

Humorous graphic production, sports press and stereotype: the narratives of Maciota, in the Placar magazine

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to analyze stereotypical traits associated with the Brazilian identity, based on graphic humor productions published in the Brazilian sports press. Created by Paulo Paiva and published in the sports magazine *Placar*, the narratives of the character Maciota were little studied in the country. The fictional stories present situations experienced by an anti-athlete in the context of soccer. We consider that certain stereotypical traits can both aid in the production of humor and in the consolidation of the anti-athlete, as well as reinforce the construction of one of the Brazilian identities: the *malandro*. Given the nature of the study, the theoretical basis establishes an interdisciplinary dialogue between the areas of the sports press, graphic humor and discourse analysis. The *corpus* of analysis comprises 140 stories about the character, published in the *Placar* magazine from 1980 to 1983.

Keywords: Graphic humor. Stereotype. Maciota. *Placar*. Soccer.

Introduction

The passion for soccer held by humor cartoonists, as Pimentel (2004) reminds us, begins in the 19th century, with the productions of Ângelo Agostini, Pereira Neto, Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro, Storni and K. Listo. These, according to the author, “were the first chroniclers and humorists who used the little-known rules of the game, in parallel with the political situation of the country” (p.54). Pimentel also remarks on the large number of examples of humorous graphic productions about soccer registered on the pages of the Brazilian press. By way of illustration, we quote: Otelo Caçador, who became famous in the *O Globo* newspaper, with his column “*Pênalti do Otelo*”; Henfil, who created the character Urubu (symbol for the supporters of Flamengo) for the *Jornal dos Sports*; Nani, who created the character Zé Zebrinha also for the *Jornal dos Sports*; and the “*Última Hora* newspaper, which published, for a long time, the daily strip *Aristeu, o Juiz*, by Adail” (p. 53-54 – Our translation).

A case which will be highlighted in this text are Maciota’s graphic narratives. Created by the cartoonist Paulo Paiva and published in the sports magazine *Placar* during the first half of the 1980s, the stories were mostly produced in the traditional format of comic strips (some of them were created as single-panel cartoons). The character is little studied in the scientific community, even in works on the history of Brazilian comics. There are only two

instances of his being mentioned: one of them is in a paper by Carmelino (2014b), in which the author discusses identity issues of Brazilians and of Brazil in the context of soccer, explored in the universe of comics; the other one, in a note by Jal and Gual, in the work “*A história do futebol no Brasil através do cartum*” (2004).

Placar, the magazine in which Maciota’s series was published, debuted in March 1970, right before the World Cup held in that year, to fill in the space of a national publication on sports (COELHO, 2003; MALAIA, 2012). With national circulation, the magazine – which is still considered one of the most important magazines to address the themes of soccer – has helped to structure and modernize the command of Brazilian soccer, being responsible for supporting and creating championships (such as the *Campeonato Brasileiro*), instituting profiles to promote content about some of the most important soccer teams in Brazil and granting prizes (such as the “*Bola de Prata*” award). Malaia (2012) also points out that, created amid the restrictions imposed by the censorship, *Placar* comprised both aspects of contestation and of support of the regime and that the double license held by the magazine (sports and humor) created the necessary space for criticism.

Even though the productions of Maciota did not present any relation with the news and sports pieces published in the magazine, nor with the political situation of the country at the time, bearing in mind the fictional character of the stories, it cannot be said that such narratives, present in the printed sports press, did not help to register stereotypical traits, social representations of Brazilians in the context of soccer, identity and memory which reflect a reality related to the universe of this mass sport.

As Gastaldo (2011, p.47 – Our translation) reminds us, “the discourse of the sports press represents an important methodological contribution for the study of the ‘myths’ which represent and configure actions in the present, but whose ‘mythical past’ is documented in the press”. We consider that the productions of graphic humor also constitute research material, since through them it is possible to reflect about the meaning of stereotypical traits which are associated with the Brazilian identity.

From these considerations and taking into account that the stereotype, besides being an important narrative and humor-producing mechanism, can help us to reflect about social roles, we intend, in this article, to show how certain stereotypical traits help to trigger the comicality in the productions of Paiva, to consolidate Maciota as an anti-athlete and to reinforce the construction of one of the identities of the Brazilian people, that of the *malandro*¹.

It is possible to think the character can be classified as one of the different kinds

1 According to Gastaldo (2003, p.2 – Our translation), the *malandro* constitutes “a sort of Brazilian ‘folk hero’”, with soccer fields being one of his areas. According to the Priberam dictionary: 1) someone who tries to live of other people’s work or of illegal activities; 2) a person with few scruples; 3) a person who does not like to work; 4) a person who does not show shame or modesty; 5) a person who likes to play jokes.

of *sacana*² created over time in the Brazilian graphic humor and which, in soccer, reflects one of the Brazilian identities, “*malandragem*” (the characteristic of being *malandro*). We start from the hypothesis that the anti-athlete usually stands between *sacanagem* (a *sacana* attitude) and naïveté, even though this may sound very contradictory: sometimes he is presented as a *sacana*, sometimes as a *sacaneado* (someone who suffers the tricks of a *sacana*), sometimes as naïve³, sometimes as *sacana/naïve*. In this last case, the two characteristics are intertwined in such a way that the reader is confused about the representation of the character.

The corpus of this analysis comprises a total of 140⁴ productions published in *Placar* from the 27 June, 1980, when the character debuted, to July 1, 1983, when his last story was printed. These narratives, sometimes in color, sometimes in black and white, vary between comic strips (most of them, 124 examples), produced in different formats (horizontal, vertical and square), and single-panel cartoons (a small number, 16 occurrences).

Even though the difference between comic strip and a single-panel cartoon is secondary to this study, since the focus of the article is different, we point out, for clarity, that comic strips are characterized by presenting one or more frames, tending to consist of a short narrative with an unexpected outcome and a character which may be fixed or not. In what regards single-panel cartoons, it may be said it is a kind of graphic joke, built in a single scene, compiled in a square frame, which deals with general themes (RAMOS, 2010; CARMELINO, 2014a).

The study tries to establish a dialogue between different areas, which here, in a certain way, we approximate to each other: sports press, only mentioned to contextualize the graphic narratives of Maciota printed in *Placar*, a magazine which carries journalistic coverage of sports news, with a clear emphasis on soccer (MALAIA, 2012) and graphic humor, area from which we will list studies that deal specifically with comics language (CAGNIN, 2014; EISNER, 2008) and the notion of stereotype. This last one will also be read from the standpoint of discourse analysis (AMOSSY; HERSCHBERG-PIERROT, 2001; POSSENTI, 2010; CARMELINO, 2014c).

Besides the contribution for the field of Communication (and sports) of registering the existence of the character in *Placar*, this investigation seeks to understand how part of the soccer representation in Brazil reflects in Maciota. Discussing this versatile player – a sort of jack-of-all-trades in his minuscule team – is, therefore, also trying to understand marks present in the most popular sport of the country, reflected fictionally in the construction of the humor found in the comic strips and single-panel cartoons.

2 In Portuguese, the word “*sacana*” can have three different meanings, according to Houaiss (2001): 1) a libertine; 2) a scoundrel; 3) a playful person.

3 The stereotypical trait of naïveté identified in the productions corresponds, in general, to the fact that the character interprets literally what he hears.

4 We have found 141 strips. Since one presented a repetition of scenes from three strips previously published, it has not been considered.

Sports humor: Maciota in Placar

In what regards Maciota's stories, let us see two examples in which it is possible to synthesize some of the main characteristics of the character.

Figure 1 – Scene which describes Maciota as a bad player⁵



Source: PAIVA, P. Maciota. *Placar*, São Paulo: Abril, 12 February 1982, n.612, p.67.

Figure 2 – Scene which characterizes Maciota as out of shape⁶



Source: PAIVA, P. Maciota. *Placar*, São Paulo: Abril, 14 August 1981, n.587, p.72.

⁵ Translation: "Damn! There's a bug biting my leg!" / "It must be a termite!".

⁶ "Huff! Puff! I can't go on! I can't take it anymore!! Huff! Puff!" / "Maciota must be the only player in the world who can't even finish his warm up!".

In Figure 1, we can see Maciota is a soccer player of the worst kind. We can infer that from the fact that he is sitting on the bench and that his team-mate says he has termites biting his leg (it is inferred he “has a wooden leg”, a common expression in Brazilian Portuguese to designate soccer players who have poor performances). Figure 2 also reinforces Maciota’s bad quality in soccer. We can see he cannot even finish the warm up session for the training because he is exhausted. We are dealing, therefore, with a player “with a wooden leg”, out of shape, sometimes clumsy, who does not obey (or does not know) any tactical scheme. It is the representation or the stereotype of the anti-athlete.

Maciota is one of comic writer Paulo Paiva’s creations. Born in 1957, in Rio Verde de Goiás (nowadays the municipality of Santa Helena de Goiás, in the state of Goiás – Brazil), he came to the city of São Paulo in 1963. Stimulated by the comic books he collected, he began to draw as a teenager. From the beginning, illustrating and producing comics, he opted for humor and also for a very dear theme to Brazilians, though little explored by other cartoonists: soccer (PAIVA⁷; FERNANDES, 2011).

In the words of P. Paiva (1996, p.1), as he signs his stories, Maciota consists of an “amateur player who wants to be an amateur”, that is, he represents the true star (not a soccer one) who lives on minimum wage and uses his weekends to play soccer on improvised fields with his friends and later enjoy a cold beer. The narratives also reveal that, sometimes, he is also the goalkeeper, the coach and the ball boy – a sort of jack-of-all-trades.

Physically, Maciota is presented as a black man (a clear fact in the colored productions), aged between 35 and 40, a little overweight, with a peculiar little mustache and whose marital status is undefined (neither single nor married). His team is the *Mula Manca Esporte Futebol* (“Limping Mule Soccer Sport”, in a free translation), which has never received any trophies. He is a fun-loving idler who smokes and loves beer. Besides being a bad player, he presents characteristics which vary between *sacana*, lazy, dirty (unhygienic), aggressive, immoral, having a bad character, womanizing, disorganized, being a scoundrel, a rascal, a victim and naïve. Actually, this reverse hero lives up to his name, or to the popular expression which his name bears, that is, “*na maciota*”, whose meaning can be “without effort”, “without work” (BORBA, 2002). Maciota, in short, tries to live “*na maciota*”.

The stereotype in question

If the main theoretical concept to be explored in the analysis of the graphic productions of Maciota’s is the stereotype, we should discuss it here. As explained in Carmelino and Possenti (2015), who base their arguments on studies by Lippmann (2008) and Amossy and Herschberg-Pierrot (2001), the notion first appeared connected to the printing press, to the

7 PAIVA, Paulo. **Criativo**. Available at: <http://editoracriativo.com.br/autores/exibir/171/paulo-paiva#.WN-gmm_ytdg>. Accessed on: 28 August, 2017.

method used to mold and duplicate the typographical printing plates. This is the origin of its first meaning (which endures throughout the 19th century), being “a solid impression”.

In the beginning of the 20th century, the term takes on the value of preexisting cultural schemes, ideas which were conventionally preconceived and standardized. Reflected in the semantic space of collective representation and belief, the stereotype became the object of study of the social sciences, area in which the concept is epistemologically established. It is also from this area that some scholars of the French discourse analysis begin to reflect about the concept (AMOSSY; HERSCHBERG-PIERROT, 2001; POSSENTI, 2010; CARMELINO, 2014c).

From then on, the phenomenon has been defined as “crystalized representations, preexisting cultural schemes, through which each one filters the reality around them” (AMOSSY; HERSCHBERG-PIERROT, 2001, p.32 – Our translation). Considered to be social, constructed and imaginary, the stereotype can be understood as a collective, simplified and rigid image of something (person, group, subject), which results from expectations, judging habits or generalizations recurrent in society.

In what regards the social role of the stereotype and its propagation in discourses, it is appropriate to register it has been read in two different ways. One of them links it to the idea of social cohesion and identity, defending that the quick and simplified categorization is an essential procedure to cognition, because it may help to better understand the world (LIPPMANN, 2008). The other way relates it to the idea of error and prejudice, because it believes the simplified or generalized categorization certainly causes a schematic, incomplete and warped point of view, generating false evidence (AMOSSY; HERSCHBERG-PIERROT, 2001).

From what has been expounded here, as stated by Carmelino and Possenti (2015), whether stereotyping is considered positive or negative, it is inevitable. This is not different in graphic productions. According to Eisner (2008, p.21), “it is a cursed necessity – a communication tool from which most cartoons cannot escape”. In order to be easily recognized in the reader’s memory, graphic productions tend to present human actions/ behaviors like they do physical aspects: in a simplified way, that is, stereotyped. Images become symbols/icons which are repeated.

One of the roles of stereotypes in comics is working as a narrative tool. Generally projected by means of physical characteristics commonly accepted and associated with an occupation, stereotyped characters are used as part of the language in graphic narrative. Therefore, when one thinks of a police officer, an athlete or a scientist, for example, one must take into account the memory of each of these individuals. Hence, the characters are drawn considering the social experience as much as the shape the reader would have (or accept) of them.

In Eisner words (2008, p.23), such data serves to highlight that the challenge of “creating a stereotyped image with the objective of telling a story requires familiarity with the public and the perception that each society has a set of their own stereotypes that it accepts”. Furthermore, certain characteristics must awaken in the reader some reflection. In this sense, the stereotype can reinforce credibility as well as work to the opposite, that is, as an incongruence. In this case, it may be used as a technique to produce humor. And here lies its other function.

In comic productions, the stereotyped marks explored are exaggeratedly emphasized, often constituting the causes of laughter. Details become maxims. According to Zink (2011, p.48 – Our translation), when the stereotype does not act as a generator of humor (mischief, irony), it “acts as a parasite on the mechanisms of humor, replicating them”.

In what regards the relation between stereotype and humor, it is appropriate to highlight Possenti’s work (2010). The author notes, in a study about jokes, that the representations that belittle others (the case of stereotypes) may originate in social tensions. If the polemic can be conceived as an open dispute between two discourses (or groups), the stereotype (understood as the materialization of the discriminatory and prejudiced way with which the “other” is identified) can also oppose two discourses.

According to Possenti (2010), beside a basic stereotype (assumed by a group), there is always an opposite one (attributed by others). It can be understood that if something or someone is constructed as X, there is(are) other(s), on the other hand, which present(s) themselves(itself) as non-X. Thus, beside the stereotype of “*sacana*”, there would be the one of “non-*sacana*”; beside the “athlete/star” there would be the “anti-athlete”; the “*malandro*” would oppose the “non-*malandro*”. It must be highlighted that humor, in the process of stereotyping, always focuses on what is pejorative. Moreover, stereotypical representations reflect a social imagery⁸ about certain individuals. This imagery, however mythical, may reveal certain social behaviors through the device of comicality.

Maciota, between *sacanagem* and naïveté: Brazilian identity in soccer

The considerations wrought until now leave no doubt as to the identity of Maciota, the protagonist of Paiva’s graphic productions published in *Placar*, from 1980 to 1983: the out-of-shape bad soccer player reflects the stereotype of the anti-athlete. The analysis of these productions, however, makes us recognize that other recurrent marks, also stereotypical, help to consolidate the personification of the anti-athlete, to produce humor and to reinforce one of the identity constructions of Brazilian people in soccer: the *malandragem*. They are: a) *sacana*, with the largest number of occurrences, since it can be found in 48 of the examined samples; b) *sacaneado* (victim), with 24 occurrences; c) *naïve* and *sacana* (at the same time), traits which appear in 16 samples; d) *naïve*, which is found in 14 occurrences.

8 According to Morais (1997, p.94 – Our translation), the “social imagery is composed of a set of pictorial relations which act as affective-social memory of a culture, an ideological substrate kept by the community”.

From the description of the profile of stereotypical traits, we can recognize that it is a complex figure. Complex because of the fact that the character brings together traits which seem to be contradictory. He is as much *sacana* in some moments as he is naïve (literal) in others. The situation and visual elements express the line which separates the two possibilities. It is what the data evinces, no matter how contradictory it may sound.

The other cases (38 samples from 140 analyzed ones) do not fit any of these four categories, because they evince other traits. That can be seen from Figure 2, presented in the second part of this text, in which the focus is to present the character as a bad player. The following table summarizes the result of the data analysis.

Table 1 - Maciota's more recurrent stereotypical traits

MACIOTA'S STEREOTYPICAL TRAITS	TOTAL NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES (reference: 140 cases)	PERCENTAGE (100%)
<i>sacana</i>	48	34, 2%
<i>sacaneado</i> (victim)	24	17, 1%
<i>sacana/naïve</i>	16	11,4%
naïve	14	10,0%
other traits	38	27,1%

Fonte: Author's research.

Let us see an example of how the stereotypical traits identified are manifested and help in the production of humor, in the consolidation of the anti-athlete and, in the case of the *sacana* (larger number of occurrences), in the configuration of the *malandro*.

Sacana

Figure 3 – Maciota as a *sacana*⁹



Source: PAIVA, P. Maciota. *Placar*, São Paulo: Abril, 10 April 1981, n.569, p.67.

⁹ **Translation:** "This won't be the end of this, dude!!" / "Of course not, it's gonna swell like crazy!!".

As has already been said, comic strips have, as one of their component marks, the presence of an unexpected element at the end, which takes the reader to the humorous meaning. This device can be seen in the example of Figure 3. The story is constituted of two moments, each one shown in a panel. The explored theme is a confrontation in the field, possibly in a soccer match.

In the first one, the reader infers that Maciota, moments before, has hurt his opponent in a play of the match. There are textual marks which reinforce this interpretation. The person who was hurt makes a threat, saying that it wouldn't "be the end of that, dude". Another indication is the presence of emanata in the form of stars, coming from the opponent's leg. Emanata is a device of comics language which is a graphic convention that denotes different possibilities of meaning (CAGNIN, 2014; RAMOS, 2010). In this example, they suggest pain.

The emanata are still seen in the second panel. But what really draws our attention is no longer the adversary, but Maciota himself. He, in the beginning, suggests agreement with the fact that the situation would not end there, saying "of course not". But the rest of his enunciation reveals he thinks the opposite: the injury would still swell a lot.

Because he attacked the opponent and wishes him ill in face of a created situation, Maciota is shown as a *sacana*, *malandro*. There are many ways of manifesting *sacanagem* or *malandragem*. In this strip, verbal and non-verbal resources reveal the perverse and mocking action of the protagonist. As it is portrayed in an exaggerated situation in the scenes, the *sacana/malandro* attitude also works as a resource for the production of humor. In this sense, a mocking laughter is established.

Sacaneado

Figure 4 - Maciota as the *sacaneado*¹⁰



Source: PAIVA, P. Maciota. *Placar*, São Paulo: Abril, 26 June 1981, n.580, p.67.

The situation explored in Figure 4, also constructed of two scenes, is one of deceit. The theme might be disappointment. In the first scene, Maciota is shown being cheered by what is suggested to be three fans of his. Verbal elements (especially adjectives) imply he is seen as an expert in the art of soccer: “great”, “super star” and “new Pelé” (a reference to Edson Arantes do Nascimento, considered the best soccer player in Brazil and in the world).

The outcome brings us a surprise: it inverts the expectation shown by the narrative and highlights a new, unexpected, situation, where humor is revealed. In this case, the joke is in the presence of the information “mental asylum”, seen on the wall. It is inferred, then, that those three people who initially seemed to be supporters are actually inmates of a mental hospital. That is, only insane people would see any good qualities in Maciota. This datum reinforces the stereotype of the bad player.

We can see in this example the presence of what Raskin (1985) calls opposite scripts. This resource would be one of the central elements for explaining the production of humor in jokes. These would construct a situation for the reader/listener so that, later, another is revealed, antagonistic to the first one. In this case, the script presented is close

10 Translation: “Look, the great Maciota!” / “The super star!!!” / “He’s the new Pelé!!!” / “Mental Asylum”.

to that of supporters manifesting so that, in the end, the one of inmates in a mental asylum is presented. This opposition would lead to the production of comicality, in the theory developed by the researcher.

In this case, it can be noted Maciota is not the *sacana*, but the *sacaneado* (the victim). Verbal and non-verbal resources help in the confusion created between the appearance (Maciota is a star player) and what it actually is (Maciota is a terrible player) and in the creation of sarcastic laughter. Being the victim of deceit, Maciota is shown as deluded at first and then visibly disappointed. The facial expression of the character corroborates these considerations: from happy (head held high and a smile) it becomes serious (lowered eyes and closed mouth).

Naïve (literal)

Figure 5 - Maciota as naïve/literal¹¹



Source: PAIVA, P. Maciota. *Placar*, São Paulo: Abril, 6 November 1981, n.599, p.43.

This example is on the borderline between what is known by comic strip and single-panel cartoon. Cartoons are usually square-shaped, similar to what can be seen in Figure 5, and tend to be drawn in only one scene. Since both genres converge in the usage of unexpected situations as a strategy for producing humor, and since this is the focus of this article, the specification of genre becomes secondary, at least for the purposes of this analysis, as has already been clarified.

11 Translation: "I'm never giving technical instructions using button soccer again!"

In comics created with only one scene, in which the situation presented is synthesized, there is a need of a greater inferential process from the reader in order to deduce the information. From what can be seen and what can be read in the balloon (“I’m never giving technical instructions using button soccer again”), we can understand Maciota took his coach’s guidance seriously (or “coatch”, in a free translation of the spelling mistake which is always seen in the stories): he put the team-mate in a position in which he could follow the same procedure as he would in a button soccer game.

This was only a method the coach used to explain the positioning of the athletes and teams on the field. We can perceive, however, that the protagonist has understood the information literally, that is, that he should go to the field with a huge pick and that, with it, he would play out the strategies, using his team-mates bodies as “buttons”. In this way, he has transformed the soccer field into a gigantic board. The absurdity created by this situation, which borders on the nonsensical, is what leads us to the strange humor, anchored on an excessively naïve attitude from the player. In order to be understood, the uncommon situation explored in this graphic narrative depends essentially on the observation of the elements of the verbal and non-verbal language and the knowledge both of the button soccer game and of the adapted usage of some of the objects which comprise this game for tactical instructions in real soccer.

Sacana/naïve

Figure 6 - Maciota between naïve and *sacana*¹²



Source: PAIVA, P. Maciota. *Placar*, São Paulo: Abril, 27 March 1981, n.567, p.67.

There are situations, as has been noted, in which Maciota acts dubiously, with different stereotypical traits: he can demonstrate both a *sacana* attitude and take action based on a literal reading of something (not intelligent, naïve), whether his naïveté is real or faked. This happens in Figure 6, which in order to be understood requires us to take into

¹² Translation: “Maciota, there’s a player hurt on the field! Kick it out!”.

consideration verbal and non-verbal elements. The story is built in two moments. In the first one, the character is shown on the field, with the ball, at a certain point of the match. Another player, possibly from Maciota's team, warns him that one of the players of the opposing team is hurt.

We can see, in the right corner of the scene, the fallen man. *Emanata*, in the form of stars, connotes that he has been hit on the legs. That is the reason for the warning to kick the ball out of the field. Getting the ball off the field is a sign of interruption so that the medical team can get onto the field and help the injured person.

The second scene shows us the consequence of the warning. Maciota, instead of getting the ball off the field, has kicked the injured player out of the field. The attitude, unexpected, leads to humor due to the unusual situation. But it is also dubious, as has already been said. He may: 1) have understood the message from the team-mate and solved the situation another way, kicking the injured person and getting them outside of the field; 2) have understood the warning "kick it out" as a recommendation and followed it literally. In the first situation, he would have been *sacana*; in the second one, naïve (literal).

In the strip in question, it is important to emphasize that the unusual situation is produced based on the thematic ambiguity: perversity or naïveté? Whether being *sacana* or naïve, the character's reaction reveals something definite: disobedience to the rules of the game. In this sense, Maciota's two stereotypical traits manifested in the graphic narrative by means of graphic and linguistic resources corroborate the construction of the anti-athlete.

The examples presented give an idea of the complexity of the character created by Paiva. Maciota, the anti-athlete, is not simply *sacana*. He is *sacaneado*, he is naïve (literal) and he is *sacana* and naïve at the same time. These stereotypical traits, in general, are revealed from discursive forms which circulate between two fields¹³: sports (represented by soccer) and humor (seen in humorous graphic productions: strip and cartoon).

The most recurrent mark of the character, that of being *sacana*, consolidates a kind of "Brazilian identity" historically and socially constructed (also) in soccer. It is the one which takes into account the behavior known as "*malandragem*". Even though *malandragem* has been seen, in the 1930s and 1940s, as "a survival strategy and concept of the world" (OLIVEN, 1986, p.34 – Our translation), by means of a refusal of the discipline (and exploitation) of wage labor, the emblematic figure of the "*malandro*" is still present in the imagery of Brazilian society. If one of the fields in which *malandragem* is seen as a value of Brazil is the soccer field, we could, therefore, verify this in Paiva's humorous graphic productions, with Maciota.

13 Developed by Maingueneau (2005), the notion of discursive field is characterized inside the discursive universe and comprehends certain discursive formations. Even though the fields are heterogenous, each one presents its own rules, is organized in a certain way, comprehends certain themes and discursive genres. Thus, for instance, as defended by Possenti (2010), humor would be a field.

By taking into consideration the thesis defended by Possenti (2010) – that beside a basic stereotype, there is always an opposite one –, we can consider that the stereotypical traits identified in Maciota bring forth (at least in the memory) their opposites. Therefore, if the character is built as an anti-athlete, *sacana* and naïve, he would automatically be in opposition to the athlete, non-*sacana* and non-naïve. These would be the other(s) of the discourse.

In the case of the analyzed productions, it is interesting to note that “these others” in general are not put in a relation of explicit alterity, that is, the stereotypes/stereotypical traits opposed to the ones seen in Maciota are not shown in other characters with whom he appears in the stories. The others of the discourse end up, therefore, being implied. The example of Figure 3 may clarify this comment. The fact that Maciota is *sacana* because he victimized his opponent and wishes him ill in a created situation does not indicate his opponent is not *sacana*.

If we retrieve Eisner’s (2008) considerations – that the challenge of producing a stereotype with the intention of telling a story demands not only familiarity with the public but, above all, the perception that each society has a set of their own stereotypes which they accept –, Paiva’s competence in the production of Maciota can be seen. Since many stereotypical representations reflect a social imagery about certain subjects, it must be asked (like the creator did about his creature): how many Maciotas are there around us?

Through the device of humor, Maciota represents several portions of the soccer-appreciative population: those who live on minimum wage and use their weekend to play soccer with their friends and then enjoy a cold beer, the aggressive player on the field, the one who does not respect the rules of the game, the out-of-shape athlete, the lazy one, the one who usually does not leave the bench, the one who does everything on the field. Thus, we can say their stereotypical traits, both physical and in what regards their behavior (be it *sacana/malandro*, be it naïve) awaken reflections about social practices.

These observations corroborate one of the social roles (and ways of conception) of the stereotype, discussed both by Lippmann (2008) and by Amossy and Herschberg-Pierrot (2001): being an element of cohesion and social identity. Besides being indispensable to cognition, because they can help to better understand the world, stereotypes may promote the identification of an individual with a group.

Conclusion

The analysis of the series Maciota, produced by Paiva and published in *Placar*, especially in what regards the stereotypical traits presented by the character, whose larger incidence is the *sacana* attitude, helps to corroborate that the fictional and humorous sports narratives reinforce the construction of the Brazilian identity as that of the *malandro*.

The stereotypical traits – produced in the fields of sport (soccer) and humor (comic strips or single-panel cartoons), by means of recourses of verbal and non-verbal language – bring to memory their opposites, which in this case would be the sports star/athlete, the one who is not *sacana* and the one who is not naïve. These, it must be emphasized, are implied in the stories, since they do not manifest in the characters with whom the protagonist appears in the narratives.

The genres of graphic humor which Maciota's stories use to be constructed are comic strips (whose shapes are horizontal, vertical and square) and single-panel cartoons. The humor identified alternates between two kinds, the unusual and the sarcastic ones. The productions create humor from bizarre or unusual situations, as well as scathingly use irony and ridicule as a way of mocking.

It can also be said that Maciota's stereotypical traits and the functions performed by him in the production of humor in Paiva's stories and in the consolidation of the anti-athlete reflect social practices. As has been said, besides the fact that there are many Maciotas around, there are also many who identify with him. Thus, the artist's *malandro* anti-athlete works as an element of cohesion and social identity.

In this way, as we see it, this text fulfills its mission: registering the existence of Paiva's graphic production, created for *Placar*, allows us to comprehend how soccer imagery in Brazil is reflected in Maciota. Comprehending this multitasker player, as was commented in the beginning of this discussion, is also understanding marks present in the most popular sport in the country, reflected fictionally into the construction of humor in these graphic productions published by the Brazilian press.

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