold. The purpose of the auction was to raise funds for the school on the beach. When he stopped the bananas from being sold, the cacique retorted by saying that if they were to be sold for that amount, it would be better to leave them at the school for the children to eat. The ceremony went on well into the night, and in the middle of the night we returned to Marly's house before it had even finished.

XIV Tremembé March, its Senses and Meanings

On September 7, 2017, the Tremembé people of Almofala held the XIV *Tremembé March*, a ceremony of ethnic and cultural affirmation, which has been repeated on the same

day of the month for the last fourteen years. It is no coincidence that it is celebrated on the same date as the commemoration of the "Independence of Brazil" from the House of Orleans and Bragança in 1822. Symbolically, the Tremembé people hold this ceremony in order to denounce the colonial dependence imbued in the territory. The first march took place precisely for this purpose, and was marked by the demand for recognition and demarcation of their ancestral territories.

According to testimonies and memories, the First *Tremembé March* took place under intense tension, with many of the communities' families remaining in hiding. The marchers' route corresponded to the same one practiced in 2017, with the gathering and departure at cacique João Venâncio's yard and with a symbolic passage through the boundaries of the areas of the territory being claimed, heading towards the village cemetery, where the Troncos Velhos with their maracas made an evocation of the Encantados *Tremembé*, and at that moment they were sensed, the March continued through the village of Almofala to the Church of the old Jesuit settlement, where they performed a Torém sung in the native *Tremembé* language. After the Torém, complaints and demands were made. Chanting songs of struggle and with great enthusiasm, they returned by another route to their starting point, the chief's yard.

According to reports obtained prior to the march, during the course of the first *Tremembé March*, some of the families living in Almofala hid inside their houses, locked their doors and closed their windows, and remained that way until the end of the ceremony. Reflecting the course of the March, in the cacique's yard, the ceremony continued in the form of a celebration with the sharing of the mocororó, and the Torém festivities to the sound of the maracás went on into the night until dawn.

For Van Genep (2011), the rituals present in the Tremembé march could be translated in different ways, given their complexities and diversities. Following his classification, they are involved in an "animist rite", because they are permanently evoking the Enchanted Ones, the *Tremembé* ancestors. There is a dialectic between the "positive rite and the negative rite", since there is an intention of social transformation when marching and there is also a reaction of confrontation to the March, when the families lock

themselves in their homes. This ceremony reflects a kind of taboo on the intentionality and objectivity of the *March*. And also as an "indirect rite", because it sets in motion a collectivity with personality and creativity that is both individual and with strong traces of cohesion.

As we move down the series of civilizations, this word being taken in the broadest sense, we see the greater predominance of the sacred world over the profane world, which, in the least evolved societies we know, encompasses practically everything. (GENNEP, 2012, p.23).

Among the factors reported about those who hid at the time of the first March, I identified two main points: the first corresponded to the fear of reprisals from the municipal police and the second covered a more complex and subjective dimension, that of denying the *Tremembé* identity in the context of ethnic and political affirmation.

The first point brings up a dialog about moments and facts in everyday life during the period of the first March, which have a new meaning today. These are directly linked to the many conflicts and confrontations against the usurpation of their territories, especially by the Ducoco and Ypioca companies. It's worth pointing out that these companies' attacks on *Tremembé* territory have occurred and are still occurring in tandem with police action by the state. During the XIV March, the entire route was accompanied by military police vehicles, which, according to reports from people at the march, were there to ensure the safety of the ceremony. This reminds us of the symbolic ambivalence between the role of the police and the purposes of the march. We no longer saw people hiding in the houses of the village of Almofala, but some with their chairs at the door watching the ritual.

The second point brings us to a subjective and ideological dimension, a conflict over moral values. We find an ambivalence between the meanings of actions and rituals. To understand this thought, it would be necessary to revisit the countless processes in which the families participated. From an economic understanding of the importance of the territory for their sovereignty and survival, to an understanding of the identity and beliefs of each *Tremembé* family. In order to do this, it is necessary to stick to a method of study based on the conflict that exists in these interactions, in other words, a malleable reality, based on the ambivalences of "symbolic interactionism", where, according to Becker (1963), the individual produces their own identity through social interactions. Of course,

when considering a dialogical and eco-relational perspective (FIGUEIREDO, 2007), we recognize other factors associated with this, such as cultural roots, the structural dynamics resulting from the place, its affective and family ties and many others.

The idea of taboo, in the dialectic of the rites present in the March, can be dialogued with Mary Douglas' (2010) thoughts on "purity and danger", more precisely when she deals with taboos associated with moral values. In this context, we can reflect on the *Tremembé March*, which, as well as being a "political ritual", should be understood as a "sacred ritual", involving spirituality and beliefs in *Tremembé* myths. To understand the taboo present in this ceremony is simultaneously to understand the relationships of subjective spiritual disputes present in the community.

In the face of Christian belief, the evocation of the Enchanted Ones, sacred to those who claim to be *Tremembé*, becomes something profane or even demonic among some Christian families in the community. The very dramatization of the *Tremembé* March meets with resistance from Catholic and evangelical groups. The process of fighting for the territory goes beyond ethnic affirmation. There is a long history of confrontation in the territory, with the participation of progressive wings of the church and social movements. Testimonies about attempts to ban children from taking part in cultural activities, singing songs or using the symbolic artifacts of *Tremembé* culture are recurrent. At the same time, the affirmative actions of valuing and recognizing "*Tremembé* culture" are worked on in a pedagogical and educational way in the community's indigenous schools. A conflicting political dimension in the transfer of ancestral knowledge, disputed by a contradictory dimension, where it is both sacred and profane. A field in constant dispute, with many ambivalences and interactions.

In the moments before the XIV *Tremembé March*, the rumors circulating around the preparations for the ritual claimed that the *Tremembé* Pajé, who had recently converted to a neo-Pentecostal church, would not perform the ritualistic initiation of the Torém during the *March*. A fact that multiplied in concern among the rumors for many present before the *March*. The shaman, as one of the Troncos Velhos, brings together with the community a religiosity linked to the *Tremembé* ancestors, called Encantados. This spirituality is one of

the foundations of the *Tremembé* people's social structure. During the ceremony, it became clear that the power of the Encantados is still preponderant in the community dynamic. Both the shaman and many of the *Tremembé* children, repressed by their Christian families, took an active part in the ritual. The shaman, chanting in the *Tremembé* language, both evoked the Charmed Ones near the cemetery and led them with the energy of the ancestors to perform the Torém in front of the church, as well as in the *Tremembé* chief's yard. It seems to us that the strong roots of their ancestral traditions and knowledge still predominate.

Making an analogy with Stanley Tambiah's (1985) thinking, this action could only be described as performative, returning to the ambivalence, he states that all dramatic performance tends to pass on a message, "indexical values", and that the shaman in his performative act "separates the commitment of the 'actor' from the collective morality of the ritual" (TAMBIAH, 1985, p.122).

The *Tremembé March* is associated with countless articulations of cultural affirmation and demands for rights from indigenous policies. In order to deal with this issue, it would be necessary to understand how the indigenist movement emerged among the *Tremembé* and the other peoples of the state of Ceará. Between the first and last *Tremembé Marches*, there was a cultural reconfiguration researched by Gerson de Oliveira Júnior (1997, 2006). One of these is the participation of the *Tremembé* people in indigenous assemblies at state and national level. The *Tremembé*'s historical contact with the colonizers, their settlement process and the economic and military logic imposed on the native peoples of northeastern Brazil resulted in a people with different characteristics compared to other indigenous groups from other regions of Brazil. One of the striking facts of this situation occurred in one of the assemblies in northern Brazil, where the *Tremembé* were questioned about their identity because they were not characterized with "indigenous" artifacts, in addition to their differences in body phenotypes.

In response to this provocation, and some others of a similar nature, the process of ethnic affirmation then became a creative and performative process, in which the *Tremembé* people assigned themselves countless artifacts from their material culture and

recreated their *Tremembé* artifacts of body beautification. CSORDAS (2008) brings us back to the dimension of the body and action. Carnauba straw, combined with the weaving skills of artisanal fishing tools, bring a new characterization to *Tremembé* culture. Headdresses recreated with chicken feathers and decorated with conch shells, body paintings using charcoal, annatto-based dyes and jenipapo paints, ceramics and handicraft instruments for everyday use, along with many others, are added materially to this cultural affirmation and give a new meaning to the materiality of the *Tremembé* identity.

In the course of the process of reaffirming their identity, the *Tremembé March* comes to represent itself as a performative moment of dramatization of the points of conflict regarding the recognition of their identity. In this way, as a response to aesthetic and performative questions, the *Tremembé* people begin to perfect the manufacture of symbolic artifacts of their culture and use them in their process of cultural affirmation. We saw this even during the march, when we saw the *Tremembé* using clothing and artifacts usually associated with indigenous culture.

In the liminal moment of the XIV *Tremembé March*, we observed the movement during the preparations for the March. Historically, reflecting on the testimonies, from the first to the last March, the moment of preparation for the ritual is associated with the concept of "liminality", Turner (1974). The *Tremembé* find themselves recreating their social positions, since they don't usually wear their artefacts in the daily life of the community, and soon afterwards they begin to reconstitute and/or strengthen this link with the Encantados Tremembé, in other words, a change in their social status in relation to a collectivity.

According to Turner, this movement is dialectical and strengthens with each ritual. The social structure that circumcises the *Tremembé March* brings together countless individuals at a similar moment, thus classifying this structure as a *Communitas*, given its structure and anti-structure. In other words, the *Tremembé March*, this ritual process, as a structure, grows in the interval between one ritual and another. Adding symbologies to its liminalities, in other words, at the same time as the individual and collective preparations strengthen the *Tremembé Ritual* of affirmation and vindication, this process also brings new subjective meanings to its individuals (TURNER, 1974).

If we reflect on Bruner's (1986) thinking about experience and expression, the experience of ethnic affirmation through the collective expression of the *Tremembé March* helps us to understand how that moment, that experience, when reproduced, becomes reconfigured and adds new meanings. How the expression of an experience can reconfigure a personal identity and these meanings assign new social roles.

Reading this ceremony, these many rituals, we can also draw up a dialog with Goffman (1983), in his work *The Representation of the Self in Everyday Life*. The *Tremembé March* is a political act, a theatricalization of a political, identity and cultural agenda. In addition to transforming the community itself, its members seek to represent themselves as *Tremembé* in the form of a spectacularization of the ritual and their political agendas. This metaphor would explain the artistic dimension of these political and spiritual rituals, a dramaturgical form, performances that cause behavioral changes in the face of the diversity of people present. I noticed the spectacularization of culture, the attempt to manipulate arrangements and landscapes for a presentation and acceptance by a public, forged for an audience that sympathized with the *Tremembé*'s political causes.

Guests, sympathizers and many others who joined the *Tremembé* struggle began to incorporate the artifacts into their "selves", their characters, in this great spectacle. They buy countless handicrafts from the community: necklaces, bracelets, earrings, ornaments, among others. They also paint their bodies, recreating their *Tremembé* traits, and join the March, at that moment becoming part of an indigenous *Tremembé* identity. This fact cuts across countless subjectivities of its non-*Tremembé* participants, even though identity can be affirmed or denied. People may be affirming their ancestry beyond the moment of the March, but they may also be motivated by the ritual's liminal frenzy, feeling like an integral part of that dramatic context or even sympathetic to the March's agenda.

These self-representations, given the dramatic context of the *Tremembé March*, create a "point of contact" between the performance of its participants and the display of the March to the public. It is a fact that the *Tremembé March* has a political focus of exposing/denouncing the denial of the rights of the *Tremembé* people to society, trying to

provoke the commotion of the *non-Tremembé* public. It is quite possible to associate it with Schechner's (2011) metaphor about the "theatricalization of dramas".

4 Final considerations

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Ahe social demands of the *Tremembé* people are expressed at various times in everyday life, but once a year, on September 7th, they concentrate these demands in a ceremony where their spirituality and political articulations are present. Symbolically, they walk through part of their ancestral territory evoking their ancestors, known as Encantados. This ritual not only strengthens the *Tremembé*'s indigenous cultural dimension, but also ensures greater visibility and public recognition. Strengthening the *Tremembé* identity is a determining factor in guaranteeing the conservation of their culture and the defense of their ancestral territories.

In this essay, we tried to provide a dense description of the events of the XIV March of the *Tremembé* People of Almofala, which took place on a single day, following Max Gluckman's (1987) methodological proposal. We participated and were active in the ritual's action and in this process we observed and systematized some facts that we evaluated as relevant and tried to analyse, resulting in an interpretation of the events that took place. According to Gluckman, from the social situations and their interrelationships in a particular society, one can abstract the social structure, social relations, institutions and many other characteristics of that society.

The March is not just one ritual, but a set of rituals, all involved in a political, social and psychological dimension, which brings to the agenda the demand for the ancestral rights of the *Tremembé* people. As well as being a "political ritual", the *Tremembé March* should also be understood as a "sacred ritual", involving spirituality and beliefs in *Tremembé* myths. There was a Torém performed by the Pajé's maraca, as well as many speeches demanding their rights and the display of banners and posters.

The rituals described are associated with countless articulations of cultural affirmation and demands for rights with indigenous policies. It is presented as a

performative moment of dramatization of the points of conflict regarding the recognition of their identity, in this political process the *Tremembé* are recreating their social positions. Presenting themselves in an aesthetic and elaborate way is proof of this statement, since they are not used to being characterized with their artifacts in the daily life of the community, and soon afterwards they begin to reconstitute and or strengthen this link with the Enchanted *Tremembé*, that is, a change in their social status before a collectivity. During the March, we saw the *Tremembé* wearing clothes and artifacts usually associated with indigenous culture, thus affirming their ancestry. This movement is dialectical and strengthens with each ritual. The *Tremembé March* is a political act, a theatricalization of a political, identity and cultural agenda. In addition to transforming the community itself, its members seek to represent themselves as *Tremembé* in the form of a spectacularization of the ritual and their political agendas.

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ⁱ **Franderlan Campos Pereira**, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2133-6091>

Universidade Federal do Ceará; Faculdade de Educação; Programa de Pós-graduação em Educação
Doutorando em Educação pelo PPGE UFC, com mestrado em Antropologia pelo PPGA UFC/UNILAB.
Integrante do Grupo de Estudos e Pesquisas em Educação Ambiental Dialógica, Perspectiva Eco-
Relacional e Educação Popular Freireana – GEAD.

Contribuição de autoria: Realizou a pesquisa de campo, sistematizou os dados com as reflexões
teóricas.

Lattes: <https://lattes.cnpq.br/3178295477656541>

E-mail: franderlan@alu.ufc.br

ii João Batista de Albuquerque Figueiredo, ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6199-8324>

Universidade Federal do Ceará; Faculdade de Educação; Programa de Pós-graduação em Educação
Professor titular, com doutorado em ciências e pós-doutorado em educação e pós-doutorado sênior em
Educação Dialógica. – Fortaleza – CE. Líder do Grupo de Estudos e Pesquisas em Educação Ambiental
Dialógica, Perspectiva Eco-Relacional e Educação Popular Freireana – GEAD.

Contribuição de autoria: Participou da pesquisa de campo com contribuições fundantes para a
fundamentação teórica do texto.

Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/5738654153004098>

E-mail: joaofigueiredo@uf.br

Responsible publisher: Lia Fialho

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