

Domination and Resistance

In Afro-Brazilian Music

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Abstract

Domination and resistance form a dialectic relationship that is essential to understanding Afro-Brazilian music. The purpose of this paper is to investigate this relationship: to form a theoretical framework of domination and resistance based on the history of Afro-Brazilian music, and to use this theory to better understand Afro-Brazilian music itself. This paper seeks to ask, and answer, both theoretical and descriptive questions pertaining to these issues.

The theoretical framework utilized here springs directly from the history of Afro-Brazilian music. This theory of domination and resistance focuses on the concepts of choice, power, and creativity. In this context, power refers to the ability of individuals to control their own lives. Power becomes coercive when it seeks to limit the choices of which others are capable. When coercive power is highly asymmetrical, it creates situations of domination. By creating new choices, choices not offered to them by those in power, subordinates are able to resist this domination either directly or indirectly. This creation of choices forms a profound relationship between creativity and resistance.

The historical analysis of this paper uses this theoretical framework to investigate domination and resistance in Afro-Brazilian music. Not surprisingly, Afro-Brazilian music was often used as resistance against the domination of white authorities. This resistance had two aspects: survival and transformation, as well as a precondition for these aspects: unity. All of these are seen as resistance because they were choices created by subordinates who refused to accept the choices offered to them.

Afro-Brazilian resistance, both within music and without, was met by a set of oppressive tactics: fines, physical punishment, relocation, imprisonment, and death. These tactics were at times successful, at times unsuccessful. They were by far most effective in situations of high surveillance and no individual rights (i.e. slavery). After emancipation in 1888, Afro-Brazilian resistance gradually gained momentum in the Black areas of Rio de Janeiro and other major cities. In the 1930s, new tactics of domination were introduced, which sought to appropriate and co-opt Afro-Brazilian culture and spaces of relative Black autonomy. This introduced new concepts which will be developed in later chapters, such as authenticity, creative resistance against authenticity, and the developments in Black consciousness that were enabled by this creative resistance.

This paper is an attempt to broaden, not refute, earlier interpretations of Afro-Brazilian music. It seeks to clearly define the terminology being used, such as domination and resistance, and shows how these concepts can be effectively applied to Afro-Brazilian music. By redefining the terms of the question, new light is shed on old questions of appropriation, authenticity, and resistance. Although this paper is not particularly combative, it provides what could be a valuable contribution to both the theory of domination and the music of Afro-Brazilians.

Introduction

Power is the central concept in any discussion of domination and resistance. Although some sociologists define power as the ability to compel, the usage in this paper has more to do with the degree of control people have over their lives, their ability to shape reality to match their desires. If power is used to compel behavior in others, it is used this way in order to shape reality according to the desires of those who are dominant. Power used to compel behavior is called coercion, and usually takes the form of either punishments or rewards.

Both punishments and rewards act to link two or more otherwise unrelated phenomena in a causal pattern. Coercion also implicitly implies a choice on the part of the subordinate person. “*If you choose to do what I want, then you will be rewarded.*” “*If you choose to do what I don’t want, then you will be punished.*” This coercive use of power must not be confused with giving another person advice and information. For example, one might tell another person that *if* they put their hand in a fire, *then* it will be burned. This is a fundamentally different kind of statement since the cause and effect are linked by nature, not intention.

A particular usage of coercive power is that of domination. Domination is an asymmetry of coercive power which is used to achieve the dominator’s goals in spite of resistance by the subordinate party. It is a contradiction to talk about domination in a context in which the subordinate is a willing participant, for one must assume that people will only engage willingly in interactions perceived to be mutually beneficial. If people engage in interactions not to their benefit, it must be due to some other motivating factor or fear of another factor, such as a punishment or reward.

This analysis of power and domination has been challenged by Gramsci’s notion of *hegemony*, referring to a brain-washing process by which people in a subordinate position are

somehow convinced that they are actually benefiting from such a situation, sometimes called a *false consciousness*.¹ The question that theories based on this model seek to answer is: Why do people in a subordinate position seem to comply so readily with the dominant socio-economic framework even when there is no obvious threat or coercion?

In his book *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, James Scott makes a distinction between the two main versions of false consciousness theory: the thick version and the thin version. He writes,

The thick version claims that a dominant ideology works its magic by persuading subordinate groups to believe actively in the values that explain and justify their own subordination. . . . The thin theory of false consciousness, on the other hand, maintains only that the dominant ideology achieves compliance by convincing subordinate groups that the social order in which they live is natural and inevitable. The thick theory claims consent; the thin theory settles for resignation.²

Scott finds the thick version wholly untenable, the thin version somewhat plausible as long as it remains very thin, but argues that both of these conceptions are ‘fundamentally wrong.’ He brings out two important points in support of this critique.

First, Scott argues that in order for an ideological hegemony to even be considered by subordinate groups, this hegemony must make some concessions by way of making promises to the subordinate group, essentially “explaining *why* a particular social order is also in their best interests.” Scott continues, “Once such promises are extended, the way is open to social conflict. How are these promises to be understood, have they been carried out, were they made in good faith, who is to enforce them? Without elaborating, it is reasonably clear that some of the most striking episodes of violent conflict have occurred between a dominant elite and a rank-and-file

mass of subordinates seeking objectives that could, in principle, be accommodated within the prevailing social order.”³

The sort of ‘reformism’ that Scott is talking about is quite common, and can often lead to more revolutionary goals. Scott points out the case of the Russian revolution of 1905 and notes that the driving forces behind the revolution were reformist goals of “an eight-hour day, an end to piecework, a minimum wage, politeness from management, and cooking and toilet facilities.”⁴ By working toward these reformist goals workers became radicalized and empowered. When they were frustrated by the Tsar, most notably in ‘Bloody Sunday’ when the Tsar’s troops opened fire on them as they demonstrated, they became disillusioned with the system and sought alternatives that would meet their needs. A similar process happened in Brazil in the 1970s, when a generation of educated Afro-Brazilians was frustrated in its attempt to get good jobs. This frustration led a large number of them to become painfully aware of the racism still present in Brazil and radicalized an entire generation into working against the institutionalized racism rampant in Brazil.

The second reason that Scott believes that theories of false consciousness are fundamentally wrong is because they often take people’s expressed feelings at face value. Simply because a person in a subordinate position tells their dominator that they are “Happy to have such a kind master” does not mean that it is necessarily true. People in marginal positions of life have a great deal of incentive to encourage the illusion that they are happy in their subordination, for by doing so they put their dominators off guard and are granted greater autonomy. Because both the dominant and subordinate groups have reasons to reinforce complacent appearances, it is easy to misunderstand the relationship entirely and take this seeming complacency at face value.

If one accepts Scott's argument that subordinate people are not 'duped' into thinking that the relationship is in their own best interest, then one must examine the ways in which people do respond to domination. Undoubtedly, there are some people who simply accept their subordinate position as the only viable option. The overwhelming majority of people, however, respond to domination with resistance in one way or another.

The heart of this paper is the struggle between domination and resistance within the contested terrain of Brazilian music. This struggle is about power, choices, and creativity. In this struggle, the dominator seeks to limit the choices that the subordinate person can reasonably choose. Many dominators attempt to take this one step further and try to limit the choices that the subordinate person can even imagine. Thus, a slave-owner might attempt to force someone enslaved to choose between death, torture, and excruciating work. If the enslaved person actually believes these are the only viable choices, then work will be the most common choice.

However, there is a great deal of evidence that dominated and enslaved people do not see the choices presented to them as the only viable options, and certainly not as the only conceivable options. How many times has a subordinate person, facing humiliation from their supervisor, imagined what it would be like if the tables were turned? And yet, if in the sort of precarious position that most peasants, servants, employees, and slaves occupy, they would be forced to stifle their own anger or face punishment. The inner desire to turn the tables, to imagine a new reality, often cannot be expressed directly.

The terminology introduced by James Scott is very useful in the analysis of these sorts of situations. Scott distinguishes between what he calls the 'public transcript' and the 'hidden transcript'. The public transcript consists of the interactions that take place under the observation of people in a dominant position. The hidden transcript is the reverse: interactions

that take place beyond the observation of those dominant, that take place 'offstage'. Since this hidden transcript is usually not directly observable, it becomes somewhat of an epistemological problem. Fortunately, glimpses of the hidden transcript are visible in the stories of people who were formerly censored in their speech but now have more freedom. These glimpses are also found whenever the hidden transcript makes its way into the public transcript; a phenomenon that Scott argues convincingly is quite common.

If domination refers to the coercive limiting of choices, then the creation of new choices constitutes resistance. Domination and resistance become an active struggle over the power to choose, the power to gain control over one's life. The people who dominate others or resist domination take on the roles of dominator or resister, but the degree to which these roles are clearly defined depends on the asymmetry of power in their relationship. In situations of enslavement, serfdom, sweatshop labor, or slave wages the balance of power is almost completely asymmetrical. In less polarized situations, the roles of dominator and resister are more fluid.

For example, consider an employer who offers a job to a worker. They enter into an agreement stipulating certain conditions of work and payment. Yet, if unemployment is high, the worker cannot easily afford to quit the job, and the employer wields the balance of power. The employer could pressure the worker to work overtime, accept abuse, or deal with harassment which was not a part of the original terms of service. The employer uses coercion to limit the worker's choices to either (1) work, payment, and a series of indignities or (2) unemployment and poverty.

The situation could theoretically be reversed, for example if unemployment was low and finding good workers was difficult. Here the balance of power lies with the worker. The

employer and worker may initially agree on a mutually beneficial contract, but this worker might then pressure the employer for a raise. In this case the worker is seeking to limit the choices of the employer to (1) pay the worker more money and receive work, or (2) the worker will quit and the employer will be in trouble. Thus, the roles of dominator and resister are subject to changes in circumstances and context. They are roles that people take on with certain actions, and only become identities when these actions begin to define the actors themselves.

In Brazil, whites and blacks interacted in contexts of both greater and lesser power asymmetry. To varying extents, whites possessed the balance of power and sought to use that power to restrict the choices of Afro-Brazilians. This domination was resisted by the creation of new choices, new possibilities, by Afro-Brazilians. This creativity was revealed by two aspects of resistance, both of which were predicated upon a third. At a general level, Afro-Brazilian resistance involved both the struggle for survival (including physical, mental, and spiritual) and for hope for future transformation. These two aspects of resistance, survival and transformation, were simultaneously present in many acts of resistance.

In addition, these aspects were conditional on a third factor: unity. Without some degree of unity or solidarity among those who faced domination, resistance was virtually hopeless. Among blacks in Brazil, solidarity grew out of the creation of social spaces of relative autonomy. Within these spaces, blacks could voice their angers, be safe from outside scrutiny, reconnect to their cultural heritage, and reconstruct the reality in which they existed. Music was of fundamental importance in this process, for its inclusive nature created bonds of solidarity within Afro-Brazilian communities and allowed for creative transformations of the world that surrounded them. Music facilitated their struggles for survival, transformation, and solidarity.

Because music was a potent tool of resistance, it was initially faced with severe

repression. In instances where repression did not work, authorities attempted to co-opt and appropriate the music, to strip it of its potential for resistance. This tactic was used with frequency during the 1930s, when Afro-Brazilian music was nationalized and became a symbol of *brasilidade* (Brazilianness). Appropriation and repression were tactics used to prevent music of resistance within the hidden transcript of Afro-Brazilian society from entering into the public transcript. In some cases it was successful, in other cases it was not. The results of the struggle between domination and repression were not preordained but arose from specific tactics employed by the participants involved.

Coinciding with this period of appropriation in Brazil (1930-1945) was the construction of different concepts of authenticity. These conceptions were not based on creativity or resistance, but rather on a static set of social, economic, racial, and musical factors. The musics considered to be 'authentic' were usually the samba songs of poor illiterate blacks living in the shanty-towns of Rio de Janeiro, or sometimes the rural folk songs of the northeast. These static conceptions were poorly equipped to deal with authoritarian domination, for they had the seeds of domination within them. As soon as static definitions of 'authentic' were formulated, certain alternatives became 'inauthentic' and freedom for creative resistance was denied.

Between 1958 and 1968, the barriers placed on musical creativity in Brazil were effectively demolished. Waves of musical innovation, such as bossa nova and *tropicália*, defied conceptions of 'authentic' Brazilian music and opened up room for creativity and innovation. It also created a good deal of space for different conceptions of identity and a more dynamic sense of authenticity.

This space created by *tropicália* sparked the growth of Black consciousness in Brazil. In the 1970s, Afro-Brazilians began to reject earlier notions of identity that arose from Brazilian

nationalism and embraced an identity based on racial heritage. This growth of Black consciousness was in part a response to the rising sense of solidarity with Black liberation struggles in the United States, Africa, and elsewhere. Music was an essential part of this process, for Black music became the most important factor in the cultural unification of blacks in Africa and the diaspora. Another part of this growth in consciousness resulted from Afro-Brazilians recognizing the racism and domination existent in Brazil. Music was used to address these issues locally as well, and in some cases musical organizations became directly involved in community concerns. As Black resistance within the hidden transcript penetrated into national and international discourses, this resistance made a transition from a creative re-imagining of the world to an explicit challenge of dominant power structures. The rise of the *blocos afro* (African blocs) is a part of this challenge, and many groups today address political and social needs both directly and through their music.

This paper follows the struggle between domination and resistance within Afro-Brazilian cultural spaces and music, focusing on three time periods: slavery (1530-1888, Chapters 1-5), the Vargas regime (1930-1945, Chapters 6-8), and the military dictatorship (1964-1985, Chapters 9-11). While some degree of continuity in historical analysis between these periods is necessary, these three periods are emphasized because they mark turning points in this struggle. The purpose of this paper then becomes a dual one: (1) to increase understanding of Afro-Brazilian music by examining it through this theory of domination and resistance and (2) to make a contribution to the existing theories of domination and resistance by learning from the struggle of Afro-Brazilian music.

Chapter 1 — Cultural Collisions Between the Old and New World

Mutual Influences

Between the second century B.C.E. and the first century C.E. the Roman army invaded the land they called Lusitania, known today as Portugal. Rome's cultural legacy is felt in the Portuguese linguistic structure, the physical infrastructure left behind, in the religion, and in the music. Elements of Portuguese culture, such as Carnival, date back to the pre-Christian Roman holiday of Lupercalia, which was celebrated on the 15th of February in honor of the god Pan.⁵ By the sixth and seventh centuries Roman military power was on the wane, and in 711 C.E. Muslim North Africans known as Moors crossed the Straits of Gibraltar and began their invasion of the Iberian Peninsula. This invasion was resisted by the Christians living in western Iberia, descendants of the Roman conquerors and ancestors of the Portuguese. The Moors came as far north as the Douro River, where they were finally stopped. Between the middle of the eighth century and 1250 the Christians in the north of Portugal fought numerous battles with the Muslims, some more successful than others. Territory was gained and lost, and a gradual process of transculturation occurred in which scientific knowledge, language, art, music, and dance interpenetrated the two cultures.

In terms of cultural collisions in the Old World, the transculturation that occurred between the Moors and the Portuguese is only half the story. The other half is the set of interactions between the Moors and the sub-Saharan Africans of the savannah and forest regions in West Africa. These interactions date back thousands of years, in spite of the difficulties in crossing the formidable Sahara. Thousands of years ago, the Sahara was not a desert. Prior to 8,000 B.C.E. it was considerably wetter, and hosted flora and fauna which now characterize the West African savannah region known as the Sahel.⁶ Between 8,000 B.C.E. and 2000 B.C.E. the

Sahara gradually turned into a desert and the Caucasoids and the Blacks, who had lived there together, split apart. The Blacks headed south into West Africa and the Caucasoids north, settling in North Africa and becoming known to Europe as the Moors.

Yet even as a desert, the Sahara was never impassable, particularly after the introduction of the camel from Arabia. By 1,000 C.E., camel caravans had become quite common across the Sahara, facilitating a cultural exchange between West Africa and North Africa. Communications and cultural exchange revolved around the flow of gold from the forest region of West Africa into the Sahel, across the Sahara, into North Africa, and eventually into Europe. Control of this trade flow allowed the West African empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai to flourish in West Africa between 1000 C.E. and 1500 C.E., a golden era for West Africa during the Dark Ages of Europe.

In terms of music, it is clear that the Arabian influence on the southern part of Portugal and Spain was quite substantial. Peter Fryer points out that the ‘duelling song’ in Portugal, known as the *canto a atirar* (shooting song), probably comes from the Arab ‘literary debates’ known as *munazarat*, in which “two or more beings, living or inanimate, compete for the honour of which of them has the best qualities.”⁷ In his work tracing the different musical influences on Brazil, John Storm Roberts notes the legacy of drumming left by the Arabs in Portugal. He writes, “. . . the presence in Brazilian *national* music of so much percussion must derive from the fact that Portuguese music also quite regularly uses drums, tambourines, and triangles—a legacy, along with some of the rhythms, of the Arab period.”⁸

Indeed, some have argued that the Asian and Arabian influence on European music has been the dominant influence, with Greek and Roman music merely incidental. According to Curt Sachs,

Nearly all the musical instruments of medieval Europe came from Asia, either from the southeast through Byzantium, or from the Islamic empire through North Africa, or from the northeast along the Baltic Coast. The direct heritage from Greece and Rome seems to have been rather insignificant, and the lyre is the only instrument that might possibly be considered European in origin.⁹

African music was also affected during its extended contact with the Arabian world. Kwabena Nketia, one of the pioneers of African musicology, identifies four regions of Africa which were most in contact with Islamic culture, two of which are relevant for our study: eastern Africa, where “Arab traders were active and penetrated the interior as far as the Congo,”¹⁰ and the savannah belt of West Africa which had extensive connections to Muslim North Africa. Nketia notes that in some cases, the Islamicization was so great that “the potentates of such states adopted the regalia of sultans, and some Arabic musical instruments, particularly aerophones and drums, became a regular feature of their court music.”¹¹ However, Nketia suggests that in the majority of cases the African people would incorporate elements of Arabian music that they found appealing, particularly new instruments, without changing the fundamental characteristics of their music. Nketia writes, “The more important aspect of Arabic style, the system of melodic and rhythmic modes, does not seem to have been generally adopted, for this would have entirely changed the character of the music of those societies.”¹² Nor did musical influences merely flow in one direction, as is evidenced by the use of the African drum *ganga* in North Africa.¹³

Portuguese Independence, Exploration, and Conquest

The history of Brazil did not begin with its discovery by the Portuguese, but was a

continuation of historical processes that had begun hundreds of years earlier. Since the Portuguese instigated both their encounters with native Brazilians and their encounters with Africans, it is important to begin with some historical background of Portugal.

By 1250, the earldom of Portugal in north-western Iberia had driven out the Moors and began to consolidate its borders. Portugal's main threat was from the Spanish kingdom of Castille, which was battling the Moors from Spain but still had designs on uniting all of Iberia. After a period of internal conflict in Portugal, war broke out with the kingdom of Castile (1295-1297). This was followed by a series of political intrigues and wars that did not fully end until a peace treaty was signed in 1432. During this period of war, the bourgeoisie and the craftsmen instigated a revolution, and in 1385 overthrew the landed aristocracy and put the Master of Avis, dubbed John I, on the throne.¹⁴

By 1385, Portugal was finally able to look beyond its own borders. A series of technological advances made sea exploration possible, and favorable social, political, and economic developments made it desirable. In terms of technology, the magnetic compass had been in use in the Mediterranean as early as the late 12th century, possibly having originated in China and crossing through the Arabian empire. Other advances included the portolan chart, which facilitated compass navigation over long voyages, and the use of the triangular lateen sail, which allowed ships to sail against the wind. All of these advances came together in the caravel, a ship of the early fifteenth century which was ideally suited to long distance exploration.¹⁵

Explorations by others also stimulated Portugal to explore by sea. In the 13th and early 14th centuries, the Genoese and others rediscovered the Canary Islands off the coast of West Africa, known to the Romans as 'The Fortunate Isles.'¹⁶ These discoveries prompted the Portuguese to engage in further, more extensive, explorations of the Atlantic coast. They were

well situated geographically to do so, for they were over 600 miles closer to Africa than the northern European ports.¹⁷ Spain was still quite occupied with the Moors in Granada, and England and France were battling each other in the Hundred Years War. Because Portugal was at peace, it was able to take advantage of the technological advances in sea-faring in a way that other European nations could not.

Portugal also had ample motivation to explore beyond its borders. Money in Europe in the fifteenth century was virtually synonymous with precious metals, particularly gold. Europe's supply of gold in the fifteenth century came predominantly from the forest region of West Africa, through a series of middle-men. The desire to trade for gold directly was both powerful and compelling. However, the most important reason for expansion was ideological. It had to do with the success of the *Reconquista* (Reconquest) itself, the success of Portugal's struggle against the Arabs. As Bakewell points out, much of the drive which pushed the Portuguese into North Africa was an extension of the momentum of the *Reconquista*, with an eventual goal of the reconquest of Jerusalem itself.¹⁸

In 1415, Portugal attacked Ceuta, Morocco. This was the first step to more expansive plans in Morocco. Soon after, the son of John I prepared a second campaign, against Tangiers, but was unsuccessful. At the same time as these campaigns against Morocco, a different son of John I, Prince Henry the Navigator, sent out a number of seafaring expeditions to discover new lands in Africa. In the 1420s, the Portuguese began to settle in the uninhabited Madeira islands. By 1427, they had located the Azores. Finally, in 1434, a captain sent by Prince Henry rounded Cape Bojador (part of the African coast opposite the Canary Islands) and continued the exploration of Africa.¹⁹

In 1441, a Portuguese captain named Antão Gonçalves enslaved two Africans from

present day Mauritania and brought them back to Portugal.²⁰ Although this was the first incident of Europeans enslaving Africans, it was not the first occurrence of slavery in the Atlantic voyages. As early as 1342 people of the Canary Islands, known as Guanches, were enslaved and brought back to Iberia. The Guanches were also brought to Madeira and had begun to make that island suitable for agriculture, particularly for sugar. As Crosby says, “The Atlantic slave trade, which we always think of as exclusively black, was in its very earliest beginnings largely white or, to be more precise as to complexion, ‘olive-colored . . . the color of sunburned peasants,’ that is, the color of the people of the Canary Islands.”²¹ It is worth noting that even the first attempts to enslave Guanches were fiercely resisted. The Guanches successfully defended themselves against at least four major assaults by Portugal between 1415 and 1466, and gradually succumbed to Spain only after repelling numerous major assaults and countless minor attacks. The last battle of the Guanches did not come until 1496, when the last of the Guanches surrendered.²²

The shortage of labor in Europe, due in part to the Black Plague, strongly affected the manner in which colonization took place. The Portuguese needed more labor to work in the fields of Madeira as well as back in Portugal. They also did not have the manpower to be able to colonize West Africa, so instead they set up trading posts along the coast with the intention of enslaving Africans and acquiring gold.

At first the Portuguese attempted to grow a mixture of crops on their new island possessions, but it wasn't until sugar cane was introduced in the early 1450s that these islands became truly profitable. Around this time, the Portuguese also discovered the islands of Cape Verde. These, the Madeiras, and the Azores became the home of the Portuguese sugar experiment. Sugar growing was only found to be successful in Madeira, and by 1455 Madeira

was exporting 70,000 kilos of sugar. Bakewell writes that “These were the first plantations – the first demonstration that the tropics and the semi-tropics could provide, cheaply and abundantly, foodstuffs for which Europeans had an immense appetite but could produce locally only with great effort and cost.”²³ These plantations were important precedents for the plantations which would later be used in Brazil. To govern these islands, the Portuguese used a system of captaincies, a clear forerunner of the style of government that would later be used in Brazil.

Between 1450 and 1488, Portugal gradually extended its reach south along the African coast line. Although the history of the Portuguese exploration of Africa is critical to understanding the origins of Brazilian domination and resistance, it will be discuss in depth later. Instead, attention must be turned to Spain. While the Portuguese were occupied with exploration, Spain was in the process of unification. This was completed in 1479, when Catherine of Castille and Ferdinand of Aragon (who had wed in 1469) finally sat on the thrones of their respective kingdoms and united Christian Iberia east of Portugal. Once united, they turned their energies toward the defeat of the Moorish kingdom of Granada in the south. Ferdinand and Isabella amassed an enormous army of over 60,000 soldiers and drove out the Moors by 1492.

While Spain was busy fighting Granada, Portugal came within sight of a new goal: a passage around Africa to India. At some point, the Portuguese search for slaves and gold transformed into an eagerness to bypass the Arabian middlemen and establish a direct trade route with India, famed for its silks, spices, and other luxuries. In 1488, Bartolomeu Dias finally rounded the southern tip of Africa, although it was not until ten years later that Vasco de Gama was able to actually reach India.

In 1492, Christopher Columbus successful sailed to the Americas and returned to Europe.

In 1494, Spain and Portugal signed the Treaty of Tordesillas, an agreement to divide the world along a meridian 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands. Spain was granted the right to colonize all territories west of the line, Portugal east of that line. With this treaty, Spain gained access to all known territory in the Americas, for the discoveries of Columbus were well west of the line. Portugal gained rights to the entire continent of Africa, as well as ample room to maneuver their ships around the southern tip of Africa. There is also some speculation that Portugal was aware that part of the Americas lay east of the line, namely Brazil. If Portugal had sighted Brazil between 1492 and 1494, it may have influenced the exact drawing of the Line of Tordesillas.

In 1497, Vasco da Gama set sail from Portugal, and in 1498 he became the first European to sail around Africa to India and back, laden with silks and spices. The Portuguese king, Manuel I, immediately authorized another expedition to repeat Vasco da Gama's success, and it was during this second trip that Brazil's known history began.

Portuguese in Brazil

The wind currents in the Atlantic circulate the ocean in two enormous vortices, a clockwise spiral in the Northern hemisphere and a counter-clockwise spiral in the Southern. In the middle of these spirals lay what sailors called 'the doldrums': vast stretches of sea in which there are few prevailing winds. If a ship is accidentally blown into these it can mean the death of the crew by dehydration or starvation (see Map 2, p. 146)

Pedro Alvares Cabral left Portugal on March 9, 1500, in an attempt to follow up on Vasco da Gama's success. Cabral sought to sail around the tip of Africa, but did not want to fight the winds which blew north along the coast of Africa. Instead he sailed west from Cape

Verde with the intention of circling counter-clockwise to follow the prevailing winds. Instead, he sighted a tall mountain which later came to be known as Mount Pascual in the Brazilian state of Bahia. He decided to split his fleet and send some ships back to Portugal with word of the discovery, while he continued on with the remaining ships to India.²⁴

The Portuguese did not know whether they had discovered an island in the ocean or part of a larger continent, so in 1501 a fleet of three ships left Portugal to explore the new lands, dubbed 'Vera Cruz' (Island of the Cross). On this expedition was Amerigo Vespucci, a Florentine merchant and geographer who was employed to survey the lands that they found. His accounts were the first indications that the Portuguese had discovered an entire continent. Vespucci's writings evoked such strong excitement in Spain and Portugal that the continents of north and south America were eventually named after him.

In addition to geographical knowledge, this second voyage encountered an abundance of brazilwood, a red wood that was much in demand in Europe at the time. Beginning in 1506, the Portuguese Crown decided to lease Brazil to a number of merchants, who began stripping the land of its brazilwood and giving a share of their profits to the Portuguese crown. This established a precedent that even today haunts Brazil: official sanction of the short-term exploitation of natural resources with little thought to long run consequences. Brazilwood was lumped together with parrots, slaves, and mestizos as the first 'products' of Brazilian colonization.

In their exploration of Brazil, the Portuguese also encountered a number of natives who lived in coastal areas. We are able to glimpse the impression that the Amerindians first made on the Portuguese by the writings of Pedro Vaz de Caminha in a letter to King Manuel:

They seem to me to be people of such innocence that, if we could understand them and they us,

they would soon become Christians, because they do not seem to have or to understand any form of religion. . . For it is certain that this people is good and of pure simplicity, and there can easily be stamped upon them whatever belief we wish to give them. And furthermore, Our Lord gave them fine bodies and good faces as to good men, and He who brought us here, I believe, did not do so without purpose . . . there were among them three or four girls, very young and very pretty, with very dark hair, long over the shoulders, and their privy parts so high, so closed and so free from hair that we felt no shame in looking hard at them. . . .²⁵

The Portuguese had lived in close proximity with Moorish women for centuries, during which they came to identify the quintessential female beauty as a woman with dark hair, ‘exotic’ eyes, light brown skin, and a certain seductive sexual immodesty. Regardless of the realism of this stereotype, when Portuguese sailors first encountered Amerindian women of Brazil the Portuguese saw in these women the same sexual ideal from before. Later, as the Amerindian population dwindled and the African population grew in Brazil, this same sexual ideal would focus its fascination on women of mixed race, called *mulattas*.

The initial fascination and sexual obsession of the Portuguese towards the Amerindian women resulted in tragic consequences. A few years after discovery, the Portuguese Crown made a decision to open Brazil to all who ventured to take the risk, provided that they were willing to pay one fifth of their profits to the Crown. In 1511, a ship called the *Bretoa* sailed to Brazil and returned to Portugal in July with forty slaves, most of whom were women.²⁶ This was the result of the sexual obsession of the Portuguese: enslavement of women. Although the words talk about innocence, attraction, and the like, the actions of the Portuguese towards Amerindian and African women during slavery were almost always dominated by rape and enslavement.

There were many different groups of Amerindians living along the coast of Brazil when the Portuguese arrived, including the Tupi, Guarani, Goitacá, Aimoré, and the Tremembé. There

was little central organization among these people, but there were definitely loose alliances and periodic battles fought. The Portuguese were able to capitalize on this political fragmentation by making alliances with the Tupi, warding off attacks from more hostile natives. Historian Boris Fausto writes, “Without Tupi allies, the town of São Paulo de Piratininga (today the capital of São Paulo state) would have been conquered by the Tamoio Indians during its first years of existence. This is not to say that Indians did not ferociously resist the colonists, especially when the latter made attempts to enslave them. One exceptional form of resistance amounted to self-isolation, which they achieved by constant migration toward poorer regions.” He continues, “all in all, the word ‘catastrophe’ is the most appropriate for describing the fate of the Amerindian population. Millions of Indians lived in Brazil at the time of conquest, and only some 270,000 are with us today.”²⁷

For the first thirty five years of Portuguese contact with Brazil, the main concern of the Portuguese was the extraction of brazilwood, a sturdy red wood used to make dye, furniture, and ships. In order to obtain this wood, the Portuguese bartered with the natives of Brazil and exchanged cloth, knives, and other trinkets. Towards the end of this period, in the 1520s, the Portuguese began to contend with the French, who also seemed intent on obtaining the valuable brazilwood. This led to a decision in 1533 to set up a number of hereditary captaincies in Brazil which roughly correspond to the more recent states of modern Brazil. These captaincies would establish a wholly new pattern of economic relations in Brazil, gradually moving Portuguese economic interests from barter to agriculture and slavery.

The growing of crops demanded vastly more labor than the felling of trees. As Alexander Marchant writes, the Portuguese need, “exaggerated by their general want of reserves of capital and men, forced them to demand from the Indians more labor and services than earlier

Portuguese had obtained by barter. Enslavement followed on many occasions when the barter relation became inadequate. . . .”²⁸

It was in 1533 that a Portuguese noble, Martim Afonso, introduced sugar cane into the Brazilian economy. This was to play a crucial role in Brazil’s subsequent history. It is also reported that he brought a number of Black slaves to Brazil to work on the sugar plantations in 1535, but there is no direct evidence to support this.²⁹ It was no coincidence that it was São Vicente and Pernambuco, the captaincies where sugar plantations became widespread, which were most successful.

Enslavement: Amerindians and Africans

Because of the failure of the other captaincies (the ones which did not rely on sugar), internal dissension, and numerous Amerindian attacks, in 1549 the Portuguese Crown decided to send Tomé de Sousa to Brazil as its first royal governor. Sousa’s mission was centered around one purpose: to extract wealth from Brazil. To this end, he set up large scale landowning in a plantation style, oriented around a cash crop monoculture. He addressed the labor shortage by enslaving Amerindians and Africans on a vastly greater scale. Amerindian slaves were much cheaper to acquire than Africans, so they were much more prominent at first on plantations. A Jesuit in 1583 wrote: “The Portuguese go into the sertão [an arid hinterland in the northeast of Brazil] and deceive these people. They say that if they go with them to the coast, life there will be just like it is in the backlands, but they will be neighbors with the Portuguese. The Indians, believing this is true, come away with them, and the Portuguese, lest the Indians change their minds, destroy their gardens. And thus they bring them. Once they get to the sea they divide them up. Some take the wives, some the husbands, some the children. They sell them all.”³⁰

As disease decimated the Amerindian populations and harsh work took its toll, the Portuguese found the quantity of Amerindian slaves to be insufficient. The same Jesuit mentioned earlier continued: “Now go take a look at Bahia’s farms and sugar plantations. You will find them full of negroes from Guiné, but with very few natives. And if you ask about all the natives, people will say they died.”³¹

In the 1570s, the Portuguese crown began to encourage the enslavement of Africans for plantation work in Brazil. The Portuguese trade route to India was its most lucrative source of income in those days, and ships along the voyage would make stops in Guinea, Angola, the Kongo and Mozambique along the way to and from India (see Map 2).

Throughout the 1570s and 1580s, both Amerindians and Africans existed on the plantations side by side. This shared experience created the first links between natives and blacks in Brazil. There would certainly be times where these two peoples would be antagonistic, played one off the other by the Portuguese, but the ways in which peoples of such different cultures found a common ground in their shared oppression by the Portuguese shows the power of slavery in creating a unified culture of resistance.

The native Brazilians did not survive very long on the Portuguese plantations, and by the late sixteenth century the fields were dominated by enslaved Africans. The history of the enslavement of African peoples is a history of suffering, but it must be dealt with in order to begin to understand the origins of Brazilian resistance.

Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Portuguese gradually explored the African coast, establishing fortresses along the way. The first Portuguese fort, Elmina, was built in present day Ghana, then known as Mina or the ‘Gold Coast’. This fort, and others like it, was designed to repel attack from other Europeans. Although initially the purpose of Elmina and the

other forts nearby was to trade for gold in the forest region, they soon became useful for the enslavement of Africans. Although the African kingdoms along the coast of the Gulf of Guinea were initially friendly to the Europeans, for many kingdoms this friendship turned into resentment when the Portuguese began to demand slaves instead of gold. In his book *A History of Africa*, J.D. Fage notes that “as early as 1576, the Ga king (located in present day Ghana) must have decided that the disadvantages of having such over-mighty subjects on his territory outweighed the commercial gains. The Portuguese fort at Accra was destroyed, and for the next half-century there was very little commercial intercourse between the Ga and any Europeans.”³²

Another example of African resistance towards the slave trade can be found in the ancient kingdom of Benin (located in present day Nigeria), who simply disregarded the Portuguese presence. The Portuguese built a trading post there in 1487, but abandoned it by 1507 because it was not working to their satisfactions. J.D. Fage writes, “the explanation of this seems to have been that the centralized kingdom of Benin would only allow trade with the Portuguese on its own terms. Although it possessed many slaves, and at the time was capturing numerous prisoners of war, its king seems to have been reluctant to supply either the quantity or the quality of slaves that the Portuguese wanted. By 1516, indeed, the latter were virtually excluded from buying male slaves.”³³

In 1485, the Portuguese began to colonize the islands in the Gulf of Guinea, including São Tome. These islands were used as way-stations for the passage of slaves across the Atlantic and also set up as sugar-plantations with great success. Later, when the sugar focus moved from Madeira and São Tome to Brazil, many of the plantation owners in São Tome moved to Brazil.

It was from São Tome that the Portuguese became interested in Kongo, an African kingdom south of the Congo river. Fage notes that Kongo was particularly attractive because it

was somewhat organized but not so centralized that it might put up heavy resistance to Portuguese ventures. At first, the Portuguese were given a warm welcome by the African leaders of Kongo. This was not to last. Even if the Portuguese rulers wanted to establish a peaceful and monopolistic trade relation with Kongo, the slave-owners of São Tome simply wanted to acquire as many slaves as they could. In this conflict of interests, time and distance were critical factors, and São Tome, with its proximity, gained control. Fage writes that “by the second quarter of the sixteenth century, about a third of all slaves being taken out of Africa by the Portuguese were coming from the Congo region.”³⁴

The king of Kongo saw the dangers of the situation and tried to stop it, to “expel all Europeans except priests and teachers.”³⁵ This was extraordinarily difficult. By this time, the market for enslaved Africans had caused several of the Bakongo chiefs to conduct raids against each other so that they could buy guns and perpetuate more violence on one another. Those who chose not to participate in capturing and enslaving their neighbors were the victims of those who did. By 1572, the king of the Kongo managed to restore control over his kingdom, but Portuguese attention merely shifted further south to the kingdom of *Ngola* (present-day Angola). In 1571, the Portuguese Crown authorized a nobleman to directly colonize Angola, and by 1575-76 a base was established in Luanda. A century of warfare followed, after which local sovereignty was lost and a colonial system was put in place.

Yet even with forts along the coasts of the Gold Coast, Angola, and Mozambique, as well as occupation of São Tome and Cape Verde, the Portuguese were more interested in controlling the existent patterns of trade and profiting from them than in directly colonizing Africa. Portuguese did not have enough people to effectively occupy the continent, and their lack of immunity to tropical diseases made occupation extremely difficult. Nevertheless, the impact of

the slave trade begun by the Portuguese was beyond comprehension, particularly as it accelerated in the 1600s.

Chapter Two — Domination: The Impact of Enslavement

A full discussion of the effects of slavery on the individuals and societies involved is well beyond the scope of this work. Even so, an understanding of the ways in which the institution of slavery dominated those enslaved individuals is essential. Just as the theoretical conceptions of domination and resistance are co-dependant, Afro-Brazilian resistance is intrinsically connected to their enslavement. For this reason, any discussion of Afro-Brazilian resistance must begin with a discussion of African enslavement. While the previous discussion considered some of the societal responses of resistance in Africa, this discussion must be centered on individual experiences. In the process of enslavement, the cultural and social identities of Africans were ripped apart, and it was at an individual level that Afro-Brazilians worked to reconstruct their identities. While there are few firsthand accounts written by Africans or Afro-Brazilians, much valuable information is revealed from the writings of travelers, historians, and abolitionists of the time.^a

Europeans enslaved Africans using two different approaches: trading and kidnapping. There was already an indigenous African system of slavery based on taking prisoners in wars or punishing criminals. This was widespread in Africa at the time, but was vastly different from European colonial enslavement. The indigenous system of slavery never treated people as animals, but gave them a recognizable place in society. The Portuguese took advantage of this system, and frequently bartered for slaves that had been taken captive. Although some Africans traded with the Europeans and sold other Africans into slavery, there is little doubt that few of

^a For a good translation and compilation of primary source document regarding the slave trade to Brazil, see Robert Conrad's book, *Children of God's Fire: A Documentary History of Black Slavery in Brazil*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1983.

them had any idea what the consequences of those actions were.

However, European slave-traders took the majority of the African captives by force, not by barter. Much of this kidnapping was perpetrated by Europeans who roamed the coastal areas. An anonymous letter, written in 1612 to the King of Spain, explains that these kidnapers “collect as many pieces [*peças*]^b as they can, sometimes through deception, at other times through violence, capturing them in ambushes aided by other local people who share in the profits.”³⁶ Some of the enslavement was perpetrated by Africans seduced by the lure of the European goods, particularly guns, that they could get in exchange for slaves. Sometimes Africans, especially children, were tricked into selling themselves or others they knew into slavery for virtually nothing. The anonymous author estimated that only one-tenth of the slave trade was made up of those ‘justly enslaved.’³⁷

Once enslaved, captives were chained together and forced to follow their captors for days or weeks. They were given little food, no shelter, and were beaten or killed if they fell behind. Once they reached a fort they were stuffed in a dungeon with only a tiny opening for light, with sea-water thrown in on occasion to wash away some of the filth. When people became sick, they infected those around them, and those who died were tossed in the sea. By this point, they also had been branded at least twice, and one more branding would follow. According to an account in 1793 by a Portuguese physician who traveled to central Africa, those enslaved were branded first by the

backlander who enslaved them, so that they can be recognized in case they run away. And when they reach a port . . . they are branded on the right breast with the coat of arms of the king and nation, of whom they have become vassals and under whom they will live subject to slavery. This mark is made with a hot silver instrument in the act of paying the king’s duties. . . . They are

^b the Portuguese word *peças*, or pieces, was used to refer to enslaved Africans

made to bear one more brand mark. This one is ordered by their private master, under whose name they are transported to Brazil, and it is put either on the left breast or on the arm, also so that they may be recognized if they should run away. . . .³⁸

The same physician continues, “In this miserable and deprived condition the terrified slaves remain for weeks and months, and the great number of them who die is unspeakable. With some ten or twelve thousand arriving in Luanda each year, it often happens that only six or seven thousand are finally transported to Brazil. . . .”³⁹ He goes on to describe the tortuous ‘Middle Passage,’ the journey by sea from the coast of Africa to the coast of Brazil. He writes, “there is hardly enough room to draw a breath. No air can reach them, except through the hatch gratings and through some square skylights so tiny that not even a head could pass through them. . . .” He continues, “the slaves are afflicted with a very short ration of water, of poor quality and lukewarm because of the climate – hardly enough to water their mouths. The suffering that this causes is extraordinary, and their dryness and thirst cause epidemics which, beginning with one person, soon spread to others. Thus, after only a few days at sea, they start to throw the slaves into the ocean.”⁴⁰

The torture continued even after the enslaved Africans got off the ship. They reached Brazil naked, starving and sick, only to be force fed by their captors, to be ‘fattened’ for sale. Brazilian historian Luiz Edmundo da Costa wrote, “The poor creatures who survived the journey, disembarked hardly able to stand, stumbling along as in a trance covered with sores and vermin, and looking like emaciated corpses.” He continued, “Completely nude, lying on straw mats or squatting on the bare dirt floors, the wan and ghastly looking blacks watched the overseer fearfully as he strode to and fro, swinging his whip, made of strips of rawhide, each tipped with an iron ring. Servants continually passed around bowls of cooked meal, bananas,

oranges, and other native fruit, and great pots of water. The torments of the ‘fattening’ had begun. The poor creatures were forced to eat continually, to stuff themselves unmercifully, so as to gain the necessary weight.”⁴¹

Once in Brazil, life for those enslaved was not much easier. Enslaved Afro-Brazilians were worked brutally hard, given little or no clothing to wear as protection against the tropical sun, and were poorly fed in terms of calories and nutrition. The life of an enslaved Afro-Brazilian could rightly be described as a ‘hell on earth’. Certainly, some slave-owners provided more in the way of physical care than others, but the overwhelming experience of those enslaved in Brazil was one of incredible suffering. Robert Conrad notes that “according to one early-eighteenth-century source, the average young African survived hardly more than twelve years. A century later, an observer judged the annual mortality of African-born slaves at about 10 percent. . .” The causes of these frightening death rates are not surprising. Conrad writes, “On many plantations, the hygiene, food, clothing, housing, and medical care were inadequate, and punishment and labor were often more than slaves could bear. All these factors, along with excessive use of rum, shortened their lives.”⁴²

Stuart Schwartz notes that “Added to the rigors inherent in the system of sugar production and to occasional acts of individual cruelty, slaves also suffered from a planned policy of punishment and terror as a means of control. Plantation owners believed that only by severity could work be accomplished and discipline maintained, especially when the ratio in the fields was often forty slaves to one white sharecropper or overseer.”⁴³

Due to the high mortality rate, Africans were constantly being imported by Brazilian slave-owners. Conrad writes, “The effects of disease, punishment, excessive work, desertion, rebellion, manumission, a low ratio of females to males, and small regard for the lives of

unproductive children caused a perennial population deficit which, almost from the beginning of Brazilian history, was compensated for by the importation of new Africans. Cheap and abundant slaves resulted in waste and neglect; and waste, neglect, and harsh environments brought death and a constant need for new Africans.”⁴⁴

A second consequence of slavery’s brutality, more relevant for this discussion, was the constant psychological trauma faced by those enslaved in the form of surveillance, verbal abuse, beatings, brandings, humiliations, and feelings of helplessness. In the words of James Scott, the domination of the slave-owners acted to deny slaves and other subordinates “the ordinary luxury of negative reciprocity: trading a slap for a slap, an insult for an insult.”⁴⁵

A Marxist analysis of enslavement would be concerned with the appropriation of the labor surplus of those enslaved. Scott argues that equally important is analysis of the indignities and cruelties forced upon those enslaved. Scott writes, “the very process of appropriation . . . unavoidably entails systematic social relations of subordination that impose indignities of one kind or another on the weak. These indignities are the seedbed of the anger, indignation, frustration, and swallowed bile that nurture the hidden transcript.”⁴⁶ Scott argues convincingly that it is often these indignities that lead to frustration, outrage, and resistance, not the material appropriation and exploitation per se.

Chapter Three — The ‘Arts of Resistance’

“Play fool, to catch wise” – Jamaican slave proverb⁴⁷

In the institution of slavery, the dominant group (i.e. Europe) had vastly superior physical resources and had the organizational structures which allowed them to exploit those resources. These physical resources were in essence material surpluses: the ships, cloth, food, domestic animals, metal tools, paper, armor, weapons, and countless other things that allowed the Portuguese and other Europeans to dominate the world. In Brazil, Africans and Amerindians were coerced to work as slaves by threats, intimidation, and physical punishment. The agents of coercion were the police and military in Brazil, as well as the vigilante ‘Indian fighters’ who were hired effectively by the Brazilian government to slaughter those living in *mocambos* (freed Black communities). It was in the sphere of physical force, punishment, and violence that the power struggle between slave-owners and enslaved Africans was most asymmetrical.

Because of this asymmetry, direct physical resistance to the slave-owners was usually tantamount to suicide. In warfare, when one side is outnumbered and outgunned, a frontal assault is usually avoided. Instead: stealth, trickery, ambush, guerilla style warfare; these are the best (and often only) options. Resistance on the part of those enslaved involved a use of power, but it was a different kind of power than that of the slave-owners. Deception was essential for survival. This is what James Scott meant by the ‘hidden transcript,’ a culture that is distinct, but intertwined with, the official, accepted culture of the slave-owners. In Scott’s words, “What may develop under such circumstances is virtually a dual culture: the official culture filled with bright euphemisms, silences, and platitudes and an unofficial culture that has its own history, its own literature and poetry, its own biting slang, its own music and poetry, its own humor, its own

knowledge of shortages, corruption, and inequalities that may, once again, be widely known but that may not be introduced into public discourse.”⁴⁸

There seem to be two aspects of this sort of resistance, even though to a large degree they are intertwined and interdependent. There is also a precondition for both. The first aspect is that of simple survival. For example, many of those enslaved were barely fed, so when they stole food from the slave-owner it was primarily as a means of survival. When those enslaved met together in the night to play music, this was also a means of survival. By forging a link to their home and their past, they were able to retain their sanity. Maintaining old religions from Africa allowed many to make sense of the world and retain their spirituality. Resistance included all senses of the word survival: physical, mental, and spiritual.

Some might argue that the physical survival of those enslaved was in the interests of both the slave-owners and the slaves themselves, so it should not be seen as a form of resistance. Two arguments refute this claim. First, the utter disregard for African life exhibited by the Portuguese suggests that even if it should have been in their interests to keep their slaves alive, they did not do so. Second, the notion of physical survival implies survival *as a human*. For the most part, the slave-owners did not want to offer even this choice to those enslaved. The slave-owners treated them as machines of labor which required minimal maintenance and constant replacement. By claiming the possibility of remaining human (physically, mentally, and spiritually), the Afro-Brazilians who were enslaved sought to resist this domination.

But those who were enslaved could not survive by simply holding on to the past. In order to survive, they needed hope for the future. This is the second element of resistance: hope for transformation. An example of this can be found in trickster tales, in which the cunning protagonist defeats animals who are much stronger. Another example is found in the drumming

circles which formed, in Brazil called *batuques*. Within these circles, the enslaved Afro-Brazilians transformed the space in which they existed from one of subjugation to one of celebration. Within this transformed space they gained control over their own lives. Whites did not offer those who were enslaved a choice of hope for transformation. This hope was a profound act of resistance on the part of the enslaved Afro-Brazilians.

Both survival and transformation were conditional on another ingredient: unity. Resisting alone was nearly hopeless. Together, they were able to aid each other in terms of daily survival and imagining future transformations. By creating spaces of relative autonomy, enslaved Afro-Brazilians were able to generate hidden transcripts on the plantations where they lived, transcripts containing both cultural and social content.

To work towards survival, transformation, or unity, enslaved Afro-Brazilians used a wide variety of tactics. These tactics can be grouped roughly by the type of transcript into which they fall, namely the public transcript, the hidden transcript, or breaks between the transcripts.

The public transcript is a facade for those dominant as well as for those subordinate. Both sides have to play a part in order to prop up the system of power relations, relations designed expressly for the benefit of those in power. For example, a slave-owner might not have had any desire to punish a slave for running away, but he would have done so anyway because he knew that if the slave was not punished others would be more likely to escape. Similarly, if someone enslaved was asked “Do you like your master?” by a member of the dominating race or class, this person might have said “Yes, I do,” although it was not true. Both sides had their own motivations for reinforcing the public transcript. Those in power reinforced it because it perpetuated the structure of power which benefited them. Those subordinate reinforced it because it made those in power less fearful, and gave those enslaved more freedom from

surveillance in which to further their own goals.

James Scott argues that public transcript, by necessity, must seek to explain why it is necessary for those in subordinate positions to stay there. During slavery in the Americas, these explanations included the natural superiority of whites, the incapability of blacks to think for themselves, the way that enslaved blacks were ‘part of the family’, and the notion that those who were enslaved were actually better off and better treated than those who were free but poor. These explanations all became part of the public transcript, and were manipulated by those enslaved as a tool of resistance. Those enslaved perpetuated the notion of the ‘kind’ slave-owner because then an appeal could be made to the slave-owner to be more humane in his treatment *because* he was ‘kind.’ These appeals were rarely punishable, since they were merely perpetuating the very explanations created by the slave-owners.

Resistance within the hidden transcript is much more difficult to approach due to its secrecy. Yet as Scott points out, it was actually quite common for the hidden transcript to enter into the public transcript in a disguised, concealed form. He writes, “[The] hidden transcript is typically expressed openly, albeit in disguised form. I suggest, along these lines, how we might interpret the rumors, gossip, folktales, songs, gestures, jokes, and theater of the powerless as vehicles by which, in my experience, peasants and slaves have disguised their efforts to thwart material appropriation of their labor, their production, and their property: for example, poaching, foot-dragging, pilfering, dissimulation, flight.”⁴⁹

This penetration of the hidden transcript into the public transcript constituted a break within the transcripts. These breaks were generally of two sorts: disguised and open. The disguised form is the evidence which supports the existence of a hidden transcript to begin with, including the ‘rumors, gossip, folktales, songs, gestures, jokes, and theater’ described by Scott.

Open breaks in the transcripts were much more obvious expressions of resistance. These breaks are called rebellion, and are found in the *mocambos* and other direct confrontations of dominating power. In terms of music, an open break in the transcripts is made when the music directly advocates resistance to authority and domination. This was not explicit in Afro-Brazilian music until the late 1960s and 1970s.

In terms of resistance, Afro-Brazilian music had two important functions: (1) the facilitation and creation of physical and social spaces of relative autonomy — within these spaces those who were enslaved could build community and redefine the structures which governed their lives; (2) the direct communication of expressions of resistance to other Afro-Brazilians, creating a unified sense of resistance and a growth of Black consciousness.

In addition, Afro-Brazilian music simultaneously reconnected to its African origins, dealt with the realities of the present, and imagined possible transformations for the future. None of these choices was simply given to those enslaved by those in power. These choices were created in acts of resistance. This is why it is possible to talk about ‘resistance within Afro-Brazilian music.’

Chapter Four — Afro-Brazilian Resistance During Slavery

In order to understand Afro-Brazilian resistance, one must first understand Afro-Brazilian cultural practices and from whence they came. Africa is a vast continent, in which over 1000 languages are spoken, hundreds of different kinds of music are played, and hundreds of deities are worshipped. This diversity within Africa makes it important to understand which African peoples were taken to Brazil and when they arrived. The cultural practices of Afro-Brazilians were an outgrowth of their traditional African practices, and an important part of these new practices was a remembrance of their traditions and heritage.

Unfortunately, in 1888, after finally abolishing slavery, the Brazilian government made a decision to destroy all the records regarding slave trafficking on the grounds that this would put the past to rest. The result is an impossibility of knowing the exact origins of different groups of Afro-Brazilians. The knowledge we do have of these origins relies on generalizations and estimates. The range of estimates of total number of enslaved Africans taken to Brazil varies from three to six million, although several times this figure died, either in Africa or along the way.

Scholars agree that the majority of enslaved Africans were taken to Brazil in four cycles. These cycles were created in large part by changing interactions between the Portuguese and Africans along the Atlantic coast over the span of three hundred years, as well as by needs of slave-owners in Brazil. The first cycle began with the establishment of sugar plantations in the northeast of Brazil, between 1530 and 1570. The majority of those enslaved during this cycle originated along the Guinea coast, between present-day Senegal and Sierra Leone. The second cycle began towards the end of the sixteenth century, and involved the enslavement of Africans living in Central Africa between Cabinda and Benguela. The number of Africans enslaved

during this cycle far exceeded the first, and blacks became common in Brazil around this time. The third cycle is sometimes called the Mina Coast cycle, and lasted from the early 1600s until around 1770. This cycle is named after the coast along what is today Ghana, where the Portuguese built their first slave-dungeon/fortress called Elmina. This cycle overlapped with the second, but lasted considerably later.⁵⁰

The fourth cycle of the Brazilian slave trade lasted from 1770 until 1850, when the transatlantic trade was finally stopped by the Brazilian government. This cycle was created by wars between different African peoples, initiated by the Africans themselves but under the influence of European economic and political pressure. In the northern part of present-day Nigeria, a series of Muslim wars of expansion resulted in the enslavement of many in that area. These Muslims (known as Hausas), were enslaved and taken predominantly to the northeast of Brazil. In 1835, they were responsible for initiating the largest Black rebellion in the history of Brazilian slavery, known as the Malê rebellion.

Around the same time as this rebellion, the African empire of Oyo began to disintegrate as its vassal states rebelled. Oyo had once dominated the area between the Mono and Niger rivers, and prior to its fall had successfully resisted European slave traffickers. The dissolution of the Oyo empire resulted in the enslavement of thousands of Yoruba people, most of whom were taken to Bahia, in the northeast of Brazil. It was only in the nineteenth century that the Yorubas, Hausas, and others living in these parts of Nigeria came to constitute a majority of Africans enslaved, many of whom were taken to either Cuba or Brazil.⁵¹

Afro-Brazilian culture grew out of these four cycles and developed its own character based both the similarities and the differences between African cultures. Specific languages, songs, stories, or rhythms varied from culture to culture, but at a more general level many of

these African cultures shared much in common. While not identical, similarities in aesthetics, folktales, myths, religious conceptions, and musical traits facilitated the transformation from multiple African cultures to a more syncretic Afro-Brazilian culture.

As Afro-Brazilians resisted their enslavement, traditional cultural elements became re-articulated and reinterpreted in a context of resistance. Some of these forms of cultural resistance, like trickster folk tales, were common to many African peoples, while other forms were more culturally specific to their regional African origin. This chapter will discuss four areas of cultural space and resistance: folk stories and heroes, African and Afro-Brazilian religions, musical gatherings known as *batuques*, and festive ceremonies known as *Congadas*. Each of these areas became important to the development of Afro-Brazilian music and resistance in later decades, in addition to strengthening resistance during slavery. The extent to which these aspects of Afro-Brazilian culture were tools for resistance is evident from the extent to which they came under attack by white authorities. This chapter will describe these four cultural areas, how they came under attack, and how they resisted those attacks.

The Trickster: Anansi, Exú, *malandro*, and *malandra*

African cultures are primarily oral cultures. Knowledge, wisdom and advice have traditionally been passed down from one generation to another in stories. These stories have played a critical role in shaping the outlook of Africans and their descendants in Brazil, and constitute an important aspect of African music, religion and education. The subjects of these stories vary, but generally they fall into certain categories. In terms of resistance, the most important category of stories is that of trickster tales.

Trickster tales in western Africa often focus around the exploits of Spider, sometimes

called Anansi. Although Anansi is not the biggest or strongest of the animals, he is by far the cleverest, and even manages to outwit God in some stories. Anansi uses the tools of deception, disguise, stealth, and ambush to achieve his goals, and is successful most of the time. The times in which he fails are those when his own pride and boastfulness exceed his abilities, and he gets caught in his own trickery.

Folktales and trickster tales have deeply penetrated into many African religious systems. In the religious systems of the Yoruba, Fon, Ewe, and others, the figure of the trickster tales is embodied in Èsù, one of the most powerful divinities (called orixás in Yoruba). Èsù, or Exú as he/she is called in Brazil, is both male and female and is “not just the guardian of vital life force but is synonymous with it. Èsù is the meeting point, the crossroads that put things together, and pulls together things that are apart and do not agree. He causes things and men to work together in harmony or suffer the consequence.”⁵² In his book *Sacred Leaves of Candomblé: African Magic, Medicine, and Religion in Brazil*, Robert Voeks writes about how Exú “is a problematic orixá, as enigmatic as he is unpredictable. As the owner of streets and crossroads—the arteries of communication—Exú symbolically directs traffic between *aiê* and *orun* (earth and the spirit world).” Voeks continues, “Capricious and enormously powerful, Exú is a catalyst of change, for both good and evil. He delivers divine protection to those who propitiate him and disaster to those who do not. Exú is never taken lightly.”⁵³

In the many songs and stories surrounding Exú, he/she is often found causing mischief. Paul Christopher Johnson tells one such story: “One of the most commonly told stories about him depicts Exú walking past two men with a two-sided hat on his head. He walked past them revealing the red side, then turned around and passed again, this time showing the hat’s black side, provoking a heated argument between the men as to the hat’s true color. The sole purpose

was to plant discord and debate. With discord, however, Exú also plants the seeds of movement and change.”⁵⁴

These trickster tales had a great deal of influence on the ideals and orientations of Afro-Brazilians. A new trickster figure emerged in Brazil, called the *malandro*, with his female counterpart the *malandra*. These street-smart hustler figures lived by their wits and cunning, abhorring any sort of hard labor. The *malandro*, with his slick good looks, his wide hat, his life of luxury and excitement, and his sexual exploits, was the opposite of the simple, submissive, hardworking laborer archetype that those in power wanted Black men to embody. The *malandro* is deeply connected in Brazil with Exú, and many depictions show Exú “fashioned in high style as the paradigmatic Brazilian ‘man of the street,’ or *malandro*.”⁵⁵ The *malandra*, on the other hand, became a symbol for sensuality, sexuality, deceit, seduction, and witchcraft.

Both figures were assumed by slave-owners to be dangerous ones, a conception that lingers today. The *malandro* was often characterized as a *mulatto* (mixed-race), for the *negro* (Black) was initially seen to be much more docile. Yet racial designation often resulted from stereotyped conceptions, not skin color. Since *negros* were assumed to be docile, any person of color who appeared to be docile was a *negro*. Since *mulattos* were assumed to be dangerous, any person of color who seemed to be dangerous was a *mulatto*.

Mulattos were characterized as dangerous both because they resisted the system that dominated them and because they threatened the racist structure all together, threatened assumptions of white supremacy. Because *mulattos* could lay claim to both European and African ancestry, racist justifications based on inherent racial differences were much more tenuous. This allowed *mulattos* to be more direct in challenging these justifications, and often led to confrontations. It is for this reason that *mulattos* were often assumed to be more violent,

arrogant, and stubborn than the *negros*. A Brazilian writer from the 1930s describes the differences in perceptions of *negroes* and *mulattos* in colonial times: “The negroes were always submissive, but the mulattoes sometimes showed fight, and knife in hand, pushing their felt hats back on their heads, would begin to swagger and boast.”⁵⁶

Most articulations of the *malandro* and the *malandra* were created by men, and while the *malandro* was portrayed as a hero, the *malandra* became his downfall, a sort of *femme fatale*. Similar to the *mulatto malandro*, the *malandra* is almost always portrayed as a *mulatta*. In most Brazilian conceptions, she is “the archetypal whore, an autonomous, sexually active deviant, who is rejected by society.”⁵⁷ The idea of the *mulatta* as a whore and seductress finds its origins in the justifications made by white slave-owners for the rape and sexual exploitation of Black and *mulatta* women.

Yet even as she is made into a sexual object the *malandra* turns the tables on the men who would exploit her. Shaw writes, “Like the *malandro*, she exploits the opposite sex for her own ends. . . . She belongs to no man and like the *malandro* she rejects domesticity and honest employment in favour of living off her wits and indulging her every desire.” Shaw continues, “The *malandra* is a challenge to male domination since she exposes the one weak point in the character of the *malandro*. This otherwise worldly Romeo lays himself open to exploitation by falling for her charms, thus running the risk of becoming his antithesis. . . .”⁵⁸

Both the *malandro* and the *malandra* were symbols of resistance, for they were the embodiment of possibilities that the white establishment feared. Plantation slavery, or the wage slavery which came later, would have been impossible if Black men had succeeded in subverting the system like the *malandro* might. By the same token, male domination would have been impossible if Black women had manipulated the sexual desires of men for their own purposes.

The creation of these figures was a creative act of resistance that defied the archetypal roles of submission that white authorities sought to impose. These figures simultaneously connected back to an African heritage while adapting to new circumstances in Brazil. They also became important characters in the minds and songs of Afro-Brazilians. The subject of the *malandro* was one of the most popular amongst samba song writers of the early 20th Century.

Although the *malandro* and the *malandra* are clear heroes of Afro-Brazilian resistance, there are still layers of ambiguity connected to these figures. The *malandro* may succeed in temporarily subverting the system, but he can never replace the system with something new. The *malandra* may use her sexuality to exploit men, but this is also used as a justification for her own rape and exploitation. Both of these figures contain multiple levels of meaning depending on their relation to different individuals. This complexity of meaning is indicative of the ways in which these mythological characters were seen as a contested terrain by both blacks and whites. Each side sought to impose their own interpretations on the characters, and to use those interpretations to either dominate or to resist that domination.

African and Afro-Brazilian Religion and Resistance

There is not simply one ‘African religion.’ There are many, and each contains a different conception of reality and a different set of practices. There are also threads of similarity running through these religions, particularly the concept of a powerful, life-giving force which sustains all creatures. In her book *A Refuge of Thunder*, Rachel Harding elaborates: “This cosmic or universal force is known by many names. For Bantus it is *Muntu*, for the Yorubas it is *Àse*, among the Congos it is *Ngolo*, and the Nyanga call it *Karamo*.”⁵⁹

One early manifestation of Afro-Brazilian religion of particular significance was called

calundu. One account of an early *calundu* ceremony comes from a traveler in the 1600s who was kept awake by the accompanying music. Her host explained that, “These are festivals or divinations that the Negroes say they were accustomed to perform in their own lands. When they get together, they perform them here too in order to learn all manner of things; such as what is causing illness or to find lost objects, also to ensure success in hunting or in their gardens, and for many other purposes.”⁶⁰ A number of instruments were played at these ceremonies, including drums, tambourines, shakers, scrapers, and other percussive instruments.⁶¹

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, *calundu* ceremonies were often also called *batuques*. In fact, these words themselves were so ambiguous they were often used interchangeably. Later on, a popularization of the *calundu* dance became known as the *lundu* and had a large impact on popular dance in Brazil. The *calundu* was a place for traditional African religion, music, dancing, singing, storytelling, and divination, just like similar African religions across the Atlantic. The *calundu*, *batuque*, and other early Afro-Brazilian cultural spaces were critical to the growth of resistance against slavery’s domination. They mark the transition of African culture into Afro-Brazilian. Harding writes that these Afro-Brazilian religious forms “can all be seen as ‘crossroads’ orientations in that they developed in the opposition between the experience of colonialism/slavery and the effort to maintain an alternative understanding of one’s place in the universe. They also developed out of the need to speak to, and in some measure redress, the nature and tensions of colonialism—particularly the arbitrariness, violence, and inequality of master-slave relations.”⁶²

As noted previously, the third and fourth waves of enslaved Africans came predominantly from the coast along the Gulf of Guinea, the southern parts of present-day Ghana, Togo, Benin, and Nigeria. Although the religions of these peoples are not identical, they are all

deeply affected by the traditions that seem to emanate from the ancient Yoruba city of Ilé Ifé. They share deep structural and historic similarities thought to come from this common origin.⁶³ In the final waves of African enslavement, these religious conceptions were transplanted into Brazil and had an enormous influence on the existing Afro-Brazilian culture, previously dominated by traditions like the *calundu* from Angola and the Congo. The result of this cultural exchange was the formation of a new Afro-Brazilian religion called *Candomblé*.

The word itself, *Candomblé*, appears to be from the Bantu family of languages spoken in Angola and the Congo. It was used by Bantu speakers to describe “a religious form with strong West African structural components.”⁶⁴ *Candomblé* crystallized fairly late in the history of Afro-Brazilian slavery, between 1800 and 1835, with the arrival of thousands of enslaved Yoruba people from the kingdom of Oyo. It became a term for a “variety of co-existent and co-influential African-based religious traditions”⁶⁵ in nineteenth-century Bahia. These different styles of *Candomblé* were often based on the regions of Africa from which their leaders and practitioners originated. By the late nineteenth century, these nations included Ketu, Ijexa and Ijebu (all Nagô, or Yoruba); Congo-Angola (Bantu); and Jeje (Aja-Fon).⁶⁶ Harding points out that these nations “increasingly represented more ritual-liturgical than strictly ethnic-genealogical designations.”⁶⁷

Attacks on Candomblé

Because it was a part of the Afro-Brazilian hidden transcript during the time of slavery, gathering information about *Candomblé* as it was practiced then is problematic. Ceremonies were held in secret by necessity, but existing records reveal much about how they were seen by the slave-owners and others in power. An abundance of evidence suggests that spaces of relative

Afro-Brazilian autonomy were both feared and repressed. This repression was an attempt to localize gatherings and prevent the ideas of resistance that were being voiced in these spaces from spreading. Whites in authority feared unity among the Afro-Brazilians, and feared the information and ideas that could be disseminated in spaces of unity and autonomy.

In response to this fear, those in power attempted to subdue, intimidate, threaten, punish, and sometimes kill those who they perceived as a threat. Harding writes,

“Participants [of Afro-Brazilian ceremonies] were described as uncivilized, ignorant, or criminal in their nature. Deliberations of local town councils, edicts from provincial presidents, and orders from chiefs of police to their subordinates show a pattern of repression of African and Afro-Brazilian religio-cultural gatherings in Bahia during the nineteenth century. *Calundus*, *Candomblés*, *batuques*, *sambas*, and other African meetings were all repeatedly denounced, prohibited, and punished. . . . Police searched the homes (and confiscated or destroyed the belongings) of free Africans who were suspected of fomenting rebellion and encouraging ‘superstition’ among their enslaved fellows. They arrested individuals for transporting or depositing *Candomblé* offerings in the streets of the city. Anyone accused of being a *feiticeiro* [*Candomblé* practitioner] was singled out for special investigation and harassment; and if African-born, could be subject to deportation. And, at the behest of slave-owners, police and militia forces hunted and punished runaway slaves who sought refuge in *Candomblé* communities.”⁶⁸

The fear by white authorities of the influence of *Candomblé* can also be seen starkly in the laws passed after the Malê rebellion of 1835. In 1836, Rio de Janeiro issued an ordinance which stated: “Every person who in his house or residence, or in some other adjacent house, allows gatherings for dances or *candomby* [*Candomblé*], in which outside slaves take part, will be punished with the penalties imposed in the fifth ordinance. The slaves who are arrested at

such gatherings will be punished with from fifty to a hundred lashes.”⁶⁹

Domination and resistance to a large extent depend on one another. After being enslaved, Afro-Brazilians used spaces like those in *Candomblé* to build resistance. In response to this resistance, white authorities attempted to disrupt and repress these spaces. In response to this repression, Afro-Brazilians became more secretive and brought these spaces deeper into the hidden transcript so that they could continue to resist both their enslavement and the repression of their religion.

***Candomblé* as Resistance**

Candomblé strengthened resistance in many ways, not only in the creation of spaces for resistance. The ceremonies themselves helped bind Afro-Brazilians together in unity. Torn from their lands, families, and cultures, the experience of enslavement generated both suffering and alienation. Those enslaved were often taken away from others who spoke their language, from those who shared their cultural heritage. In the *Candomblé* ceremony, they found the space and to be able to begin rebuilding their lives, in the process creating a sense of unity and solidarity with others in the same struggle. Rachel Harding writes:

The Africans who constituted fully a third of the city’s [Salvador’s] inhabitants shared the emotional and physical disjunctions of capture, the Middle Passage, and adjustment to the labor requirements, humiliations, and legal-social status of slaves everywhere in the Americas. For these people and for many of their descendants, *Candomblé* was an important means for the engagement of trauma. It represented an integrative process—pulling together and (re)organizing that which had been rendered asunder: family, identity, and psyche. Where families were separated by the slave trade—mothers sold from daughters, nephews sold from uncles, whole genealogies lost—*Candomblé* reestablished connections of kin by means of ethnic alliance and

shared devotion to the deities.⁷⁰

The first step was to reconnect with each-other, to create new bonds of friendship, worship and celebration. As these bonds began to form Afro-Brazilians were able to retain their humanity, to survive as humans. To a certain extent this survival was simply a matter of escaping the indignities of enslavement for a brief time. Harding writes:

Whether in the mud houses or rented rooms of freed Africans, in the streets at fountains or plazas, or in suburban and forested areas which afforded more privacy and protection, these gatherings were among the means used to (re)create spaces where blacks were no longer 'slave' or 'subaltern,' but where they in fact called into being prior and new meanings of themselves and reshaped these to help survive the jeopardous situations of the New World.⁷¹

This redefinition of identity relates to both survival and transformation, for an important aspect of survival is the retention of hope for future change and transformation. As aspirations grew in these semi-autonomous spaces, these aspirations were written into the cultural traditions themselves. Because most African cultures are primarily oral, expressions of resistance and critical responses to domination are articulated not by pen and paper but in their music, dances, stories, and ceremonies. Harding writes that "in large measure, Africans in the Americas 'read' the meanings of their liturgical rhythms and dances and they 'wrote' the physical symbols of their religion and 're-wrote' Catholic and Protestant symbols to serve African American purposes. They also 'read' the limitations imposed upon them by slavery and the developing culture of white supremacy; but at the same time they 'wrote' forms of negotiation, resistance, and transformation."⁷²

One of the key ingredients in *Candomblé* is the music involved. During the ceremonies,

words are sung and specific drum patterns played to invoke the spirits (called *orixas*). Without the correct words and rhythms, there is no possession. For this reason, the musical aspects of *Candomblé* changed very little as it developed in Brazil, as compared to most other Afro-Brazilian religious traditions. In addition to being vital to the spirit summoning, the music contributed to the sense of community amongst those participating.

The unity which was built in these communities was a vital contribution to Afro-Brazilian resistance. Harding writes, “Attempts to create and re-create community among human beings, to experience communion with the natural-divine world, to find spaces of refuge from trauma, and to resist one’s own dehumanization have been at the heart of the meaning of Afro-Brazilian religion throughout its history.”⁷³ While the religious forms of *Candomblé* stayed very similar to its African predecessors, the meanings were reinterpreted in a context of resistance. This metamorphosis of meaning took place not only in sacred spaces like that of the *Candomblé*, but also more secular ones, such as the *batuques*.

Afro-Brazilian Musical Spaces: the *Batuque*

To slave-owners, the distinction between Afro-Brazilian sacred gatherings and secular gatherings was often not made. The word *batuque*, originally an Angolan/Congolese term, was used as a generic term in the early 18th century for any gathering of blacks which involved drumming and dancing. John Charles Chasteen describes these gatherings:

The same basic characteristics could be found in slave dancing from Buenos Aires to Rio de Janeiro to Havana to New Orleans. The instruments were especially African drums, but also rasping instruments usually believed to be of Amerindian origin, a variety of Iberian stringed instruments (the most common being somewhat like small guitars), and importantly, handclapping by those who

gathered to form a circle around the dancers. One of the dancers often sang verses that elicited a refrain from those clapping the rhythm for the dancers. Thus spectators in the surrounding circle – Spanish *rueda* or Portuguese *roda* – doubled as musicians and eventual participants. The dancers themselves were usually one couple, male and female, although the partners varied as one or the other tired and was replaced by a new dancer. The dance emphasized the lateral movements of the hips. . . which create the sinuous twists of the body below the torso, but allow the upper body to remain unagitated, imparting to the dancer’s movements a sort of gyroscopic glide. As they glided around each other, their eyes locked, the dancers sometimes coming face to face within a couple of feet and moving their lower bodies in a manner suggestive of sexual intercourse.⁷⁴

Since the whites who observed these dances and wrote about them did not understand what they were witnessing, the term *batuque* was often used to describe *calundu* or *Candomblé* ceremonies as well as more secular gatherings. Eventually, this distinction was made, and the term *batuque* was used to describe a specific secular dance from the Congo. An essential feature of this dance was a belly bump between two dancers of opposite sex, called the *umbigada*. Chasteen relates an account given by a French traveler who witnessed a *batuque* with its *umbigada*: “From time to time they embrace and whirl a few times, continuing to smack their bellies and kissing without losing the beat. In France, people would be shocked by such an indecent dance, but it is common to almost all the countries of South America.”⁷⁵

Gerhard Kubik’s article “Drum Patterns in the ‘Batuque’ of Benedito Caxias,” provides a wealth of information about the *batuque*.⁷⁶ Kubik was able to identify the musical origins of the *batuque* by studying the drums used, the *quinjengue* and the *tambu*, and tracing them back to their African predecessors. He shows evidence that the *quinjengue*, a goblet shaped supporting drum used in the *batuque*, “represents a fusion of ideas going back (1) to drum models from the lower Zambezi valley (Moçambique) and (2) to the Província de Wila (Huíla) in Angola. The

overall shape and the method of attaching the skin are for the most part perpetuating a Moçambiquan tradition, while some other elements, such as the sound hole at the side, probably come from the *kenjengo* [of Angola].”⁷⁷ This dual origin of the *quinjengue* shows that it was probably developed during the second wave of enslavement, when the Portuguese traders enslaved people at their ports in Angola and Moçambique, some time in the 17th or 18th Century.

Kubik found the origin of the *tambu* drum to be easier to trace. By its construction and the way it which it was played he found it came from the former Kingdom of the Congo, constituting northwestern Angola and the southwest of the Republic of Zaire. He also notes that in the Congo this drum is generally called *ntambu*.⁷⁸

Kubik also looks at the origins of the dances involved. *Batuques* were either danced in lines, or in circles (*rodas*), in which case they were sometimes referred to as *jongos*. Kubik notes that the line dance of the *batuque*, with its characteristic *umbigada*, was very similar to a dance he witnessed in Angola in 1965 called *Kamundonda*. This was played by a group of youths and functioned as a meeting place for young men and women. Kubik writes, “A dancing boy would leave his row, move toward the opposite row and end up his sequence in front of the girl of his choice, with a gesture that included a bounce-stop action, as in ‘umbigada,’ but without the touch.”⁷⁹

In terms of the *jongo* dance, he notes many similarities between it and a dance that he witnessed in Angola called the *kandowa*. He writes, “[the *kandowa*] had the same social background and was for the same age group, but had a circular formation. The interaction between the dancers inside the circle corresponded in great detail with Araújo’s (1973:73-75) description of the Brazilian ‘jongo.’”⁸⁰ The *batuques*, danced either in a line or in a circle, were extensions of the musical traditions originating in various parts of Africa. The creation of the

batuque in Brazil was an attempt by Afro-Brazilians to reconnect to their African cultural heritage.

Batuque Under Attack

The *batuque* also became significant in terms of Afro-Brazilian resistance. This significance grew out of the new circumstances of domination and enslavement with which Africans in Brazil were faced. Similarly to the *Candomblé*, the extent to which the *batuque* was used for resistance can be understood by looking at how the white authorities attempted to repress it. An example of a *batuque* both used as resistance and under attack can be found in an account written in the late nineteenth century. This account was written by the French wife of a Brazilian slave-owner, and is valuable not only because it is an eye witness account of a *batuque* by an observant writer, but also because it states explicitly the significance of the *batuque* for both the slave-owners and for those enslaved. Her account of the *batuque* (she calls it a *batuco*) begins:

The overseer then made the distribution of the *cachaça*^c, giving each one but a small glass at a time, and then the *batuco* (negro's dance, accompanied with the clapping of hands) began. I wish I could give my readers an idea of this strange scene and of this wild dance. Let me try.

Large fires had been lit in the middle of the meadow. A negro of high stature, formerly king in his native country, soon appeared, armed with a long white wand, —sign apparent, to them, of his command. His head was ornamented with feathers of all colors, and little bells were fastened around his legs. Every one bowed himself down before him with respect, while he gravely walked about, dressed in this manner, filled with a supreme majesty. Near the king stood the two musicians who were to lead the *batuco*; one carried a kind of immense calabash, which contained six or seven

^c a strong rum from sugar cane

[more calabashes] of different sizes, over which were placed a very thin little board. With the aid of little sticks, which he maneuvered with great dexterity, the negro obtained dull sounds, the monotony of which seemed sooner to provoke sleep than anything else. The second musician, squatted on his heels, had before him a piece of the hollow trunk of a tree, over which a dried lambskin was stretched. He was beating in a melancholy way on this primitive drum to re-enforce the singing. Three or four groups of dancers soon came to place themselves in the centre of the circle, which was formed by all their companions. The negresses walked harmoniously, keeping time in waving their handkerchiefs and in giving themselves up to a most accentuated movement of the hips, while their dark partners were turning around them, skipping upon one foot with the most grotesque contortions, and the old musician was walking from one group to another, speaking and singing, while shaking his sticks with frenzy. He seemed, by his expressions, desirous of exciting them for the dance, while the assistants accompanied the *batuco* with clapping of hands, which accentuated the rhythm in a strange manner, and the king was promenading in a grave manner while shaking his bells.

The negroes were dripping, and yet the musicians did not cease running from one to the other and exciting them still more. The dance had arrived at such a degree of strange over-excitement, when suddenly calling was heard from the house: '*Feitor*, let all fires be extinguished, that all noise ceases, and that all the negroes return to their cabins!'

Not knowing to what to attribute this sudden disturbance in the festival, I hastily ascended to the house, where I found the proprietor perfectly pale, and having barricaded windows and doors around him. He seemed to me laboring under a certain excitement, whose cause I asked him.

He then told me that, while his comrades were dancing, a negro had entered the house, with a drunken face, and vociferating threats against his master, who immediately had him laid hold of, but who had understood that if his negroes became more excited by the *cachaça* and their national dance, his life might be in danger.

These national dances excite to such a degree these poor slaves, that they have been prohibited to them in the city. In spite of all this, however, they take place. At the risk of being cruelly beaten, the negroes go at night, when the whites are asleep, to dance on the beach in the moonlight. They

assemble in groups of the same nationality, either Congo or Mozambique, or Minas; then, in dancing and singing, they forget their ills and servitude, and only remember their native country and the time that they were free.⁸¹

The slave-owners were constantly fearful of an attack or uprising by their slaves. In the early nineteenth century a wave of uprisings swept across Brazil, particularly in the northeast, in Bahia. These uprisings were often instigated by the influx of militant Hausas and Yorubas who practiced either Islam or *Candomblé*. They were also fueled by the knowledge of the successful rebellion in Haiti, and by hope from the British decree of 1808 which outlawed slave trafficking. The most spectacular uprising of the time was that of 1835, the Malê rebellion. During the rebellion, Muslims Hausas of Bahia overthrew the local government, only to be beaten back later by the national army. After this, many of the Black cultural spaces which had enjoyed a fairly high level of autonomy came under attack. A series of laws were passed in districts around the country which forbade Afro-Brazilian gatherings. A few examples of these are translated by Robert Conrad in his book *Children of God's Fire* (1983)

City of Desterro, Santa Catarina, Law of May 10, 1845

“Art. 38. From this time on assemblies of slaves or freed persons intended to form *batuques* are forbidden, as well as those which have as their purpose the supposed African royal ceremonies [*reinados africanos*] which they are accustomed to performing during their celebrations. All those in violation will be fined 4\$000 *réis*, if free, and, not possessing the means to pay, 4 to 8 days in jail; and if slaves, and without their master's license, they will be punished in conformity with the law.”⁸²

City of Diamantina, Minas Gerais, Law of March 26, 1846

“Art. 78. It is forbidden to permit gatherings of slaves who are not making purchases in taverns or drinking houses. . . .”⁸³

Town of Itajubá, Minas Gerais, Law of 1853

“Art. 129. It is forbidden to dance *batuque* in the houses of the villages accompanied by loud noise either during the daytime or at night, in such a way that it disturbs the neighborhood: penalty of imprisonment for a day and the closing down of the meeting.

Art. 130. Negro dances [*quimbetes*] or royal ceremonies [*reinados*] which the slaves are accustomed to celebrate on certain days of the year are permitted, with the condition that they not be held at night, and with the payment of two *milréis* on each occasion: fine of eight *milréis*.”⁸⁴

These laws represent the institutionalized oppression of Afro-Brazilian culture, focused specifically at suppressing the hidden transcript that was growing and being spread. This suppression was effective in certain circumstances in preventing immediate rebellions, but in terms of completely stopping the *batuques* and *Candomblé* ceremonies it was a failure.

***Batuque* as a Place of Resistance**

Some might question the extent to which the *batuque* contributed to Afro-Brazilian resistance. They might argue that the *batuques* simply diffused Black anger and resentment, channeling it into harmless cultural diversions. Some of these explanations come from blacks themselves, who use this line of reasoning to justify why *batuques* should be legal. Yet, as a

whole, this ‘safety-valve’ theory is simply untenable. Black Brazilians had every reason to *want* the slave-owners to think that the *batuques* were harmless, because this belief would allow them more room from surveillance. This is a strong argument in favor of viewing the *batuque* as a space for resistance. It shows that those enslaved were canny to the slave-owner’s apprehensions and attempted to diffuse the tension. It also shows that the blacks valued these spaces and in this case defended them within the framework of the public transcript. Defense tactics which by necessity relied on duplicity can not be taken at face value.

Although *batuques* were permitted for many years, repressive laws were passed as soon as there was outright rebellion in Bahia and elsewhere. One explanation of why the *batuques* were legal early is that repression of the *batuques* would have increased Afro-Brazilian anger and resistance. Slave-owners attempted to appear generous by allowing these gatherings to occur, in their mind diffusing any tension. *Batuques* were made illegal after rebellions began increasing in size and frequency. By this time, the *batuques* themselves were seen as more dangerous than their repression. Once outright rebellion had exploded, any autonomous space became deadly to authority. Robert Conrad writes, “Urban slaves [in cities such as Salvador] had opportunities to observe their masters’ weaknesses, to recognize their own strength, and to learn about such outside events as the Black revolution in Haiti, increasing their will to cast off oppression. Moreover, their gatherings for entertainment or religious worship, which were not always prevented, gave them opportunities to plan strategy and to enlarge their vision of the dazzling potential consequences of a successful rebellion.”⁸⁵

A good example of the fear of the *batuques* and of slave rebellions is found in a petition sent by citizens of Bahia to the prince regent, Dom João, in 1814. This fear, and the analysis, which links the rebellion to the *batuque*, shows clearly the reasoning behind the repressive laws

which came about later. The petition reads:

Failure to establish firm principles spoils these people; fear and rigorous punishment are the only way to make them behave correctly. Since their *batuques* have been allowed (they are in fact banned by statutes), and since they have been permitted to dress themselves up in royal costumes, crowning themselves with pageantry and public ceremony, and paying homage to one another, gathering together to play a kind of single-stringed instrument resembling a *guzla*, and agitating the city [the instrument was probably the *berimbau*, which is still used in Bahia today to accompany the athletic male dance called *capoeira*—it is since all this has been permitted that we have witnessed most of the acts of violence and disobedience.⁸⁶

The cultural spaces of the *batuque* and the *Candomblé* were fought for and contested by both the whites in power and the Afro-Brazilians. It was this struggle itself, not its outcome, which created the relationship between domination and resistance.

Samba de Roda

An important variation of the *batuque* that evolved in the northeast of Brazil was the *samba de roda*. This was specifically a circle dance, similar to the *jongo*, and also had roots in Central Africa. The word itself —samba— is thought to be derived from the Bantu word ‘*semba*,’ referring to an African dance move similar to the *umbigada*. Although some researchers disagree with this etymology, it is known that as early as the nineteenth century the term ‘samba’ was used in Brazil in similar ways to the term *batuque*. Chasteen writes, “The word *samba* was used in Brazil during the nineteenth century to refer rather generically to polyrhythmic dance (with percussive accompaniment) enjoyed by poor Brazilians from Para to Rio Grande do Sul. It was more an event (as in ‘an all night samba’) or a style of body movement than a particular step.”⁸⁷ In the *samba de roda*, Afro-Brazilians formed a circle and played makeshift drums, tambourines, and shakers. Participants clapped their hands while

dancers took turns improvising in the center of the circle.

There are strong connections between the traditional circles (*rodas*) of samba and *Candomblé*. In a variation of *Candomblé*, *Candomblé de caboclo*, samba is considered “an integral part of the *Candomblé* ceremony.” Barbara Browning writes, “When the caboclo spirit comes down, he sambas. . . . Even within the religious community, the very use of the term *samba* to designate the caboclo spirit’s dance seems to be a way of blurring the distinction between the divine and the profane.”⁸⁸ This blurring of sacred and secular spaces has deep origins in Africa, where such distinctions are rarely made.

Browning also notes that in more mainstream *Candomblé* ceremonies samba dancing and singing often occur after the ceremony has ended. It is seen as a way of relaxing after a serious event, a way of bringing the mundane into a sacred space. She sees the object of attention as somewhat different in the two *rodas*: the divinities are the inspiration of the *Candomblé* circle (*Roda de Santo*) and the human body is the inspiration of the samba circle (*Roda de Samba*).⁸⁹ As the Brazilian author Teixeira writes, “The center of the *Roda de Santo* . . . relives the mythic drama of the Orixás; it is the divinities that assume the stage with all their refinement, potency and decorum. In the *Roda de Samba*, it is the cult of the body which assumes relevance.”⁹⁰ Although not often thought of as a direct precursor to samba, *Candomblé* profoundly influenced the *samba de roda*, which in turn influenced the more modern samba. These aspects of Afro-Brazilian culture were related both historically and functionally, for each played a strong role in the creation of places of Afro-Brazilian resistance.

Congadas: Reimagining Power Structures

Not all Afro-Brazilian musical gatherings were small night-time gatherings. An

important example of different sort of gathering is the *Congada*. The *Congada* was a creation of enslaved Africans from the ancient kingdom of Kongo, north of Angola. When taken to Brazil, they sought to reconnect with their cultural, social, and political heritage. This reconnection turned into an elaborate ceremony and celebration that involved music, dance, drama, religion, and ritual called the *Congada*.

Some scholars interpret the *Congada* as an act of charity on the part of those in authority, a celebration granted to enslaved blacks out of the kindness of their masters. This is the view presented by Daniel Crowley, when he writes, “Often associated with the parish churches of Blacks, these festivals were apparently invented by Portuguese priests as a means of lightening the burdens of slavery and improving the mental health of the slaves by providing a fictitious hierarchy reflecting the structure of African cultures.”⁹¹ This paternalistic point of view grants all agency to those in power and none to those subordinate. It ignores the conflict and tension inherent in the creation of those social spaces.

Just like the spaces involved with *Candomblé* and *batuques*, the *Congada* was a realm of relative autonomy in which Afro-Brazilian could reimagine their world. In this space they could nurture hopes for a future transformation in society, as well as reconnect to their cultural roots. Music was an essential part of the *Congada* ceremony, just as it was with the *Candomblé* and *batuque* ceremonies.

A good description of a *Congada* is given by Brazilian author Luiz Edmundo de Costa in his book *O Rio de Janeiro no Tempo dos Vice-Reis* (Rio in the Time of the Viceroy), translated by Dorothea H. Momsen in 1936. In Costa’s account, the ceremony begins when the musicians start to play. Costa writes, “To the happy sounds of timbrel and fife, Chocalho and quica a jubilant troupe of dancing, singing, shouting negroes poured down Rosario Street. Augmenting

the crowd at every step, came more and more blacks of every kind and condition. . . .”⁹² These instruments, particularly the *chocalho* (an idiophone shaker with many metal jingles) and the *cuíca* (a friction drum, here spelled ‘quica’), are heard today in almost every samba percussion group.

The *Congada* was at once both inclusive and celebratory. In Costa’s account he writes that “Mulattoes wearing long capes hurried to join in, also gipsies and beggars – the cream of the Black population as well as the dregs of humanity. Forgetting feuds and hatreds, all became friendly companions during the delirious festivities of the *Congadas*, or *Crowning* of the Congo King.” He continues, “Above all else, they wanted to dance. Spinning like tops, waving their arms and legs and tossing their heads, they whirled madly to the music of the *samba*. Shouting, whistling, squealing with joy, they jumped like puppets on the end of a string.”⁹³

These *Congadas* took place as far back as the seventeenth century, yet the level of organization present among the musicians and performers was remarkably similar to the organizational style of the samba schools of the 1920s and ‘30s. Costa writes: “Putting two fingers in his mouth, the leader whistled shrilly, and immediately the throng became more orderly, the musicians took their proper places at the head of the procession and all fell in line. High above the rest rode the king and queen in handsome sedan chairs decked with plumes and ribbons, crimson canopies over their heads.”⁹⁴

The entrance of the ‘king’ and ‘queen’ marks a dramatic transformation in the social space. In honoring a Black man and woman as king and queen, participants created a startling contrast to the dominant power structure, which invariably favored whites. The participants in the *Congada* stretched their social space both back to Africa and into a future where blacks could rule. The extent to which the *Congada* ‘turned the world upside down’ for Afro-Brazilian

participants can not be over-stressed. Costa hints at these ideas when he writes, “Stifled by the sun’s rays from above and the heat rising from the stones below him, he must have suffered agonies! His mind was far above such things, however, and the exultation of his mood made him oblivious to discomforts of the flesh. This was his one historic and never to be forgotten moment – he lived every second of it to the full, his cup brimming over with pride and joy.”⁹⁵

Costa’s description continues, showing the role of singing in the *Congada* and the power it had in evoking images that did not fit into the ideas of the slave-owners. Costa writes “The king, slipping and sliding in his uncomfortable boots, climbed off his throne and, still wearing his heavy cape, began a cumbersome slow dance in the center of the cleared space, singing, as he shuffled and turned:

*The Congo King is here
From Portugal far away
Come join from far and near
To revel and sing and play.*

The chorus in which all joined followed

*Its Sambangalal
from Portugal.*

The queen danced too, making her ornaments jingle and ring as she twisted and turned like a corkscrew.”⁹⁶

The next part of the drama involved the prince, who enters and is immediately killed by a

man dressed as an Indian with a tomahawk. The king cries in grief and calls in his *quimboto*, a Bantu word for a sorcerer, healer, or diviner. Costa describes the *quimboto*: “The sorcerer was an awe-inspiring person. A tall well-formed man, he was an agile and graceful dancer. A large snake coiled around his neck, and his arms were weighed down with bracelets of every description, whilst his legs were completely covered with jaguar and tapir skins. . . . He danced around the little fallen figure singing a song, containing such a number of African words that no translation is possible.”⁹⁷ Through his dancing, singing, and prayers, the *quimboto* was able to resurrect the prince and drive off the ‘Indian’.

This act has many levels of significance. It shows the superiority of African magic and medicine over that of the Europeans, who could not revive the dead.⁹⁸ It also shows the superiority of Afro-Brazilians over Amerindians, who were often employed by the Portuguese to attack escaped slave communities. Finally, it showed the strong connection between African government and religion, a connection which in Brazil had been disrupted by slavery.

The procession ended with a flurry of music, just as it began. Although Costa’s comments reflect the racist language of his time, they do give valuable clues. He writes, “The litters of the king and queen were again raised to the pole bearer’s shoulders, and the kaleidoscopic cortege moved away into the distance, the instruments blaringly out of tune as their owners puffed and blew, beat and shook with more energy than skill.”⁹⁹ The melodies that the horn players played were almost certainly African in origin, and the difference in tuning systems accounts for Costa’s ears to hear them ‘out of tune’. His description of the Afro-Brazilian drumming, with ‘more energy than skill,’ shows that even unappreciative audiences like Costa admired the energy of the drumming if not the drumming itself.

The *Congadas* reconnected people to their African heritage, promoted a sense of

solidarity and unity among its participants, and allowed Afro-Brazilians to radically redefine their place in the world. By remembering and symbolically honoring their traditional African ruler, the Afro-Brazilians involved were able to aspire to one day live under their own ruler again. The aspiration for a radical transformation of the hierarchical power structures under which they lived was a strong statement of resistance, and one which profoundly influenced later Afro-Brazilian cultural developments.

Chapter Five — Black and White in Brazil?

Thus far, domination and resistance have interacted in spaces of unambiguous cultural ownership with a high degree of racial polarity. Roles of dominator (white) and resister (black) have been sharply defined. Strong asymmetries in power, epitomized by the dynamic between the ‘Master’ and the ‘Slave,’ contributed to this polarization and antagonism. When Afro-Brazilians danced and played *Candomblés*, *batuques*, or *Congadas*, whites were at most silent observers, rarely participants. Similarly, blacks were excluded from much of white cultural life, including their parties, balls, and dances. This cultural separation was created by differences in cultural aesthetics, asymmetries in power, and inhibitions due to surveillance from authority.

In spaces where these differences were mitigated, more equal cultural interactions were possible. Dances and music that appealed to both Portuguese and African sensibilities found enthusiasts among all races. In places away from the “Master’s House” or the “Slave Quarters,” the importance of social roles was lessened and asymmetries of power were diminished. At times in which inhibition from authority was temporarily suspended (for example, festivals, fights, or drunkenness), people were more willing to cross racial boundaries.

Two important examples of these more equal interactions are Carnival and partner dances. Carnival is an ancient holiday which originated in Europe in the time of the Romans. It was a celebration of the most basic human instincts, a suspension of social norms and authority. This continued in Brazil. Within the realm of Brazilian street Carnival, blacks, whites, rich and poor all interacted as equals. Those in power generally despised Carnival, for it stripped them of their power, and authorities waged a battle against street Carnival and attempted to suppress it. On the other hand, Carnival appealed to Afro-Brazilians precisely because of this mitigation of

power asymmetries. It allowed blacks to interact with whites at a more equal level.

Partner dances also appealed to those with less power, both blacks and whites. Cultural antecedents can be found in both Africa and Europe, so people of both cultures were able to relate aesthetically. They often took place in neutral territory, such as bars, taverns, and parties, where people felt less restrained to their expected social roles. Alcohol relaxed inhibitions, and the lack of surveillance from authority in these spaces permitted actions otherwise restricted.

These two spaces for interaction became of increasing importance throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In time, they became both disassociated from their cultural roots and reinterpreted as symbols of Brazilian identity. From the beginning, these spaces were appealing because they resisted authority and allowed greater equality among participants. The attempt by the government to transform these spaces into tools of propaganda, control, and domination created a cultural battle that continues to this day. To begin to understand this struggle, one must begin with an understanding of the roots of both Carnival and partner dances.

Carnival

Carnival originated as a Roman holiday in honor of the god Pan, but was long ago appropriated by Christianity and turned into a pre-Lenten holiday. While Lent was a time of abstinence, fasting, and sobriety, Carnival was the exact opposite. Food, alcohol, sex, music, and festivities were abundant. In his book *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, Peter Burke quotes a seventeenth-century description of Carnival in England as a time of “such boiling and broiling, such roasting and toasting, such stewing and brewing, such baking, frying, mincing, cutting, carving, devouring, and gorbellied gourmandising, that a man would think people did take in two months’ provision at once into their paunches, or that they did ballast their bellies

with meat for a voyage to Constantinople, or the West Indies.”¹⁰⁰

In his book, Burke describes different elements of European carnival. He writes, “People sang and danced in the streets — not that this was unusual in early modern Europe, but the excitement was, and some of the songs and dances and musical instruments were special ones.” He describes some of the pranks people played: “People threw flour at one another, or sugar-plums, or apples, or oranges, or stones, or eggs, which might be filled with rose-water but might not.” He adds, “In Cadiz the ubiquitous English visitor noticed women on balconies pouring pails of water on the men below.”¹⁰¹ The loss of inhibitions meant that people felt freer to celebrate as well as insult and attack one another. People often fought, but more characteristic was the high level of verbal aggression, both in terms of insults and insulting songs.

Carnival was always more popular in the southern areas of Europe, where the climate was more agreeable to an outdoors festival in early March. Often times these festivals involved parades, processions, and floats, in which the men marched, sang songs, and called out to the girls who watched from their balconies. Men young and old competed in races, football matches, tug-of-war contests, and other competitive events. Actors staged plays both for entertainment and to mock and ridicule victims chosen by the playwrights. These structured activities, along with more general themes of food, sex, and violence (verbal and physical), were the heart of Carnival. Music, dancing, and drama were ubiquitous, often working together to keep people entertained.¹⁰²

Any simple interpretation of Carnival would be insufficient. As Burke writes, “What is clear is that Carnival was polysemous, meaning different things to different people.”¹⁰³ One of these ‘functions’ of Carnival was as a tool for resistance. This can be seen by examining Carnival in relation to survival, transformation, and unity.

Carnival was a release from the stress of everyday life, a release necessary to retain one's sanity. It stripped away the hierarchies of power under which people lived, bringing them all to an equal level. James Scott writes, "If so much of the carnivalesque was focused on the functions we share with lower mammals—eating and drinking, defecation, fornication, flatulence—that is because this is the level at which we are all alike and no one can claim a higher status. . . . For the lower classes, who spent much of their lives under the tension created by subordination and surveillance, the carnivalesque was a realm of release."¹⁰⁴ This release was a necessary ingredient for emotional survival.

Scott goes on to describe the ways that people used Carnival for transformation, to attack invested powers and to invert the social structure of discipline and authority: "Among other things, carnival is 'the people's informal courtroom' in which biting songs and scolding verse can be sung directly to the disrespected and malefactors. The young can scold the old, women can ridicule men, cuckolded or henpecked husbands may be openly mocked, the bad-tempered and stingy can be satirized, muted personal vendettas and factional strife can be expressed. Disapproval that would be dangerous or socially costly to vent at other times is sanctioned during carnival."¹⁰⁵

European Carnival involved a celebration of community and unity, as well as a means of attacking those who undermined it. The activities of Carnival reinforced feelings of community, with throngs of people participating in a common parade, singing the same songs, watching the same plays, and dancing and drinking together. The creators of songs, plays, skits, and clever insults used them to mock and ridicule people who did not fit into this sense of community. This verbal aggression widened divisions between the community and strangers, but strengthened the ties within the community. Burke writes that during Carnival people "celebrated the community

itself, displaying its ability to put on a good show; and perhaps the mocking of outsiders. . . was, among other things, a dramatic expression of community solidarity.”¹⁰⁶

When the Portuguese came to Brazil in 1500, they brought Carnival with them. Although during the sixteenth-century Brazilian Carnival was virtually identical to Portuguese Carnival, by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it had become more distinctive. In his article “The Prehistory of Samba: Carnival Dancing in Rio de Janeiro, 1840-1917,” John Charles Chasteen describes *entrudo*, the earliest form of Brazilian Carnival. He calls *entrudo* a “playful, generalised annual *melee* dedicated to the thumbing of noses at social norms, and featuring all sorts of practical jokes and – most of all – water fights. The projectiles of choice, precise antecedents of today’s water balloon, were wax ‘lemons’ (*limoes do cheiro*) that ruptured on impact to douse the unlucky targets. . .”¹⁰⁷

This description of *entrudo* reveals similarities to European Carnival practices. Of particular interest is the way in which authorities were stripped of societal power and privilege. Everyone was a possible victim of *entrudo*. Chasteen writes, “Like other carnival activities, *entrudo* refused to recognize limits, so anyone passing in the street was considered fair game – the more pompous, the better. A top hat lasted no time at all on the wearer’s head if he ventured into the street during *entrudo*. Though the stuffer inhabitants of the city cordially loathed *entrudo*, and the authorities almost invariably condemned it, people of all colours and conditions played it passionately. Both emperors played *entrudo*, as did slaves and everybody in between.”¹⁰⁸

This stripping of privilege and power allowed both blacks and whites, both of whom possessed positions of varying power and privilege, to interact as equals. *Entrudo* suspended asymmetries in power, making it distasteful to those with power and an act of resistance for

those less powerful. The spirit of *entrudo* was one which characterized street Carnival in general, one which had important consequences in the twentieth century.

Entrudo was the dominant feature of Carnival until the 1840s, when masked dances became very popular among those with light skin and financial resources. Chasteen writes: “The masked balls that proliferated during that decade were modelled on those of the Parisian carnival. They took place in public theatres after the evening’s performance, and the costumed revellers invaded corridors, galleries, boxes, as well as the orchestra, now cleared of chairs for a dance floor. Extravagantly decorated, dimly lit, and crammed with costumed revellers, such structures became mysterious labyrinths that created titillating possibilities for romantic intrigue.”¹⁰⁹

In the 1850s, the processional aspect of Carnival became much more important to white Brazilians. These parades evolved from simple horseback processions to trains of wagons, eventually becoming modern floats.¹¹⁰ Just like their European counterparts, the men riding along with these parades would sing songs and shout to women who watched on their balconies, attempting to lure them to a masked ball in the evening. Within a decade, balls and parades dominated white Carnival tradition. Chasteen describes the change from *entrudo* to this new style:

This ‘Venetian’ style of carnival (so-called because of its origin in Venice, though Brazilians copied it from Paris) gained rapid popularity and, well-established by the late 1850s, it dominated Rio’s pre-Lenten festivities for a time. Whereas the whole city had participated in *entrudo* – proverbially liveliest in the plebeian neighbourhoods – the gallant members of the parading societies were inherently bourgeois, at least in inspiration. By the 1860s *entrudo* seemed to have obediently withered away, leaving the parading societies as masters of street carnival. If poor people of colour danced, it was in their own houses or perhaps occasionally at balls in public theatres.¹¹¹

The rise of Venetian Carnival was an attempt by white authorities to replace *entrudo* with more exclusive Carnival practices. By channeling energy away from resistance and towards ‘acceptable’ practices, those in authority worked to control and dominate Brazilian Carnival.

This domination was resisted in the 1850s by a poor Portuguese immigrant named Zé Pereira. Rather than accept his exclusion from Carnival, he created his own tradition. He and his friends gathered together snare drums and bass drums and played them at maximum volume all around Rio de Janeiro. This was certainly a far cry from the drumming of the *Escolas de Samba* (samba schools) which came later, but it had certain similarities. Although the *Zé Pereiras* drummed with the sole intention of making noise, their drumming was a response to being silenced, to being presented with unacceptable options. Those in power sought to limit Brazilians in Rio de Janeiro to two choices, (1) if they had the money then they could join the parades and balls; or (2) they could stay at home. The *Zé Pereiras* rejected those alternatives and created something new, demonstrating the resilience of street Carnival. This process of domination, suppression, resistance, and creativity repeated itself during the 1910s and 1920s in Rio de Janeiro’s Afro-Brazilian community.

Partner-dances

Partner dances have been a part of Brazilian culture from its earliest history. In Portugal, people of all backgrounds would dance the *fandango*, a partner dance which evolved into *flamenco* and was influenced by both Moorish and Gypsy music and dance.¹¹² The Portuguese brought the *fandango* and other partner dances with them across the Atlantic, creating aesthetic predilections for the Brazilian partner dances that would develop later. In Central Africa, on the

other hand, blacks rarely danced with partners in the European sense. This said, highly suggestive and sexual dances between African men and women were quite common, such as the *Kamundonda* witnessed by Kubik in Angola (see the section on the *batuque* in Chapter 4), or dances with a *semba* (the African equivalent of the *umbigada*).

In Brazil, a number of partner dances from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were referred to but rarely analyzed in writings from that time. Undoubtedly, these dances flourished most within the hidden transcript and were not desired in the public record. Dances such as the *zarabanda*, *chacóna*, and *fofa* were considered pornographic and scandalous, but even so they made their way to Portugal and Spain where they became highly popular. Chasteen writes, “A visitor to Portugal in the 1580s commented in a similar vein concerning the new wave of unbridled couple dances, using tambourines and castanets, which he thought had at least the benefit of stimulating population growth.”¹¹³

During the nineteenth century a new music and dance caught Brazil’s national attention. This was the *lundu*, a tradition stemming both from earlier partner dances and from the *calundu* ceremonies discussed previously. Like the partner dances from before, the *lundu* flourished in places that escaped the eyes of authority: bars, taverns, houses, and Carnival parties. Unlike earlier dances, the *lundu* became so popular among both blacks and whites that it began to enter into the public transcript.

Even though the *lundu* was considered Brazil’s ‘national dance’¹¹⁴ between 1780 and 1880, there were actually a variety of dances that were all called *lundu*. At a general level, there were both Black and White versions of the *lundu*, emphasizing either African or European influences. At times, those different cultural influences interacted directly. Chasteen writes, “A stylised 1787 description of *lundu* (in verse) depicts it as danced by a mulata, whose gliding

movements are strongly African, and a white partner whose snapping fingers and arm gestures (one hand on his hip and one on his forehead) are unmistakably those of Iberian *fandango*.”¹¹⁵

The *lundu* was often associated with the racial mixing of lighter-skinned men and darker-skinned women. The power dynamics of these associations were obviously asymmetrical in favor of the men, in terms of sex, race, and class. However, just as with the figures of the *mulatta* and *malandra*, the situation was often described in terms of female seduction rather than male conquest. The asymmetries in power were denied by the men, but they were facts that “no amount of romantic interest could undo.”¹¹⁶

The Afro-Brazilian version of the *lundu* grew in the margins of society, particularly in the bars and taverns where lower class men, women, whites and blacks came together to relax and find some freedom from authority. These spaces were of particular importance as sites of interracial mediation. In the dimly lit bars, color and cultural barriers diminished. Music and dance were both important elements in the creation of these spaces, for they provided a common language through which racial boundaries could be breached. Copious amounts of alcohol relaxed inhibitions, and both blacks and whites relaxed their conformity to social norms and boundaries.

A description of a typical tavern is found in the writings of Edmundo Luis de Costa. He writes, “In Colonial Rio, these taverns were the haven of the lower classes, where the drunkard, the boaster, the idler, and the fugitive slave took their ease, drinking and singing, playing lively airs on the *berimbão*, the *motungo*, and the *marimba* and luxuriating in idleness, and vice.” He continues, “The rum was drained and the cups filled again with great clatter. On with the dance! Partners were grasped for the *chocaina*, the *chula*, the *sarambeque* and the *lundu*. The music became more lively, the dancing more unrestrained, as their bodies moved to and fro, with

undulations and sensuous movements of hips and breasts, of arms and legs.”¹¹⁷

The *lundu* even began to seep into the parties and cultural life of those in power. Thomas Lindley, a traveler in Brazil, published a book in 1805 that dealt with the spread of the *lundu* into upper class white society. He writes, “A few of the superior classes give elegant entertainments, have family concerts, balls, and card parties. During and after [their banquets] they drink unusual quantities of wine; and when elevated to an extraordinary pitch, the guitar or violin is introduced and singing commences. But the song soon gives way to the enticing *Negro dance* . . . which is a mixture of the dances of Africa and the fandangos of Spain and Portugal.”¹¹⁸

Chasteen notes that José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva, one of the leaders of Brazilian independence, was a *lundu* enthusiast in the 1820s. Chasteen writes, “the image of José Bonifácio delivering an *umbigada* must give us pause. If he did surely it was not at court but at gatherings where such activities came more naturally. . . and probably during the pre-Lenten time when flaunting social convention became virtually mandatory.”¹¹⁹ This passage emphasized the role that Carnival played in the popularization of the *lundu*, a point important to consider later with the development of samba.

These passages demonstrate the differences in meaning across cultures. For blacks, social spaces surrounding the *lundu* were places of relative autonomy, free from surveillance. For rich white Brazilians, these spaces became exotified realms where social taboos no longer held. They were free to drink, dance intimately, and at times engage in sexual encounters with darker-skinned women. In the twentieth century, this white male attitude was transferred to samba.

These excerpts also show the extent to which the *lundu* cut through boundaries of race, class, and sex. This is not to deny the highly asymmetrical balance of power involved when a

wealthy white man danced with a poor *mulatta* woman, but this asymmetry was partially mitigated by the circumstances of the dance. The anonymity, the neutral territory, and the freedom from surveillance from authority figures all contributed to this partial mitigation. In a society where structured domination in terms of race, sex, and class was pervasive, even these partial mitigations contained elements of resistance.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the *lundu* was fading (just as *entrudo* had) in its national popularity. The influence of European Carnival parades, masked-balls, and European dances were prevalent towards this time, and replaced the *lundu* in elite circles. Yet in Rio de Janeiro, as the northern part of the city was flooded with Afro-Brazilians freed in the emancipation of 1888, the *lundu* experienced a resurgence under a different name. Chasteen writes, “in Rio’s northside Cidade Nova, rapidly filling with poor, dark-skinned newcomers in the last decades of the nineteenth century, people with *lundu* in their sinews shook a leg to polka – and the result was *maxixe*, yet another miscegenated tendril of the same twirling choreographical vine.”¹²⁰ Chasteen describes *maxixe*:

Maxixe was not a specific rhythm, it was a way of moving one’s body and also a way of syncopating and accenting the performance of the music. The *chocalho*, a percussion instrument similar to the maraca, eventually characterised the sound called *maxixe*. Our interest here, however is dance, and *maxixe* was characterised by its *requebros* and *reboleios*, the same sinuous movements of the torso, hips, and legs that animated *lundu* and its cousins.¹²¹

The *maxixe* was danced in similar circumstances as the *lundu*, but was somewhat more modern and more urban. Instead of in taverns, it usually took place in narrow single-storey houses, especially during Carnival. Like the *lundu*, the *maxixe* quickly became known for

pairing light skinned men with *mulattas*, continuing the sexual exotification of these women. The *maxixe* traveled to Paris, drew considerable attention there, and then returned back to Brazil with a ‘new respectability.’ Chasteen writes, “*maxixe* became the central attraction of all but the most strait-laced carnival balls, even those given by the Venetian-style parading societies. . . . Moralists found it ‘pornographic’, statesmen condemned it as ‘barbaric’, but like it or not, everyone knew that the phrase ‘national dance’ referred to *maxixe*. A theatrical review of 1903 proclaimed Brazilian cultural chauvinism with familiar insouciance: ‘So tasty is maxixe / That if he only knew / The Holy Father’d come from Rome / To dance maxixe too.’”¹²²

Maxixe was brought to Rio de Janeiro by the Bahians of the northeast. Along with *maxixe*, the Bahians brought with themselves a wealth of Afro-Brazilian musical and cultural practices. The capital of Bahia, Salvador, was known to be the capital of Afro-Brazilian culture, and traditions such as *Candomblé*, the *batuque*, and the *Congada* were prevalent there. The *Congada* in particular had a strong influence on *maxixe*, and within a few years of its birth *maxixe* developed from a partner dance into a street dance. Street dancing was already a traditional part of the *Congada*, and as *maxixe* moved from small houses onto the street, it gradually became identified with Carnival. Then, in 1917, a new sound developed for Carnival, bringing together elements and rhythms from *Candomblé*, *batuque*, *samba de roda*, *Congada*, and *maxixe*: samba.

Chapter Six — 1808-1917: Empire, Abolition and Republic

1808-1889: Kings in Brazil

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Afro-Brazilian music was shaped largely by the circumstances of colonial slavery which dominated the lives of enslaved Afro-Brazilians. This pattern of colonial domination altered noticeably when colonial rule ended, and even more dramatically when slavery was abolished. These political developments created important changes in the demographics, social organization, and cultural atmosphere of Brazil. These changes were sparked, oddly enough, by the actions of a short Sicilian man.

In the early nineteenth century Napoleon swept across Europe, stirring up feelings of horror and dread that most Europeans had not experienced since the Mongol invasions. In Latin America, revolutionary leaders took advantage of Spain's weakness and launched movements of independence, freeing themselves from Spanish rule. Brazil was different. In 1807, Napoleon's troops crossed the border from Spain into Portugal, and in 1808 the Portuguese king, along with his family and 10,000 to 15,000 retainers, fled to Rio de Janeiro. This began the imperial era of Brazil under the direct rule of the king of Portugal. The king stayed in Brazil until 1821, well past Napoleon's defeat, until unrest in Portugal forced him to return. He left his son, Dom Pedro I, as prince regent in Brazil. As Portugal sought to recover from the war and return to its domination of Brazil, Dom Pedro, who had spent his formative years in Brazil, refused to comply and declared Brazilian independence. By December 1, 1822, the troops loyal to Portugal had been driven out and Dom Pedro was seated as Brazil's first king.

The presence of royalty in Brazil was significant for a number of reasons. It set off a veritable spree of modernization and cultural growth in Rio de Janeiro. Books became relatively

available; libraries and schools opened; theaters were established; scientific research was funded; and the population of Rio de Janeiro swelled to more than twice its size, reaching 100,000 people in 1821. By 1822, Rio de Janeiro had become the center of Brazilian intellectual life, as well as a mixing ground for people of different races, cultures, and backgrounds.

The centralization of Rio de Janeiro had important consequences for the tension between nationalism and regionalism. This tension centered around issues of power balance, autonomy, and national identity. The presence of a king in Rio de Janeiro created a centralized government in which the balance of power resided in the capital. This limited the autonomy of the provinces, distant from the capital in terms of geography, culture, and character. As academic life in Rio blossomed, questions of national identity became increasingly troubling. Most nationalist rhetoric of Europe at the time depended on arguments of racial purity or unity. Any claim of racial 'purity' in Brazil would have been untenable due to the large degree of racial mixing which had been continuing uninterrupted for centuries. Many Brazilian intellectuals saw the mixed racial heritage of Brazil as the cause of its 'backwardness,' and the only solution that they could find was to encourage an influx of European immigrants. This began an official policy of 'whitening' the country.

This racist argument worked hand in hand with an argument of necessity, for it was clear that the end of slavery in Brazil was near. Even so, the boom of coffee plantations in the area around Rio de Janeiro created a huge demand for slave labor. Between 1800 and 1830, Africans were being enslaved and taken to Brazil at a pace faster than ever before. Even in 1830, when England forced Brazil to declare traffic in slaves illegal, the transatlantic slave trade hardly slowed down. It was not until 1850, when serious legislation was passed in order to gain Britain's favor, that the transatlantic slave trade was finally brought to an end. Even then,

emancipation for those enslaved did not come about until 1888, making Brazil the last country in the Americas to abolish slavery. Between 1860 and 1888, slave-owners in Brazil could see emancipation looming near, and put pressure on their government to encourage the immigration of Europeans so that the labor supply would not diminish. During the second half of the nineteenth century, millions of Europeans poured into Brazil, in effect creating this ‘whitening’ that many intellectuals sought.

1889-1917: A New Republic

In 1889, regional powers in Brazilian rebelled against their king and transformed Brazil into a republic. If the imperial age of Brazil created strong unifying forces throughout the country, the ‘democratic’ republic that followed the revolution of 1889 emphasized regionalist forces. The two major contenders for national power were the state of Minas Gerais, with its center in Rio de Janeiro, and the state and city of São Paulo. Power brokers in these two states agreed to alternate presidencies through an explicit agreement, an arrangement which lasted until the republic fell apart in 1930.

Many trends of the nineteenth century continued into the twentieth. Waves of massive immigration from Europe created large scale shifts in demographics, and a growing trend of urbanization drew people to large cities. In her book *The Social History of the Brazilian Samba*, Lisa Shaw writes, “The Brazilian élite’s belief in the racial superiority of whites and the *branqueamento* or ‘whitening’ ideology, gave rise to the myth of the *operário ideal* (ideal factory worker), of white, European origin. Brazil’s blacks and mulattos, who had proved highly skillful in a whole host of trades and crafts prior to the abolition of slavery in 1888, were subsequently stigmatized, the implication being that they were unsuitable for modern life and

progress.”¹²³

In addition, the question of national unity became much more critical. No longer could the country unite around their king. Brazil began to feel a sense of insecurity, an insecurity that resulted from the European emphasis on homogeneity of ethnicity which was impossible in Brazil. In his book *The Mystery of Samba*, Hermano Vianna describes this process: “The growing importance of nationalism in the nineteenth century rooted political legitimacy almost invariably in the idea of national community, and community usually implied commonality. Commonality, in turn, was most often imagined as ethnic homogeneity. Because human populations are, in fact, generally heterogeneous, a sense of homogeneity had to be created. Ethnic homogeneity became a nationalist project.”¹²⁴

While white Brazilians scrambled for a national identity, Afro-Brazilians enjoyed an unprecedented level of autonomy in their social interactions. Newly freed Afro-Brazilians joined those who had been free for generations in cities like Rio de Janeiro, and together they created Black communities that generated a flourishing of Afro-Brazilian culture. White authorities did not welcome these communities, and systematically relocated Black settlements to the fringes of the city. Shaw writes:

In 1904, under the direction of the then *prefeito* (mayor) of Rio, Pereira Passos, and President Rodrigues Alves, Rio’s city centre was the object of a massive renovation campaign, part of the savage urbanization of the city known as the ‘*bota-abaixo*’ (literally ‘knocking down’), which drove out the poor to the hillside shantytowns. . . Under the slogan ‘*O Rio civiliza-se*’ (‘Rio is becoming civilized’) the poor were forcibly moved from central areas of the city, that were becoming valuable, to the *favelas* or shantytowns and the suburbs of the humble *Zona Norte* (North Zone). Hence the *bairro* (neighbourhood or district) became a central part of the identity of the lower classes, as distinct from the *cidade* (city) as a whole.¹²⁵

Birth of the *Morros*

Expelled from the center of Rio, blacks began to build shantytowns in the *Zona Norte* on the hills that overlooked Rio de Janeiro. These hills could not hold the shacks built upon them, and witnessed devastating losses of lives and buildings whenever a heavy rain fell. The Portuguese word for hill, *morro*, became synonymous with these shantytowns. The creation of these communities was the first step in the creation of a national Afro-Brazilian identity.

Into the *morros* came Afro-Brazilian immigrants from all over the country. Some came because the land upon which they had worked was ravaged by drought, others simply to seek jobs and a better life. In Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and other large cities, they sought to find good jobs, often to no avail. The influx of European workers, as well as widespread sentiment that blacks were unfit for skilled labor, relegated most Afro-Brazilians to the more menial jobs of the city. Even in the music industry, Afro-Brazilians were unwelcome. From its birth in 1904, the nascent music industry reinforced the domination of European aesthetics and sensibilities by exclusively recording European song traditions. Alternatives to European music, like the Argentine tangos of that era, were played at times, but never associated with their African roots.

This combination of elements continued the domination of Afro-Brazilians that many had hoped would end with the institution of slavery. This is not to say that nothing changed. After emancipation, Afro-Brazilians were freed to a large extent from the scrutiny and surveillance they experienced during slavery. In the *morros*, there was a great deal of autonomy, allowing a growth of cultural practices, spaces, and resistance that was unprecedented. The growth of the hidden transcript in the *morros* was critical to later musical developments.

Previously, during slavery, Afro-Brazilians had been forced to conceal, hide, and subvert

the meanings of their religious practices, dances, and music. Prior to the birth of the *morros*, these hidden transcripts were highly localized, spread from one community to another only with difficulty. As autonomous interactions were made more and more possible, these cultural practices were able to emerge from the hidden transcript. They influenced each other back and forth until new syntheses were created, and a public transcript of the *morro* was created. This new Afro-Brazilian public transcript had a number of manifestations, but the one that caught national attention was samba.

Chapter Seven — Samba

The shantytowns provided the perfect breeding ground for black cultural manifestations, including samba. On the *morro* blacks could isolate themselves totally from the pervasive ideals of the white elite, and it became a spiritual refuge, as well as a physical hideout for petty criminals and persecuted *sambistas*. Internal harmony on the *morro* was paramount, and there existed a moral code of practice. Each member of the community had a particular role to play in maintaining the status quo, such as the peace-keeper or *valente*. The community as a whole took precedence over the individual, and the street rather than the makeshift shack became the centre of life. . . . The *morro* allowed Afro-Brazilian traditions to be preserved and to flourish, and it had its own social structure and means for economic survival.¹²⁶

There were two fairly distinct worlds in Rio at that time: that of the North, dominated by blacks in the *morros*, and that of the South, populated by the rich white elite. Yet this distinction was never complete, and interracial encounters were prevalent, particularly in spaces of diminished authority, such as taverns, parties, and Carnival. Hermano Vianna writes about the importance of cultural mediators who were able to bridge these two worlds, particularly in musical, artistic, and literary circles. Nevertheless, in the beginning of the twentieth century Rio de Janeiro contained two nearly separate worlds.

This social segregation was revealed in the exclusion of Afro-Brazilians from Carnival. In response to this exclusion, the blacks of the *morros* created their own street Carnival, complete with food, dancing, music, and celebration. Claus Schreiner writes, “Rio’s street carnival was conducted through two organizational forms. The lower classes came together in *cordões*; the lower-middle class formed *blocos* of residents from a street or neighborhood who kept to themselves during the festivals and played their polcas and valsas.”¹²⁷ Schreiner also

notes that these *cordões* were associated with the centers of *Candomblé* and *Macumba* (an Afro-Brazilian religion popular in Rio de Janeiro).

One of these centers of *Candomblé* and *Macumba* was the house of Tia Ciata (Auntie Ciata). This house was near Praça Onze (Plaza Eleven), a plaza with such a strong Bahian and African presence that it was called “a true Africa in miniature.”¹²⁸ Tia Ciata was a daughter of Oxum, one of the *orixás* of *Candomblé*, and her backyard was a center of worship for many in Praça Onze.

Her house was also a center of music. Claus Schreiner notes that many of the founders of samba often frequented her home. He writes, “Tia Ciata’s house on Rua Visconde de Itauna 177, right next to the Praça Onze, was a meeting place for musicians, composers and lyricists. Lundus, choros, maxixes, Candomblé, ranchos and many other musical forms were played, written and discussed here. Such meeting places occurred in great numbers. Bohemians in Rio met at Tia Tereza’s, Bahians at Tia Tetéa’s. . . . Tia Tetéa’s and Tia Ciata’s homes served as information centers for the cordões and their musicians (the sambistas) in the city neighborhoods.”¹²⁹

These ‘founders of samba’ included the musicians known as Pixinguinha (Alfredo da Rocha Vianna, Jr.), Sinhô (José Barbosa da Silva), Donga (Ernesto Joaquim Maria dos Santos), João da Baiana (João Machado Guedes), and Heitor dos Prazeres. At Tia Ciata’s house these men and others “played lundus, marchas, choros, maxixes, and batuques in jam sessions that must have been incredible to watch. . . Together, they discussed music, created songs, and began to shape the urban Carioca form of samba that we know today.”¹³⁰

Houses like Tia Ciata’s, as well as the *morros* themselves, provided autonomous spaces for artistic creation and cultural growth. In 1917, Donga and his friends wrote *Pelo Telefone* (On

the Phone), which is generally recognized as the first samba song (see lyrics to *Pelo Telefone*, Song 1, Appendix A). The opening lines of the song, “The master of the follies, Had me advised on the telephone, Not to quarrel with pleasure, If I wanted to have fun,” deal ironically with the ways in which the authorities of Rio de Janeiro shut out the sambistas from the main Carnival event. A later line, “Be sad if you succeed and you’ll see. I hope you get a thrashing, So you’ll never try again,” shows what happens when these early *sambistas* attempted to play their music in the central part of the city. Even this first samba song contains elements of rebelliousness and resistance against authority.

The *sambistas* of Tia Ciata’s house played what is sometimes called samba-maxixe, an old style of samba that is sung and played on guitar, *cavaquinho* (a stringed instrument similar to a ukulele), *pandeiro* (a sort of tambourine), flute, and a whole variety of percussion instruments. This music spread throughout the Praça Onze and into other parts of the *morro*, such as nearby Estácio. In Estácio, a different group of *sambistas*, including Bide, Ismael Silva, Nilton Bastos, and Armando Marçal, heard the new sound of samba and created their own version. McGowan and Pessanha write, “They took the fledgling samba genre and clearly differentiated it from maxixe and marcha, introducing longer notes and two-bar phrasing, and making the tempo slower, in contrast to the maxixelike sambas composed by Sinhô and Donga. The form they codified became the standard reference of samba, to which sambistas always return.”¹³¹

The samba songs of Praça Onze and Estácio were played at Carnival, at first in the *morros* and later in the main city. During this time, the music went from the inside of houses to the street. When this happened, the instrumentation changed somewhat. *Sambistas* used the same drums that were previously used in the *Congadas*, but added the snare drums (*caixas*) and bass drums (*surdos*) used by the Zé Pereiras and other marching bands. Often the guitar and

cavaquinho were kept to aid the singing, but the overall character of the music had changed dramatically, becoming much more percussive.

It was the *cordões* and *blocos* of the street who organized the music and festivities for Carnival in the *morros*. As the music became more sophisticated and the *baterias* (percussion ensembles) grew bigger, more organization was needed to coordinate and train people. In 1928, those same *sambistas* from Estácio created the first *Escola de Samba* (samba school), called *Deixa Falar* (Let them talk). This was a place where people would meet to play samba and practice for the street Carnival of the *morros*. These *baterias* became incredibly sophisticated, inspiring Brazilian musician Caetano Veloso to dub them “the most impressive manifestation of originality and musical competence to be found anywhere in Brazilian popular culture.”¹³²

The basic rhythmic structure of samba is similar to much other Central African drumming music. Although never intended to be written in Western notation, it is often described as having a 2/4 feel with the accent on the second beat. In most *baterias*, this pulse is carried by the *surdos*, large bass drums that play with a quarter note feel, the higher pitched *surdo* on beat one and the lower pitched *surdo* on beat two. Each beat is generally thought of as divisible into four sixteenth-notes, although in some instances instruments will divide the beat into triplets.

The *tamborims* usually play a repeated pattern which is very similar to the timelines that Kwabena Nketia describes in his book *The Music of Africa*. In West African music, these timelines are usually played on bells. There are also bells played in the *baterias*, but these have a more melodic and improvisatory function. Other instruments, such as the *caixa* and the *ganzá*, typically play a steady stream of sixteenth notes, with various patterns of accents to provide contrasting rhythms. Finally, there are solo instruments like the *cuíca* (a friction drum) and the

repinique (a solo drum often played with both a stick and a bare hand).

It is not the purpose here to provide a detailed description of samba music. Such a description has been done adequately elsewhere, and is better left to an audio recording rather than a text.¹³³ However, there are many subtle meanings and implications in samba music itself. A good discussion of these points is found in Barbara Browning's book, *Samba: Resistance in Motion*. As a dancer with experience in samba, *Candomblé* and other Brazilian dances, she writes that samba "narrates a story of racial contact, conflict, and resistance, not just mimetically across a span of musical time but also synchronically, in the depth of a single measure."¹³⁴

Browning is particularly interested in the heavy accent on the second beat, or rather with the suspension of the first beat. She writes, "This suspension leaves the body with a hunger that can only be satisfied by filling the silence with motion. Samba, the dance, cannot exist without the suppression of a strong beat."¹³⁵ She goes on to write that "The accompanying dance can fill the gap with a strong step or can reinforce its dislocation with another kind of suspension. But marking the absence of the downbeat is another way of indicating it. However the samba is danced, *it is the suspension or silencing of a beat which provokes movement.*"¹³⁶

Browning finds this emptiness, this gap, essential to understanding the symbolic aspects of samba. She sees a connection between the deafening of the first beat and the huge hole in the public discourse surrounding the existence of racism and oppression. She sees this deafening as reflective of the denial of Black resistance throughout the centuries which caricatured Afro-Brazilians as joyful, sensual people who do nothing but drink and party. She writes:

Samba is a dance that generally attracts attention for its frenetic exuberance. It is regarded as a secular form, neither religious nor overtly political. It is also known as the Brazilian national dance and has contributed to a world image of Brazil as a country of exaggerated elation, in which joyous

movement is considered meaningful in and of itself. But samba means more than this. And if its steps can only be called forth by syncopation, its deeper meanings can only be evoked by another kind of suppression, which is racial, cultural, and political. Those who would promote samba as a purely aesthetic form, the Brazilian national dance in its most harmless sense, are also those who have long promoted the fiction of a Brazilian racial democracy—a fiction which began to be inscribed with the destruction of the documents of slavery. This is another form of negative articulation, an erasure of a historical moment which in fact brings this moment into relief. This fiction has silenced a history of cultural and political repression of blacks and indigenous peoples. Samba speaks this history.¹³⁷

One could argue that since the samba rhythms are based on traditional African rhythms, developed long before Africa's encounter with European colonization, any additional meanings of resistance read into these rhythms is speculative at best. This argument denies the ability of Afro-Brazilians to reinterpret and rediscover their own music, to find new meanings in old traditions. Far too often elements of music and culture are regarded in isolation, stripped of their social and cultural contexts. Denuded of their songs, musicians, and performance spaces, samba rhythms are easily taken for a transplantation of African rhythms in the Americas. When these rhythms are regarded in their proper context, their role as resistance becomes quite plausible.

Oppression and Resistance of the Early *Sambistas*

From the very beginning, centers of Black culture in the *morros* were seen as dangerous and were suppressed by the authorities. The *sambista* was often identified with the *malandro*, and both were seen as embodying the antithesis of the authority's ideal (the hard working, docile, Black man). Lisa Shaw writes, "The *malandro* and the *sambista* became synonymous, with the performance of samba being outlawed by the authorities in the first decades of its existence.

During this clandestine period in samba's history, when its performance was closely associated with the Afro-Brazilian cult practice of *Candomblé* in the minds of the authorities, the state feared the potentially subversive group solidarity engendered by informal musical or religious gatherings."¹³⁸

An article by Jota Efegê confirms Shaw's observations. He writes, "In those vanished times of 1920 until almost 1930, samba was considered illegitimate. It was looked on as the stuff of lowlife rascals, the carol of vagabonds. And the police, in their chief function of watching over the maintenance of public order, persecuted [samba] without rest." Efegê goes on to describe how this oppression was met by strong resistance on the part of the Afro-Brazilians: "The heroic epoch was like that, its people valiant, not letting themselves be intimidated, battered but unrelenting," ignoring "the scorn of the bourgeoisie."¹³⁹

It was a cycle of domination and repression, difficult to pin down to an initial cause. The authorities and police oppressed the *sambistas* because they feared changes to the social fabric that might come from Afro-Brazilian solidarity and resistance, and the Afro-Brazilian communities became strong centers for resistance in part because of the shared experience of their oppression. This cycle of domination and resistance was a continuation of the struggle which had begun on sugar plantations in the 1530s. Just like the earlier forms of Afro-Brazilian resistance, it is helpful to view the resistance of the *sambistas*, and others from the *morros*, in terms of survival, transformation, and unity.

Survival in the *morros* was quite different from survival on the plantations. The dangers lay not as much in the violence of the slave-owner but in the poverty and hunger which so many faced. People found different ways of coping with these dangers. Some turned to alcohol or gambling. Others sought religion and used prayer and ritual to help make sense of their world.

The *sambistas* found relief in music, especially in the music of Carnival. Within samba, Afro-Brazilians constructed identities more satisfying than their mundane lives. In music, it did not matter whether a person was educated or had money, but only whether or not he or she could play. Like soccer or other sports, the playing field of music was roughly equal and gave Afro-Brazilians an opportunity to excel.

In addition to simply surviving mentally and physically, *sambistas* were focused on imagining a world where they could not only survive but flourish, a place where the tables of power were turned upside-down. This imagined reality was not created simply for the sake of maintaining mental sanity, but of bringing about actual changes in the world. Whereas the authorities sought to limit the choices of Afro-Brazilians to the most undesirable options, the *sambistas* reveled in the figure of the *malandro*, a figure bent on outwitting his oppressor and subverting the system. In the songs of the *sambistas*, the *malandro* became a symbol of resistance and transformation.

In the first chapter of her book, *The Social History of the Brazilian Samba*, Lisa Shaw emphasizes the importance of the figure of the *malandro* in early samba songs. She finds the two main themes of these songs to be (1) the *malandro* and his attitude, *malandragem*, and (2) that of women, sex, and love. Although at a superficial level these themes do not seem to be related to Afro-Brazilian resistance, they are quite deeply related. By extolling *malandragem*, the *sambistas* were in effect persuading young Black Brazilian men to reject the roles into which they had been thrust and create a new images for themselves, breaking out of the paradigm of slavery. Shaw writes, “The *malandro*’s negative attitude to manual labour directly flouted the work ethic of the Vargas government [which came into place in 1930]. He parodied bourgeois values and lifestyle in his dapper, white, linen suit, which formed an ironic contrast to his dark

skin, his jauntily tilted straw hat, two-tone shoes, silk shirt and scarf, and spurned the manual labour. . . that was so closely associated with exploitation and the institution of slavery. . . .”¹⁴⁰

The popularity of the *malandro* was not simply due to his negative attitudes regarding work and hard labor. It was also in his defense of himself, his friends, and his community. This consecration of unity and solidarity resonated with the closely knit communities on the *morros*, and encouraged people to look out for one another. Shaw writes, “Although seemingly self-obsessed and concerned, above all, for his own well-being, the *malandro* is, nevertheless, vehemently opposed to the exploitation of his social class. He challenges any form of manipulation by the state, and thus is worshiped by the rest of his community. He does not want to become a middle-class city dweller, preferring to indulge in small acts of *malandragem*, rather than make any serious attempt to climb the social ladder.”¹⁴¹ Implicit in *malandragem* is a rejection of industrial labor, of the oppressive consequences of capitalism, and of the hierarchical system of power based on wealth and race. (For examples of the ideal of *malandragem* in samba songs, see Song Text 2, ‘*mulato bamba*’ by Noel Rosa, and Song Text 3, ‘*O que será de mim?*’ (‘What Will Become of Me’), by Ismael Silva, both in Appendix A)

By facilitating survival, transformation, and unity within the *morros*, *sambistas* attempted to strengthen the spirit of resistance within the Black community. As their songs were disseminated, blacks living outside the *morros* heard these ideas and recognized the message of resistance. The message was not yet explicit, but was understood by those for whom it was intended. Samba songs were a powerful example of music from the hidden transcript slipping into the public transcript. If this process had been allowed to continue, its consequences in terms of the development of Black consciousness in Brazil would have been profound.

Chapter Eight: the Appropriation and Nationalization of Samba

After the revolution of 1889, national politics came to be dominated by a few entrenched interests and resembled an oligarchy more than a democracy. In 1889, these entrenched interests were divided into the coffee based bourgeoisies centered in Minas Gerais and São Paulo. By the late 1920s, this system came to an end. As Boris Fausto writes, “the union between Paulista and Mineiro oligarchies was fundamental in the political history of the First Republic. In this union, one or the other faction prevailed. As time went by, arguments broke out and at the end the two sides were at odds.”¹⁴²

Many Brazilians were not pleased with the political situation in the early twentieth century. Movements by landless workers, religious idealists, coffee planters, and the urban working class occurred with frequency but little success. When workers were able to unionize and pressure employers and legislators, any rights granted to them would disappear as soon as that pressure ceased.¹⁴³ Between 1917 and 1920, heavy inflation prompted more successful strikes in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. These strikes caught the nation’s attention and forced legislators to pass child labor laws and other minimal rights legislation for workers. Even so, no substantive changes were made.

Many lieutenants in the army were also displeased with the state of politics. One of the most famous episodes in Brazil’s history centered around the Prestes Column. In 1924, a group of lieutenants and enlisted men took control of São Paulo, occupied it for several weeks, and proceeded to march out of the city and around the countryside. Their aim was to encourage people to rise up against the oligarchs. In this column, led by Luis Carlos Prestes, 1,500 people marched approximately 24,000 kilometers through the backlands of Brazil. Along with other

revolts around the mid-1920s, the Prestes Column encouraged people to more directly oppose the political system. The radicals in the military also saw a great need to unify the country and oppose regionalist tendencies. Fausto writes, the officers “believed it was necessary to rebuild the state in order to rebuild the nation.”¹⁴⁴

In 1929, political tensions came to a head when the president nominated a candidate from within his own party, a Paulista named Júlio Prestes (no relation to Luis Carlos Prestes). This defied the agreement between Minas Gerais and São Paulo to alternate presidencies. It also coincided with the worldwide recession of 1929 which sent coffee prices and consumption plummeting. An alliance was made between the political opposition party and the military rebels, and by mid-1930 a ‘revolutionary conspiracy’ was being carried out. On October 3, 1930 the rebels launched attacks in Minas Gerais and Rio Grande do Sul. By the time the rebel troops in the south reached Rio de Janeiro in late October, the government forces had backed down. On November 3, 1930, the general of the rebel forces, Getulio Vargas, became the new president of Brazil.

The alliance that brought an end to the First Republic was quite diverse and somewhat unstable. They were no more inclined towards liberal democracy than the oligarchs before them, and as Fausto writes, “an exchange of elites took place.”¹⁴⁵ However, once Vargas took power a number of themes received new emphasis. Vargas was a populist leader who saw himself as a paternal figure that cared for the workers of Brazil, particularly the industrial workers. He pushed for industrialization, institutionalized protections for workers, and a greater involvement of the armed forces within Brazilian politics.

As mentioned previously, national identity was extremely important in Brazil and elsewhere during the first half of the twentieth century. Although some European nationalists

were able to use racist ideology to reinforce their nationalist goals, Vargas had no such ability. It was simply impossible to ignore the degree of interracial mixing that had already happened. Hermano Vianna writes: “Purity and authenticity go together in this ‘essentializing’ conceptualization of a national spirit. Each people’s national essence, the untainted wellspring of collective identity, is supposedly unique and not to be plagiarized or mixed.”¹⁴⁶ The question of nationalism and national identity had been raised in the late nineteenth century, but did not become urgent until Vargas took power. Not only were Vargas’s economic policies intended to unify the country, but the factionalism within his own base of support demanded that he unite a broad coalition of positions into his camp.

Where to find this national identity?

In 1933, a Brazilian anthropologist named Gilberto Freyre published his now famous book *Casa-Grande & Senzala*, later translated into English as *The Masters and the Slaves*. This book provided a new foundation for the project of national unification. Whereas earlier authors had deplored the horrors of racial mixing, or at best had considered them quite coolly, Freyre saw racial mixing and the *mestiço* in a positive light. Vianna writes, “According to Freyre, racially mixed Brazilian culture was not the cause of Brazilian backwardness but, to the contrary, something to be carefully nurtured, the very guarantee of our distinctiveness among nations and the mark of our destiny – which was to be increasingly *mestiço*.”¹⁴⁷

With the elevation of the *mestiço* as a symbol of national unity came an elevation of Afro-Brazilian culture. Vianna writes, “Instead of a degenerative influence, the cause of great woes, race mixing could now be interpreted as a positive cultural process around which Brazilians could invent a new identity. Cultural products like samba, Afro-Brazilian cuisine, and

Luso-tropicalist hygienic techniques became the signs of that identity.”¹⁴⁸ Vianna suggests that Gilberto Freyre’s immediate popularity was due to both the long precedent of cultural interactions between whites and Afro-Brazilians as well as the need within the national consciousness and the political system for a unifying ideology.

Prior to 1930, themes of resistance within Afro-Brazilian music had been, for the most part, repressed by white authorities. The cases of the *lundu* and *maxixe* are somewhat more complex, but even these were generally frowned upon. After 1933, a new tactic was employed by the government: appropriation. Brazilian authorities under Vargas worked to strip elements of Afro-Brazilian culture of their history and meaning. Authorities then generated new meanings for samba and Carnival, turning them into symbols of Brazilian identity and patriotism. Samba went from ‘belonging’ to the people of the *morros* to ‘belonging’ to the people of Brazil as a whole.

This combination of nationalistic cultural appropriation and new authoritarian government made resistance much more difficult and dangerous for the *sambistas*. Any attempt to claim the spaces in which samba was played as a place of Black autonomy was decried as reverse racism. To extol the ideal of the *malandro* was to be anti-nationalist and the subject of government censorship. At the same time, *sambistas* who were willing to cater to the nationalist ideology were tolerated or rewarded. Lisa Shaw writes: “Samba and Afro-Brazilian cult practices were permitted, provided that their participants abided by certain rules laid down by the regime. Non-white institutions such as these were ‘Brazilianized’, and their potential for subversion was diffused.”¹⁴⁹

In the 1920s, the hidden transcript of samba had gradually emerged into the public transcript, particularly in the upside-down world of Carnival in Rio de Janeiro. In order to

appropriate and subvert this growing emergence, Vargas needed to put close controls on its means of dissemination throughout the country. The names of the *Escolas de Samba* were some of the first things changed. Claus Schreiner describes how the Vargas's regime "rejected the original name chosen for the Portela: Vai Como Pode (Come As You Are). The name struck them as sounding too democratic, as well as conflicting with Vargas' intention to force the people to see things his way. The school renamed itself Gremio Recreativo Escola do Samba Portela (Recreational Corps of the Portela Samba School). The Vargas regime meant to exploit the samba schools in line with its own interest of strengthening patriotic fervor in the populace."¹⁵⁰ The co-option of the *Escolas de Samba* became more or less official in 1935. Shaw writes, "After 1935, samba schools were legalized and obliged to enter the carnival competitions as official entities, each known as a *Grêmio Recreativo Escola de Samba*. From then on the annual parades were organized and financed by the state."¹⁵¹

Another important tactic of appropriation used by Vargas was that of musical censorship. It was impossible for him to simply forbid subversive songs, so instead he created strict controls over the means of production of national music: the radio and record industries. Vargas recognized the power of these industries over the collective consciousness of Brazil, power to either strengthen his regime or to subvert it. Shaw writes, "The revolution of 1930 mobilized public opinion in Brazil and awakened a desire for participation in political life among the population. It was thus necessary for the nascent political regime to try to direct and control the opinions of the Brazilian people, and to obtain their support for further political changes. To this end the Provisional Government of 1930 established the *Departamento Oficial de Propaganda* (Official Department of Propaganda) on 2 July 1931. . . "¹⁵² Vargas renamed this department several times, but its final incarnation was called the *Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda*

(Press and Propaganda Department), or DIP.

The DIP quickly became the most influential instrument of government censorship. Shaw continues, “The DIP supplied both the press and radio stations with lists of forbidden terms, the use of which could result in prison sentences. From 1937 these lists were sent to newspapers every month, and included any reference to the regime before 10 November 1937.”¹⁵³ Yet even with the DIP’s surveillance of popular media, songwriters were occasionally able to slip subversive songs past the ears of the censors. In order to eliminate these slips, an “independent watchdog was set up by the growing number of radio stations. This was known as the *Comissão de Censura da Confederação Brasileira de Radiodifusão* (Censorship Commission of the Brazilian Confederation of Radio Diffusion) and its remit was to prohibit the transmission of certain pieces of music that had slipped through the DIP’s net. . . . Tight control of the content of song lyrics was assured by the censors of the DIP, whose stamp of approval was required before lyrics could be reproduced on sheet music or recorded on disc.”¹⁵⁴

Yet even these repressive measures were not enough to gather the allegiance of the songwriters. The DIP simultaneously censored songwriters who did not comply with government policy, and rewarded those who did. Shaw writes, “The DIP coerced popular composers into creating songs that were patriotic by offering attractive incentives, such as sponsorships, subsidies and competition prizes. If they toed the official line and espoused the new work ethic of the Vargas regime, publicly rejecting the traditional theme of samba lyrics, *malandragem*, which advocated a lifestyle of idleness, crime and debauchery, songwriters could receive considerable commercial rewards.”¹⁵⁵

Due to this government censorship and coercion, elements of resistance in samba music retreated back into the hidden transcript. This had important consequences for the prospects of

Afro-Brazilian unity and Black consciousness. It removed the samba that was played on the radio and disseminated throughout the country from any direct relevance to the lives of Brazilians, both in terms of lyrics and in terms of music itself. As musical censorship retrenched further, the music that found its way onto the airwaves was increasingly produced by middle class and upper class white musicians, not by those who had innovated it. Caetano Veloso writes, “One has only to hear Sílvia Caldas’s recordings of ‘Maria’ or ‘Tu’ by Ary Barroso, or Pixinguinha’s ‘Carinhoso’ sung by Orlando Silva—all songs from the thirties—to know that the tamed and refined samba of the studios and musical notation had long been the dominant genre, with recordings of the more percussive brand of ‘street’ samba for the *terreiro* variety being the exception rather than the rule.”¹⁵⁶

Circumventing the Censors

As Vargas exerted his control over the national production of music, many *sambistas* met this coercion and appropriation with resistance. Some attempted to circumvent the censors, to resist within the public transcript. Just as during the time of slavery, musicians were forced to be less explicit in their song lyrics, to hint more than to tell. It was at this level of double meaning that songs of *malandragem* were occasionally able to work their way into the mass media, in this case phonograph records and radio. Lisa Shaw agrees with scholar Cláudia Matos, writing “the ethos [of *malandragem*] did not disappear entirely, but rather became increasingly ambiguous. [Matos] says that songwriters managed to evade censorship and seemingly to toe the official line, yet still put across elements of the counter-culture of *malandragem*. The *malandro*’s vision of life became more realistic and a critical view of society was covertly expressed.”¹⁵⁷ Shaw gives an example of a song text of this sort, reproduced here in Appendix A, Song 4.

Shaw elaborates on the argument presented by Matos:

Matos believes that *sambistas* could ostensibly write about the reformed *malandro regenerado*, while at the same time using him as a mouthpiece to make ironic comments about daily life. Deliberate chinks in the reformed spiv's armour allow us to glimpse his former lifestyle and origins, along with his true attitude towards the new work ethic that he appears, on the surface at least, to espouse. The spiv's* linguistic dexterity is crucial to his existence. Many *sambistas* chose this 'falar macio' ('smooth talking'), as opposed to the 'pisar macio' ('smooth walking'), as Gilberto Vasconcelos puts it. Instead of extolling the virtues of *malandragem* in their lyrics, they directed their efforts into creating a language of *malandragem*, which would embody the ethos in its irony, ambiguities, word play and satirical humour.¹⁵⁸

*Shaw uses the word 'spiv' to refer to the *malandro*

Other *sambistas* chose to resist within the hidden transcript. Samba songs that opposed Vargas and celebrated *malandragem* were undoubtedly played in spaces beyond the gaze of the censors. These songs did not reach large audiences and were not recorded, but strong hints of their existence remain. In areas where government censorship weakened, even if only temporarily, these songs found their way into the public transcript. One such incident was in São Paulo in 1932, two years after Vargas took power. The coffee growers there were very unhappy about the crash in world market prices, decline in consumption of coffee, and lack of favor from Vargas. Claus Schreiner writes: "Two years after the putsch of 1930 in São Paulo, the constitutional revolution to overthrow Vargas began. (It was put down by the military only months later, but managed to effect new elections and a constitutional convention in 1933.) Authors [of samba songs] from São Paulo modeled themselves on their colleagues from Rio

when they wrote satirical sambas like ‘Gosto que me enrosco’: ‘I would love to hear that the dictatorship is ending and that the courageous Getúlio has the grace to hide himself.’”¹⁵⁹

The years between 1930 and 1937 were filled with political turmoil. In 1932, the Ação Integralista Brasileira (AIB), or Brazilian Integralist Movement, was formed. This party modeled itself on the fascist parties in Italy and Germany, and advocated “a national consciousness of a spiritual nature based on unifying principles: ‘God, Fatherland, and Family’ was the movement’s motto.”¹⁶⁰ By the end of 1937, this movement reached its height of 100,000 to 200,000 individuals across Brazil.

On the other side of the spectrum were the Brazilian Communists, who formed an organization called the Aliança Nacional Libertadora (National Liberation Alliance), or the ANL. This organization proclaimed its existence in March of 1935, and declared Luis Carlos Prestes as its president (the same Prestes made famous by the Prestes Column). By July of 1935, some people estimated the ANL to have as many as 100,000 members. On the fifth of July, a member of the ANL read a manifesto written by Prestes, who was in hiding in Brazil. This manifesto “called for the overthrow of the ‘hateful Vargas government’ as well as for a takeover by a democratic, national, revolutionary government.”¹⁶¹ In response, Vargas cracked down on the ANL, squashed a few scattered uprisings across the country, and instilled a general climate of fear. Fausto writes, “The 1935 episode had serious consequences, since it opened the way for far-reaching repressive measures and for an escalation of authoritarianism.”¹⁶²

The Communists and the Integralists were not the only ones mobilizing during the 1920s and 1930s. In response to the racism faced by Afro-Brazilians as they moved into urban areas, Black Brazilians began to develop their own political organizations. In his article, “Where Are the Blacks?”, Antônio Pitanga describes the founding of the most important of these

organizations, the FNB:

This marginalization and humiliation could not go on without a political response. In the 1920s a vigorous black press emerged, and in the 1930s there appeared the Frente Negra Brasileira (FNB; Black Brazilian Front), which led mass demonstrations against racism and the social exclusion of the Afro-Brazilian community. The FNB was the largest organization of the Black Movement in the Republican period, and it spread throughout Brazil with more than 70,000 members. The FNB had a strong impact, and thanks to its struggle the integration of blacks in the free labor society began, albeit timidly.¹⁶³

The FNB did not seek to overturn of capitalism itself, merely the oppressive power structure contained within it. Although some authors criticize the movement for this fact, Michael Hanchard is correct when he writes, “While the FNB did not seek to overturn an entire social system, its critique of racial democracy and promotion of Black self-help was a contestation, however limited, of white hegemony. It set a historical precedent for Black political activity in twentieth-century Brazil.”¹⁶⁴ Hanchard continues, “At the very least, the Black Brazilian Front epitomized the possibility that Afro-Brazilians could refer to their racial and cultural identity as a positive organizing principle within the context of capitalist development.”¹⁶⁵

In reaction to the political turmoil and anti-authoritarian backlash against the government, Vargas staged a coup d'état in 1937 that inaugurated the period of Brazilian history known as the Estado Novo. With this ‘New State’ Vargas swept away any semblances of democracy, tightened up his censorship machinery, and completed the trends towards centralization that he had begun in 1930. Movements like the FNB were made illegal, and censorship controls were tightened.

As the world entered into its second World War, the United States began to see Vargas as a strategic ally. Brazil had become a part of Roosevelt's 'Good Neighbor' policy. Although in the early 1930s Vargas enjoyed strong economic relations with Germany, by the late 1930s he began to favor the United States. During the war, Brazil supported the Allies with supplies and equipment in a limited fashion. Most Brazilians celebrated the end of World War II as a triumph of democracy against fascism. Opposition leaders immediately turned this sentiment of anti-fascism against Vargas. His power base crumbled away, and in 1945 Vargas left office. That year began Brazil's second attempt to live under democracy.

Contested Terrain

In the course of the evolution of samba, the production of music became contested terrain. Countless academicians have posed the question: was samba appropriated and stripped of any potential for resistance, or was it a training ground for radicals? Both of these views solidify a situation that has historically been in flux. A battlefield, a contested terrain, does not belong to anyone by necessity. It is only associated with one group or another as long as that group successfully defends that territory.

When large numbers of Afro-Brazilians came to Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo after emancipation, white authorities saw them as both inferior and as a threat. Consequently, most Black immigrants were relocated to the margins of society, into the *morros*. From the *morros*, Afro-Brazilian culture blossomed and began to penetrate into those elements of white Brazilian society which were most accessible: Carnival, music, and dance. Gaining this foothold in the cultural consciousness of Rio de Janeiro, Afro-Brazilian music and culture began to spread into the mass media, onto the airwaves and gramophone recordings.

This was contested by authorities first by repression and police harassment, then after Vargas came to power by appropriation and censorship. As Vargas and the authorities pushed Afro-Brazilian artists and musicians back into line, he was resisted with a variety of tactics. Some circumvented the censors by only hinting at the messages they had explicitly stated before. Others took advantage of weak points in governmental censorship which occurred during scattered uprisings, such as that of 1932 in São Paulo. Some song-writers and musicians took their music underground and sang songs of resistance in spaces where retaliation was unlikely. Others no doubt bought into the cooption sponsored by the government and began to toe the official line. Resistance was not ubiquitous nor was it inevitable. It was a choice made by those who rejected the official choices offered to them.

Chapter Nine — Appropriation, Authenticity, and Creativity

The appropriation and nationalization of samba music quickly solidified into a rigid conception of authenticity. This conception of authenticity contained a counterpart, a critique of music seen as inauthentic. The question of which music was authentic or inauthentic was answered differently by various voices in Brazilian history. To some, only the samba music of the poor, illiterate blacks of the *morros* was truly authentic. To others, authenticity was granted to the commercialized, orchestrated, patriotic sambas on the radio. Some notions of authenticity disregarded samba altogether and turned back to the folk music of rural areas of the northeast and the south.

During the 1950s and 1960s these concepts of authenticity became very significant. Cutting through all of these conceptions was a sense of pride in Brazil and in *brasilidade* (Brazilianness). Those who created music that was seen as inauthentic became threats to Brazil itself. This occurred to a lesser extent in 1958 with the creation of bossa nova, and to a greater extent in 1967 with music called *tropicália*. In both cases, authenticity was used to limit the creative power of musicians, to limit their choices to those forms of music considered to be authentic. This domination was resisted, and in both cases the creation of new musical forms resulted in the weakening of the restrictions of authenticity. This provided future musicians with more creative freedom.

The question of authenticity had its roots in the older question of national identity. This question was answered in a number of ways. Those in the nineteenth century conceived of national identity in terms of racial purity, and saw Brazil as doomed to failure because of this. After Gilberto Freyre's rise in popularity, many Brazilians embraced the notion of 'racial

democracy.’ The white ideal was put aside and a mestiço ideal was elevated. Afro-Brazilian culture became nationalized and appropriated, turned into a symbol of *brasilidade*.

Both white and mestiço ideals were rooted in static conceptions of culture and authenticity. Afro-Brazilian culture, once nationalized, was turned into a specific set of practices rather than a changing series of creative responses. Blacks who played samba music were authentic, but those who created new forms of music were not. Even though Freyre’s ideal of racial mixing seems to imply cultural adaptation and change, it simply assumed mestiço culture as a given.

Not all Brazilians responded to questions of national identity and authenticity with static conceptions. A powerful new answer came with Oswald de Andrade’s 1924 manifesto, the “Manifesto da Poesia Pau-Brasil” (Manifesto of Brazilwood Poetry). This manifesto called for an end to the re-creation of European culture in Brazil. Oswald de Andrade wrote, “The Empire was like that. We made everything erudite. We forgot ingenuity.”¹⁶⁶ Instead of flowery speech, he calls for “language without archaisms, without erudition. Natural and neologic. The millionaire-contribution of all the errors. The way we speak. The way we are.”¹⁶⁷

Oswald de Andrade sought to give Brazilian poetry solid grounding in the very experience of being Brazilian, not in intellectual frameworks. He writes, “Poetry exists in the facts. The shacks of saffron and ochre in the green of the Favela, under cabralin blue, are aesthetic facts.”¹⁶⁸ In characterizing *brasilidade*, Andrade contrasts the ‘forest’ and the ‘school.’ Christopher Dunn writes, “In his formulation, the school connotes lettered society, with its formal institutions and technological resources, and the forest serves as a natural metaphor for that which was excluded or marginalized from the economic, political, and cultural centers of power and prestige.”¹⁶⁹

The very name of the manifesto, Pau-Brasil (Brazilwood), refers back to those first trees which were exported to Europe by the Portuguese. Oswald calls for Pau-Brasil *poetry*, explicitly calling for poetry “for exportation.” The call for poetry for export demanded that those involved in Brazilian cultural production create products that were both Brazilian and innovative. This would allow Brazilian culture to be exported to the United States and Europe. This call was eventually taken up by a group of poets in the 1950s who developed a style known as *poesia concreta* (concrete poetry), who “situated themselves on the cusp of an experimental tradition descended from Stéphane Mallarmé, Ezra Pound, James Joyce, and e.e. cummings.”¹⁷⁰ Musically, however, the call was not truly answered until 1958 with the development of bossa nova.

Oswald de Andrade continued his ideas in later writings. In 1928, he published his “Manifesto Antropófago” (Cannibalist Manifesto), or *MA*. This new manifesto radicalized his earlier ideas, challenging the dualities of his first manifesto. Leslie Bary writes:

The *MA* challenges the dualities civilization/barbarism, modern/primitive, and original/derivative, which had informed the construction of Brazilian culture since the days of the colony. In the *MA*, Oswald subversively appropriates the colonizer’s inscription of America as a savage territory which, once civilized, would be a necessarily muddy copy of Europe. The use of the cannibal metaphor permits the Brazilian subject to forge his specular colonial identity into an autonomous and original (as opposed to dependent, derivative) national culture. Oswald’s anthropophagist. . . neither apes nor rejects European culture, but ‘devours’ it, adapting its strengths and incorporating them into the native self.¹⁷¹

The manifesto itself consists of a series of aphorisms, beginning with the words, “Cannibalism alone unites us. Socially. Economically. Philosophically.”¹⁷² Oswald redefines

brasilidade, claiming that it is not defined by the land, people, or cultural heritage of Brazil. Instead, *brasilidade* is created by what Brazilians do, in this case ‘eating’ other cultures. The cannibalist metaphor would surface again in the 1960s, most powerfully in the music which came to be known as *tropicália*.

Between 1958 and 1968, three major developments changed the course of Brazilian music. The first development was bossa nova, a music of originality, complexity, and artistry which epitomized Oswald de Andrade’s notion of ‘poetry for export.’ The second development was led by a group of protest singers who sought to make bossa nova more ‘authentic.’ Their lyrics addressed political and social concerns, and they used rural folk traditions to authenticate the music itself. The third development became known as *tropicália*. This music was a reaction to both the dominating authenticity of the protest singers and the repressive military government. After *tropicália*, conceptions of authenticity were shaken to the point that entirely new forms of identity could be discovered.

Bossa Nova: A New Sound (1958-1962)

The late 1950s was a time of change in Brazil. The country was becoming comfortable with democracy once again, and in 1955 a highly popular president was elected. Juscelino Kubitschek promised his country fifty-years of development in five-years of time. It was a period of optimism, epitomized by the building of a new capital city called Brasília, an architectural feat designed by Lúcio Costa (an urban planner) and by Oscar Niemeyer (a world famous architect).

In this time of change and optimism, the stagnant conceptions of what constituted ‘authentic’ Brazilian music could not hold. In the south zone of Rio de Janeiro, known for its

beautiful beaches and rich white residential districts, bossa nova was born. The founders of this music included composer Antonio Carlos “Tom” Jobim, poet and song-writer Vinicius de Moraes, and the guitarist and singer João Gilberto. These artists created a new style, steeped in the rhythms of samba, but influenced as well by advanced European harmonies and cool jazz aesthetics. The bossa nova movement was formally launched with the release of the 78-RPM single by João Gilberto containing the songs “Chega de Saudade” (written by Antonio Carlos Jobim) and “Bim-Bom” (written by João Gilberto himself).

The impact of bossa nova on musicians and students of the time was immediate and dramatic. One of bossa nova’s most ardent supporters was the musician Caetano Veloso, who was deeply moved by bossa nova in his adolescence. Veloso writes about bossa nova in his autobiography *Tropical Truth: A Story of Music and Revolution in Brazil*: “Bossa nova overwhelmed us. And it delighted my intelligence to follow closely this radical process of cultural transformation, which led us to reevaluate our tastes, our heritage and—even more important—our possibilities.” He continues, “Without the self-assurance that bossa nova infused in us, making us feel capable of creating things wholly our own, we would still when working in the studios be leaving out the supremely inventive elements of Brazilian traditions: the tambourines of Mocidade Independente de Padre Miguel, the harmonics of Nelson Cavaquinho’s voice.”¹⁷³

Veloso recognized the creativity and originality involved in the birth of bossa nova. He writes, “Bossa nova did not represent a grafting of a foreign branch on to an indigenous rootstock but rather the continuation of a process of innovation that had always been integral to an ever-changing samba.”¹⁷⁴ Bossa nova did not treat samba as a fixed, authentic product of Brazilian culture, but rather as a ‘process of innovation.’

Bossa nova's radical reinterpretation of authenticity was bound to have critics. Most notable was music critic José Ramos Tinhorão, who argues that bossa nova "constituted a new example (not consciously desired) of alienation among the Brazilian elite, who are subject to the illusions of rapid development based on paying royalties to foreign technology."¹⁷⁵ Tinhorão saw the only authentic music as that of the *morros*. He writes, "Meanwhile, the people, calm in their *cultural unity* established by semi-illiteracy, and *social unity*, determined by poverty and lack of opportunities to ascend, continue to create and happily sing their carnival sambas, beating the drum to a vigorous 2/4 rhythm."¹⁷⁶ As Dunn notes, Tinhorão saw bossa nova as part of the United State's cultural domination, closely related to its economic and political domination at the time.

By judging samba to be authentic and bossa nova to be inauthentic, Tinhorão locks himself into a static and inflexible evaluation. By denying Black musicians the ability to improve their material surroundings and retain their authenticity, Tinhorão denies both their agency and creativity. As Veloso wrote in the mid-1960s, "Judging from the book of hysterical articles by Mr. José Ramos Tinhorão . . . only preservation of illiteracy will assure the possibility of making music in Brazil."¹⁷⁷

Veloso was not the only person to welcome bossa nova. It was a music of the era, reflecting the high self-esteem in which most Brazilians held themselves in relation to the world. They had confidence that Brazil was on its way to becoming a great superpower on par with the United States. For perhaps the first time in their history, Brazilians had created a cultural art form, bossa nova, which fascinated the Western world, particularly the United States. Dunn writes, "One might even argue that bossa nova was the first musical movement to produce Brazilian culture 'for export' in the way Oswald de Andrade had imagined."¹⁷⁸

It is very important to realize that bossa nova was not a music of resistance in the same ways as samba or earlier music. The *bossa novistas* resisted the musical limitations that were placed on them in the name of ‘authenticity.’ They resisted being locked into ritualized, stagnant, or irrelevant musical conceptions that no longer spoke to the people of Brazil. Bossa nova was not created by Black musicians in spaces of Black-autonomy, but even so was an attempt to continue the innovation begun in previous Black musical forms, such as samba.

While bossa nova is not generally considered to be radical or contain elements of resistance, it must be seen as a creative re-imagining of Brazilian music with deep implications for musical resistance. It paved the way for future musicians to invent, innovate, and create. It allowed new musical conceptions as well as new social and political conceptions. Yet for all its strengths, the original articulation of bossa nova did not speak to millions of Brazilians who were living in increasing poverty. It did not address social concerns, and its musical aesthetic was inextricably tied to the sunny white beaches of the South Zone of Rio de Janeiro. These concerns were addressed by the next wave of musicians, many of whom sought to make bossa nova more ‘authentic.’

Leftist Nationalism: the Oppression of Authenticity (1960-1968)

In general, the Kubitschek era was thought to be one of rosy optimism and political stability. However, during this time serious problems developed. Inflation reached a peak of 39.5% in 1959 and drove many who were already poor to the brink of starvation.¹⁷⁹ In her diary of life in the *morro*, Carolina Maria de Jesus describes the building tension and resentment against Kubitschek and those in power: “What our President Senhor Juscelino has in his favor is

his voice. He sings like a bird and his voice is pleasant to the ears. And now the bird is living in a golden cage called Catete Palace. Be careful, little bird, that you don't lose your cage, because cats when they are hungry think of birds in cages. The favelados are the cats, and they are hungry.”¹⁸⁰

The Cuban Revolution of 1959 fueled the growing discontent among both the poor and the radical Left. In a Cold War era of high tensions, the success of Guevara and Castro brought hope to would-be revolutionaries and fearful palpitations to the military and to the Right. These fears increased when Leftist vice-president João Goulart took office in 1961. They increased further as peasant leagues began to merge together and as the União Nacional de Estudantes (National Student Union), or UNE, radicalized their activities and took a more direct political stance.¹⁸¹ To address these growing crises, Goulart began a series of reform measures which addressed land use, urban housing ownership reform, and extending suffrage to those illiterate or in the armed services.

It was natural for these changes in the early 1960s to influence the direction taken by musicians and song-writers. In his article “Guns and Roses: Bossa Nova and Brazil's music of popular protest, 1958-1968,” David Treece describes this change in the direction of Brazilian music: “These were years of political radicalisation, when increasing numbers of people became mobilised in trade unions, peasant leagues and student organisations, influenced by anti-imperialist and socialist ideas and especially the example of the 1959 overthrow of the Batista regime in Cuba. Culture, including song, was now required to play a conscious, active role in expressing the interests and aspirations of the movement for social and political change.”¹⁸²

The first artists and musicians to respond to this political radicalization did so within the *Centro Popular de Cultura* (Popular Culture Center), or CPC. The CPC was created between

1961 and 1962 under the direction of the UNE. It was left-wing in political orientation, and it dedicated itself to social revolution. David Treece writes, “The movement’s pre-Manifesto, drawn up in the following year [1962], dictated the principles by which a revolutionary, popular art might transform the political consciousness of its audience so as to challenge the prevailing ideas: ‘Instead of man isolated in his individuality, lost forever in the intricate meanderings of introspection, our art must carry to the people the human meaning of oil and steel, political parties and class associations, rates of production and financial mechanisms.’”¹⁸³

The CPC attracted numerous bossa nova artists whose vision matched their own. Carlos Lyra, Sergio Ricardo, and Geraldo Vandré all became involved with the CPC and began to write songs that addressed the difficulties faced by poor Brazilians. They were influenced by the more intellectual leaders of the CPC. These leaders “denounced Brazil’s dependency on foreign capital and advocated a more nationalist economic policy. They criticized the influx of cultural products from developed nations, particularly from the United States, as a cause of political alienation. In general, CPC activists perceived themselves as a cultural and political vanguard that could lead rural and urban masses toward social revolution.”¹⁸⁴

This vanguardist stance was highly problematic. The musicians and intellectuals who led the group did not have many ties with the working classes whom they sought to elevate, and the entire movement became somewhat patronizing and classist. Treece writes, “The vanguardist stance of the CPC in relation to the consciousness of its audience points up the central problem facing this essentially intellectual movement, without organised roots within the popular classes it was addressing. A voluntaristic ideological leap of social consciousness was required for the artist to shrug off his petty-bourgeois assumptions, and identify with the ‘people’.”¹⁸⁵ Many, or even most, of those involved with the CPC could not make that leap.

Coup of 1964

On March 31, 1964 the military decided that the time had come to remove Goulart from power. His land reforms (which threatened to expropriate under-used land) and urban housing reforms (which threatened to give urban renters full ownership) had terrified the Brazilian conservatives. This, in combination with increasingly frequent workers' strikes and fear of a Cuban style Communist revolution, caused many Brazilians to welcome a change of power. People wanted a government that would bring back economic stability and guarantee their rights to their property. By the end of April, the military sent Goulart to exile in Uruguay and Brazil's second attempt at democracy was over.

Immediately after taking power, the military outlawed Leftist organizations. Dunn writes, "For progressive artists and intellectuals, one of the gravest consequences of the coup was the proscription of the UNE and CPC. Meanwhile, labor and peasant movements were swiftly suppressed and their leaders were detained, tortured, and, in some cases, executed."¹⁸⁶ Yet even during this initial period of repression there was still a large degree of artistic freedom allowed in the urban centers. This led Roberto Schwarz to write, "Despite the existence of a right-wing dictatorship, the cultural hegemony of the Left is virtually complete."¹⁸⁷ The relative isolation of Leftist artists rendered them politically impotent, and initially they were not seen as much of a threat to the military. They were also protected by the racism and classism of the military, who singled out working class and Black activists for the most severe repression.

In response to the coup, some of the dramatists from the CPC created the Grupo Opinião, a group which combined music and drama to counter political repression. Their first production was *Show Opinião*, which opened on December 11, 1964 and was "structured around the artists' personal narratives and their opinions on culture and politics in contemporary Brazil."¹⁸⁸ The

musicians in this group was intentionally diverse, including “a composer from the hills of Rio de Janeiro (Zé Keti), a composer from the rural Northeast (João do Vale), and a female bossa nova singer from Rio’s Zona Sul (Nara Leão).”¹⁸⁹ Caetano Veloso describes *Show Opinião* as a show which:

combined the charm of nightclub bossa nova shows with the excitement of politically engaged theater. *Opinião* epitomized the trend among some of the *bossanovistas* to promote the fusion of modern Brazilian music with politically engaged art. Vinicius de Moraes himself, bossa nova’s first and foremost lyricist, was involved in the effort; and around this time Brazil created perhaps the most graceful protest songwriting in the world. . . *Opinião* was a form of theater that alternated music with passages read aloud from Brazilian and world literature, or texts written especially for the occasion. This kind of show became one of the most influential forms of expression in the subsequent history of MPB.¹⁹⁰

Veloso continues:

Nara had been trying for some time to expand the thematic range of bossa nova and find a way for music to be involved with the social and political issues then being frequently and passionately confronted by the new Brazilian theater and Cinema Novo. The show *Opinião* itself was inspired by her attempt to draw attention to the samba from the *morros* in Rio and the music coming out of the Northeastern backlands—and to the new songs with a social content that she, more than anyone, encouraged composers to write.¹⁹¹

The *Show Opinião* was highly successful. This said, *Opinião* never resolved the gap between the ‘intellectual vanguard’ who designed much of the show and ‘the people’ who were

the supposed audience. Dunn writes,

At one point in the script, the uncomfortable social differences that separated middle-class artists from their desired mass audience is broached but not seriously developed. After Nara Leão earnestly explains her newfound commitment to public performance as a way to confront the regime, an offstage voice sarcastically questions her sincerity, pointing out her bourgeois pedigree, her residency in Copacabana, and her ties with bossa nova. The ambiguities and complexities of the moment are quickly resolved, however, as Nara Leão begins singing ‘Marcha da quarta-feira de cinzas’ (Ash Wednesday march) (Carlos Lyra–Vinicius de Moraes), an antiregime anthem that proclaims the collective imperative to sing.”¹⁹²

Show Opinião did not fully deal with the problems of elitism and authenticity inherited from the CPC. They continued to seek authenticity in the past and continued to place their faith in the orthodox Left’s conception of revolutionary struggle. They also addressed an audience which consisted primarily of white middle class students and intellectuals, despite the presence of composer Zé Keti. This was not to say that *Show Opinião* was ineffectual or unimportant. It was progressive for its time, but it was not the final word in resistance.

Canções de Protesto (Protest Songs)

By the middle of the 1960s a new consideration was added to the troubles of the nationalist-Leftists: the growing popularity of Rock ‘n Roll in Brazil. It had begun in the 1950s with direct importation of music from the United States, but in the 1960s it had taken root in Brazil itself and was led by musician Roberto Carlos. The influence of Rock in Brazil was seen by the nationalist-Leftists as a part of the cultural domination of the United States, to whom the military government was quite friendly. Some musicians feared the influence of ‘inauthentic’

music on Brazilian culture, and responded by focusing on rural folk music of the north and northeast.

The first musician to do so was Geraldo Vandré with his 1966 recording of 'Disparada' (Stampede). He based his song on the *moda de viola*, a Brazilian folk song popular in rural areas. He thought the importance of this song was its ability to draw elements of rural, working class culture into the realm of national attention. Vandré wrote,

Any manifestation of a national culture that has no support amongst the urban middle class, which will stand up for itself and its interests, has no way of asserting itself within the national mentality. The *moda de viola* [guitar-accompanied rural folk-song] is the most proletarian of these manifestations. *Disparada* broke that middle-class prejudice, but not by virtue of its harmonic or poetic poverty. Harmonically and poetically, the American hillbilly folksong is as impoverished as our own, yet is accepted throughout the world. But a whole line ought to follow from *Disparada*. If it hasn't it is just through a lack of investment and the low regard of middle-class musicians for a manifestation of culture which, whether they like it or not, represents the only way of singing for 60 or 70% of the Brazilian population, rural populations of the states of Mato Grosso, Goias, Minas, Parana, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul.¹⁹³

'Disparada' tied for first place in the 1966 TV Record Festival of Brazilian Popular Music with Chico Buarque's song 'A Banda'. For the next two years, Vandré and his colleagues continued to strip their songs of all elements of 'refinement', placing more and more emphasis on the politicized lyrics. In doing so, they continued to reinforce the connection between authenticity and rural music. David Treece writes about the dual challenge faced by these songwriters, to both develop a viable notion of national identity and to create music that was commercially viable and would reach their intended audiences:

The challenge faced by the protest song movement was not merely the need to offer an ideological alternative to the state's developmentalist mythology of popular and national identity. The new media and commercial conditions in which musical production now operated placed more formidable barriers in the way of musicians and their imagined 'popular' audience. Paradoxically, the orthodox left's reaction to the modernisation and internationalisation of Brazilian culture was symptomatic of an idealistic isolation from the realities of the 1960s, which prevented it engaging critically and creatively *with* the new mass culture. Repudiating the cosmopolitan sophistication and modernity of bossa nova, the protest song aimed to project a public message of denunciation and resistance drawing on the traditions and experiences of those very sectors of the population most severely victimised by the country's industrial revolution and later on by the dictatorship. Urban and rural musical traditions such as samba, the rural folk ballad, *berimbau* (the accompaniment to a form of choreographic martial art) and the *samba de roda* (circle-dance), were to restore a national-popular authenticity to the song of political protest, against the imported, 'Americanised' culture which bossa nova, and increasingly rock, were held to represent.¹⁹⁴

These problems were never satisfactorily resolved by the writers of *canções de protesto*. In the end of 1968 the military government cracked down on Leftist artists and musicians and many of these musicians were imprisoned and sent into exile for a few years. Eventually they were able to go back to making music, but as a movement the *canção de protesto* was over.

The writers of *canções de protesto* were frustrated by the same difficulties in which many Brazilian Leftists found themselves. Treece writes, "In the absence of any politically articulated community of interests, that is to say, in the absence of a viable popular movement with its own coherent alternative to the regime's strategy of state

capitalist modernisation, the traditional left could express little more than its own frustrated idealism and that of its middle-class audience.” As artists, intellectuals, and musicians sought to create works that were both relevant and new, they were faced with tremendous challenges. These challenges were approached very differently, and much more successfully, by a group of musicians who came to be known as the *tropicálistas*.

Tropicália: The Destruction of Authenticity

A full discussion of the musical phenomenon of the late 1960s in Brazil known as *tropicália* is outside the scope of this paper, but good accounts can be found in Christopher Dunn’s book *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture* and in Caetano Veloso’s semi-autobiography *Tropical Truth: a Story of Music and Revolution*. While both of these books provide good discussions of the historical dimension to this music, the focus here is more theoretical, looking at the ways that *tropicália* challenged notions of authenticity and expanded the scope of possibilities for future musicians. In the process, the *tropicálistas* resisted domination from both the orthodox Left and the military government.

The musicians who were eventually to create the music known as *tropicália* all grew up in the 1940s and 1950s in Bahia, the northeast of Brazil. This area was generally known for two things: it was the center of Afro-Brazilian cultural and it was one of the poorest areas of Brazil. While Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo benefited from tremendous gains in industry in the early twentieth century, Bahia was left behind, particularly in the *sertão*, the arid hinterland of Bahia. For a number of years, Bahians had been the Leftist

symbol for all backward and impoverished peoples of Brazil, known as the *povo*, who many Leftists thought of as the backbone of the revolution. Some protest song writers, like Geraldo Vandré, used melodies or instruments from the *sertão* in order to evoke this symbol. By using ‘authentic’ folk music in their songs, these composers sought to bridge the gap between people from rural and urban backgrounds. They also used folk music to assert their own authenticity. The *tropicálistas*, on the other hand, grew up in Bahia and saw no need to prove their authenticity.

The personal backgrounds of the *tropicálistas* were fairly diverse. Caetano Veloso (b. 1942) and his younger sister Maria Bethânia (b. 1946) grew up in a lower-middle-class light skinned mulatto family in Santo Amaro de Purificação. Caetano went to university in Salvador and studied philosophy, playing music in his spare time. Maria Bethânia was sent to Salvador about the same time, when she was only 14, and the two of them were inseparable during their formative years. Gilberto Gil (b. 1942) was the son of a doctor and spent his childhood in Ituaçú before he moved to Salvador.¹⁹⁵ He was one of the most musically talented of the group, with an incredible ear for music, and also the most politically engaged. Gal Costa (Maria de Graça, b. 1945) was the only one of the group who was born in Salvador itself. She had one goal growing up: to be a singer, and to this end she was successful.

Although they were only slightly younger than the protest song-writers of the south, the Bahians’ approach to politics and to leftist ideology was substantially different. This is seen clearly in the writings of Caetano Veloso: “Of course, I cared about social justice and felt enthusiasm about belonging to a generation that appeared to have the potential to effect profound change. But such phrases as ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’

meant nothing to me. I saw wretchedly unorganized poverty all around me, while the ‘proletariat’ of the articles and speeches was always made up of workers in hard hats.”¹⁹⁶

Veloso saw problems deeply imbedded within orthodox Leftist thinking, mostly in terms of the limitations placed on dialogue and criticism. Problems such as racism, sexism, classism, artistic innovation, and creativity were seldom taken seriously by the Left, and everything was shoveled into a binary socialist class struggle that struck the Bahians as somewhat strange. Veloso writes, “I felt in some fundamental ways much further removed from anything petit bourgeois than my critics: they never discussed topics such as sex or race, elegance or taste, love or form. In such matters the world was accepted just as it was.”¹⁹⁷

Politics entered into the Bahians’ artistic production even before the coup. Veloso writes, “Politics was not our forte, but in 1963—with the students behind President João Goulart, pressuring him to move further to the left; and with Miguel Arraes, who was doing a splendid job as governor of Pernambuco, working closely with his lower-income constituency—we were moved to write political plays and songs.”¹⁹⁸

Later, when the military took power in 1964, the Bahians reacted as strongly against it as the orthodox Left. Veloso writes, “we saw the coup simply as a decision to halt the redress of the horrible social inequities in Brazil and, simultaneously, to sustain North American supremacy in the hemisphere.”¹⁹⁹

At the university in Salvador, Caetano and Maria Bethânia began to work with director Álvaro Guimarães, known as Alvinho, and later with poet and critic Duda Machado. After Caetano met Gilberto Gil, Tom Zé, and Gal Costa, the five of them often collaborated on the musical aspects of Alvinho’s shows, as well as put on concerts of their

own. Their growing presence in Salvador caught the eye of Nara Leão from *Teatro Opinião*. Nara was in Bahia on vacation, had heard about the Bahians, and arranged to meet the group. Nara was most impressed with Maria Bethânia, and eventually invited her to come to Rio de Janeiro to star in *Opinião*.

The difference in approaches between the Bahians and the protest song-writers in Rio de Janeiro can be seen in the differences between the Bahians shows and the *Opinião* group. Veloso writes, “Where *Opinião* had been given to explicit political or social references, our shows aimed to create a historical perspective that would situate us in the context of the development of MPB. We were picking up on João Gilberto’s most penetrating intuition, rejecting the oversimplified and myopic vision of those who wanted to infuse our music with a false jazz-like modernization or to make it serve as propaganda, or who wanted to combine these dubious purposes.”²⁰⁰ Veloso continues later, “*Opinião*, while extremely good, did not seem to improve upon our own Vila Velha shows. . .”²⁰¹

By 1966, the Bahians were all living alternatively in Rio de Janeiro or in São Paulo, struggling to come to terms with their own artistic direction. A year later they witnessed the release of *Terra em transe* (Land in Anguish), a powerful film by Glauber Rocha. This film was uneven and lacked narrative clarity, but it directly challenged the assumptions of the orthodox Left and their faith in *o povo* (the people). The film centers around a Left-wing poet, Paulo Martins, in a fictitious Latin American country called Eldorado. Paulo is a activist/artist of a style in line with the CPC. He seeks to help create a revolutionary artistic and intellectual vanguard which could then lead the masses to a revolution. Paulo works for Felipe Vieira, a populist candidate for governor who is a caricature of Leftist demagogues.²⁰²

Within Paulo's character, Rocha portrays the elitism and paternalism that characterized the CPC and the orthodox Left. Veloso describes how this portrayal dismayed Leftist viewers:

One scene in particular shocked them: During a mass demonstration the poet, who is among those making speeches, calls forward a unionized worker and, to show how unprepared the worker is to fight for his rights, violently covers his mouth, shouting at the others (and at the audience), 'This is the People! Idiots, illiterate, no politics!' Then a poor wretch, representing unorganized poverty, appears from among the crowd trying to speak, only to be silenced by the point of a gun stuck in his mouth by one of the candidate's bodyguards.²⁰³

He continues,

It was their essential faith in the popular forces—and their very respect that the best souls invested in the poor man—that here was discarded as a political weapon and an ethical value in itself. It was a hecatomb that I was facing. And I was excited by the prospect of examining what drove it and anticipating its consequences. *Tropicalismo* would never have come into being but for this traumatic moment.²⁰⁴

Both Rocha and Veloso had been involved with the CPC style of artistic production before the coup, and by 1967 both of them realized that the orthodox Left was unequipped to face the different forces of domination in their society. Rocha's film brought this inadequacy into the spotlight and forced all who opposed the military regime to question their own approach. For many, the reaction to the film was one of outrage and dismay. For Caetano Veloso and the other Bahians, it was one of excitement. As the old model of resistance put forth by the orthodox

left crumbled, the possibility of creating something new became urgent. Veloso writes, “When the poet in *Land in Anguish* declared a lack of faith in the liberating energy of ‘the people,’ I heard this not as an end to possibilities but rather as proclamation of what I now needed to do.”²⁰⁵

Increasingly, Veloso became aware of the inadequacies of orthodox Leftist ideology. This left him more receptive to musical influences he previously dismissed as inauthentic, such as rock music. Maria Bethânia had been listening to Roberto Carlos, the Brazilian rock star, for years. Her influence, along with that of Veloso’s friends Rogerio Duarte and Zé Agrippino, made Caetano listen seriously to the Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, Bob Dylan, and others.

As Veloso recorded his first album, *Domingo* (Sunday) with Gal Costa, all of these influences came to the foreground. At this same time, Gilberto Gil made a trip to Pernambuco (a province north of Bahia) which changed his life. Veloso writes:

The fact is that he returned to Rio wanting to change everything, rethink everything—and, ceaselessly, he demanded from us an unconditional adherence to a program of action that he was sketching with both anxiety and impatience. He would talk about the violence of poverty and the power of artistic invention: that was the double lesson he had learned in Pernambuco, and he wanted to draw on it to chart a path for us. The vision of those miserably poor people in the Northeast, the gag imposed by the dictatorship in a state where political awareness had reached impressive maturity. . . and where the experiments of politically engaged art had gone the farthest, Gil’s listening to the *ciranda* masters performing on the beaches, but above all to the Banda de Pífanos of Caruaru (a musical group composed of simple flautists from the interior of Pernambuco whose profound regional character fused with an inventiveness that fearlessly proclaimed its modernity—the cut that most impressed us was in fact called ‘Pipoca moderna’ {Modern Popcorn})—all of these things had turned him into an exacting taskmaster. He said we could not continue on the defensive, nor ignore the business side of the industry into which we had inserted ourselves. Nor could we

ignore the characteristics of mass culture whose mechanisms we could understand only by penetrating them. . . Finally, Gil wanted us to hold meanings with our well-intentioned colleagues, in order to involve them in a movement that would unleash the truly revolutionary forces of Brazilian music, beyond the ideological slogans of protest music, the elegant chains of altered chords, the narrow nationalism.”

Soon after Gil’s revelation he was asked to participate in a TV music program known as Frente Ampla de Música Popular Brasileira (The Broad Front of Brazilian Popular Music), or FAMPB. The show would air once a week, and each week would feature a different musician of MPB, starring Elis Regina, Wilson Simonal, Geraldo Vandré, and Gilberto Gil. The first show of the program, featuring Simonal, was staged with a demonstration outside. The banners and signs and chanting at the demonstration were described by Nara Leão as reminiscent of the Integralist Party, the fascist movement of the 1930s.²⁰⁶

Veloso and Gil agreed that they had to do something radically different, that “Gil’s program should be turned into an antinationalist and anti-MPB scandal.”²⁰⁷ Gil’s program plan involved Marie Bethânia appearing in a miniskirt with an electric guitar singing a song by Roberto Carlos, “Querem acabar comigo” (They Want to Do Me In). Vandré found out about their plans before they performed and last minute changes were made, but the whole point of it was irrelevant since the show did not attract significant attention from viewers.

What the show did do was cement the anti-nationalistic and anti-MPB attitudes of the Bahians and pave the way for their real debut at the 1967 TV Record music festival. For this event Veloso wrote his song “Alegria, alegria” (Joy, joy) and Gil wrote “Domingo no parque” (Sunday in the Park). After the songs were ready they sought out bands to play with them and found the Beat Boys and Os Mutantes. The Beat Boys were a Beatles cover band with long hair,

colorful electric guitars, and “represented in the most strident way everything that the MPB nationalists hated and feared.”²⁰⁸ Os Mutantes were a group of three teenagers from a middle-class São Paulo neighborhood who created music that rivaled the cutting edge of British neo-rock. Veloso writes, “Os Mutantes, who were still half amateurs, seemed not so much copies of the Beatles. . . but their equals, creators on the same level.”²⁰⁹

Both Veloso and Gil realized the enormous consequences of what they intended to do, but had different reactions to it. Veloso writes, “Since what would come to be called *tropicalismo* intended to situate itself beyond the Left and to prove itself shamelessly festive, we felt immune to what others thought of us. I embarked on the adventure of ‘Alegria, alegria’ as though fighting for freedom itself. Once the deed was done, I felt the euphoria of one who has bravely broken unbearable chains. Gil, however, aware of the power of MPB at the time and that we were adopting a drastic position in relation to it, feared there might be serious consequences. . . .”²¹⁰

Veloso describes this deep turmoil felt by Gil: “He was not willing to talk about it much in the days and months that followed this event. But, with all the deep insecurity of a man changing his life, leaving a marriage, and knowing himself to be responsible for a kind of revolution, Gil, for a brief and indeterminate moment, had bared an anguish that he would be better able to articulate a year later, when the terrible consequences were already a reality: ‘I felt we were messing with dangerous things.’”²¹¹ Both Veloso and Gil played at the festival and were greeted by enthusiasm and criticism. The 1967 festival was a success from the point of view from the Bahians, but definitely marked a widening of the split between the Bahians and the traditional MPB devotees.

The differences between the *tropicalists* and the protest singers of MPB were clear.

While the protest song writers sought authenticity in folk music, the *tropicalists* sought to destroy authenticity all together. Veloso writes, “we had understood that in order to do what we believed necessary, we had to rid ourselves of Brazil as we knew it. We had to destroy the Brazil of the nationalists, we had to go deeper and pulverize the image of Brazil as being exclusively identified with Rio.”²¹²

In place of Leftist-nationalism, the *tropicálistas* sought to create something altogether new. Veloso writes, “[We] wanted the freedom to move beyond the automatic ties with the Left and at the same time to account for the visceral rebellion against the abysmal disparities that tear a people asunder, even as that people remains singular and charming. And also to tell about the fateful and joyous participation in a universal and international urban cultural reality. All of this being an unveiling of the mystery of the island of Brazil.”²¹³ He continues, “*Tropicalismo* wanted to project itself as the triumph over two notions: one, that the version of the Western enterprise offered by American pop and mass culture was potentially liberating—though we recognized that a naïve attraction to that version is a healthy impulse—and, two, the horrifying humiliation represented by capitulation to the narrow interests of dominant groups, whether at home or internationally. It was also an attempt to face up to the apparent coincidence, in this tropical country, of a countercultural wave emerging at the same time as the vogue in authoritarian regimes.”²¹⁴ He concludes, “I was a *tropicálista*, free of ties to traditional politics, and therefore I could react against oppression and narrowness according to my own creativity.”²¹⁵

The origin of the name of the movement came from an art installation by Hélio Oiticica. This installation consisted of “a winding path covered with sand, flanked by tropical plants and wooden walls, along which one was meant to walk barefoot before winding up facing a

television screen tuned to regularly scheduled programs.”²¹⁶ The name was suggested to Veloso by a newspaper photographer who thought that there was a connection between one of Veloso’s songs and the installation. The song became named ‘Tropicália,’ and named the whole movement.

Eventually the *tropicálistas* also encountered the writings of Oswald de Andrade and his “Cannibalist Manifesto”. Veloso writes, “The idea of cultural cannibalism fit *tropicálistas* like a glove. We were ‘eating’ the Beatles and Jimi Hendrix. Our arguments against the nationalists’ defensive attitude found in this stance its most succinct and exhaustive enunciation.”²¹⁷ The *tropicálistas* had finally found an articulation of their dynamic approach to authenticity. As a group, they had decided that “a genuine blend of the ridiculous aspirations of the Americanophiles, the naïve good intentions of the nationalists, traditional Brazilian ‘backwardness,’ the Brazilian avant-garde—absolutely everything in Brazil’s real cultural life would be our raw material. Genuine creativity could redeem any aspect of it and make it transcendent.”²¹⁸ The *tropicalistas* became the cannibalists that Oswald de Andrade had only hypothesized.

This transcendent creativity was by far the most important dimension to *tropicália*. Inherent in it were both violence and joy. The violence was directed against those who sought to stifle this creativity. Veloso writes, “Everything that came to be called *tropicalismo* was nourished by acts of violence against a taste that had matured steadily and was everywhere lucidly defended.”²¹⁹ The joyfulness came from the possibility of the creation of something new, of redefining the reality in which the *tropicálistas* existed. Veloso writes, “We recognized that joyfulness is essential to anyone who would participate in an urban and international cultural community. The template of nationalism seemed like a sad anachronism. We wanted to

participate in the worldwide language both to strengthen ourselves as a people and to affirm our originality.”²²⁰

Veloso and Gil performed again in the 1968 music festivals, creating even more indignation about their performances. Then, in late 1968, there was a coup within the military and a group of hard-line officers took power. They issued orders which severely curtailed artistic freedom, imprisoned both Gil and Veloso as well as a number of the protest song-writers, and eventually sent those imprisoned into exile in London for three years. By the time Gil and Veloso returned to Brazil, *tropicália* was over. In its wake, however, it created a great deal of room for new ideas and creativity.

Chapter Ten — Transitions: the Birth of Black-Consciousness

Within the artistic space created by *tropicália*, Afro-Brazilians were able to build new conceptions of identity and authenticity. Prior to the 1960s, race issues had been dealt with in a light, joking manner. After *tropicália*, Afro-Brazilian artists were able to sing lyrics that specifically dealt with issues of race. The first artist to do this was Jorge Ben. In 1963, he released his pop samba “Mas que nada” (Oh, come on), which brought together R&B from the United States and traditional samba from the *morros*. Veloso describes the impression that Ben’s early recordings made on Gilberto Gil: “The direct thematization of negritude—which, in Salvador, had impressed Gil all the more strongly, since he had always avoided doing it at any level—came through in the guitar beat and the half-blues, half-Afro phrasing, more so than in the occasional African or pseudo-African words or explicit references to black experience in his lyrics. What he was doing now was using the electric guitar in a way that simultaneously brought him closer to blues and rock and yet revealed clearly the essence of samba.”²²¹

However, soon after his 1963 release Jorge Ben fell into relative obscurity. Christopher Dunn writes, “During the peak years of the televised musical festivals, Jorge Ben fell out of favor with the public, occupying an ambiguous position between the MPB group and the Jovem Guarda [those playing rock]. His career was resuscitated in 1968 when he allied with the tropicalists and appeared several times on their program ‘Divino Maravilhoso’ (Divine, Marvelous).”²²²

In his 1963 release, Jorge Ben dealt overtly with racial themes but not political ones. Nor did he deal with racial themes in political ways. Before *tropicália*, most Brazilians still believed in Freyre’s ‘racial democracy’ as well as the authenticity of traditional samba. If Ben had

released a political album during those earlier years he would have been loathed as a ‘reverse racist’. These feelings from the early 1960s did not simply vanish in a puff of *tropicália*, but by the 1970s virtually no one in Brazil took them for granted.

Between 1963 and his next major release in 1969, Jorge Ben became highly politicized in his music. In part, this was a response to the Black consciousness movement in the United States, led by Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, and Black Panther leaders Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. African liberation movements, beginning with Ghana, also inspired a generation of blacks. Jorge Ben must have heard James Brown, Aretha Franklin, and other Black musicians of the United States who infused theme of Blackness into their music. During the course of the 1960s, these influences merged together in his artistic vision.

In 1969, Jorge Ben released a radical new album bringing together music, politics, and Black consciousness. Dunn describes this album:

Jorge Ben’s 1969 album cover features a black and white drawing of him framed by a colorful psychedelic montage of cartoon female superheroes, samba musicians, tropical plants, and a Brazilian flag. With a toucan perched on his shoulder, Ben holds an acoustic guitar bearing the insignia of his favorite soccer team, Flamengo. The broken shackles around his wrist pay homage to national and international black struggles. Several of the songs from the album make explicit references to Afro-Brazilian history and contemporary life in the *favelas*. The entire album is deeply influenced by African American soul music and its ethos of racial pride, self-determination, and collective struggle.²²³

Unlike the *tropicalistas*, Jorge Ben’s music was not about shock value and intentionally breaking down barriers of nationalism and authenticity. He simply made music that did not recognize those barriers. It is for this reason that his music did not have the same impact on MPB that the

tropicálistas had, and why it was generally misunderstood during the middle of the 1960s.

By the end of the 1960s, Gilberto Gil had also begun singing about racial themes in his performances. This was a dramatic shift from his earlier demeanor, in which he did not especially identify with his African heritage. Veloso writes: “In the late sixties, especially under the influence of Jimi Hendrix, Gil donned the mask of the racially conscious black man, and this new persona revealed the latent pain and pride beneath the former veil. It had always seemed he saw no need to beat his breast and announce, ‘I’m black!’ in protest against discrimination; he considered it enough to lead a dignified life and to affirm himself socially and intellectually, as his father had done. Now that he was embracing the ‘black is beautiful’ wave of pop culture, he revolted against Brazilian social injustice in its racial dimension.”²²⁴

During Gil’s exile in London, he became involved with Afro-Caribbean musicians who lived there, further broadening his sense of Black consciousness. Later, after he returned to Brazil, he wrote a song “beseeching the *orixás* to bring the *afoxé* Filhos de Gandhi, his one childhood passion during Carnival in Salvador, back to life.”²²⁵ The Filhos de Gandhi (Sons of Gandhi) were a group that paraded in Carnival in Salvador dressed as Mahatma Gandhi, complete with canes, cloth wraps, and sandals. Veloso continues, “One could say that the *orixás* heard Gil’s request, because the next year the bloc paraded with more than a thousand members. This in turn prompted the establishment of new *afoxés* which—being already receptive to themes of racial affirmation—gave rise to *blocos Afro* like Ilê Aiyê and Olodum. . .”²²⁶

These *blocos afro* in turn recognized Gilberto Gil’s contributions to Afro-Brazilian resistance, both as a *tropicálista* and for his involvement with the Filhos de Gandhi. Caetano Veloso writes, “It would come to pass that the petit bourgeois *bossanovista* of 1963 would be praised in the *blocos Afros*, the Afro-Bahian groups of the eighties and nineties, as Bob Marley’s

heir, the defender of his people.”²²⁷

Black Soul

Another key movement in the development of Black consciousness in Brazil was the Black Soul movement in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in the 1970s. Black Soul, or Black Rio as it was sometimes called, began in radio stations when disc jockeys began to play soul records from the United States. While soul never caught on for radio programming, it did capture the attention of party planners and organizers in the *morros* of Rio.

Michael Hanchard describes the beginning of Black Soul: “Dance and party organizers in the north zone of the city began playing ‘soul.’ People such as Osseas ‘Mr. Funk’ Santos, considered the originator of Black Soul, and Filo developed reputations as able purveyors of this music, its attendant dances, styles of dress, and symbolic modes of protest. For many followers of Black Soul, James Brown was the principal interlocutor of this form of musical expression, with songs such as ‘Say it Loud (I’m Black and I’m Proud),’ a major hit in the United States and among Black Soul participants in Brazil.”²²⁸ The new attitude of the Black Soul movement reached Afro-Brazilians of all classes in Rio, and was reflected in the style of dress, hair, music, and dance which characterized Black Soul parties. As Larry Crook and Randal Johnson write, the participants of these parties “adopted a posture that rooted Afro-Brazilian identity in the black body.”²²⁹

There are also signs that the movement could have become much more explicitly political. The party organizers of the original clubs involved left those clubs to form their own group, Soul Grand Prix. This became a traveling multimedia event as well as a television show. As a part of their show, they created slide presentations depicting explicitly Black imagery.

Hanchard writes, “Pictures of U.S. blacks in protest and self-adulation were abundant, which pleased many of the black participants but offended some whites. Grand Prix members thus altered the slides to suit the audience, deleting racial content from visual presentations in white clubs.”²³⁰ He continues, “In situations where the constituency was overwhelmingly black, however, the slide presentations were a success. Newspaper reports and interviews with partygoers from the epoch confirm gestalt-like revelations by many individuals. Scenes of black people crying while viewing the slides and U.S. movies like *Wattstax*, and relating the imagery of blacks in the United States and elsewhere to their own experience, were not uncommon in clubs and dance halls where Soul Grand Prix produced events.”²³¹

Black Soul was attacked with many of the same criticisms leveled at the *tropicálistas* and at Jorge Ben: that it was ‘inauthentic’ and anti-Brazilian. Hanchard writes, “Because it was independent of white elite definitions of both national ‘Brazilianness’ and Afro-Brazilian cultural practice, as well as resistant to appropriations by white elites, Black Soul was subject to criticism and, ultimately, repression.”²³² One of those detractors was none other than Gilberto Freyre, who saw Black Soul as a symbol of cultural imperialism from the United States and as an attack on racial democracy and freedom.

Just as with the *tropicálistas*, however, others welcomed Black Soul and sought to engage in a creative dialogue with it. Hanchard notes that many Black Soul parties and dances were actually held in the *escolas de samba*, “largely due to the high cost of renting dance halls, and the reluctance on the part of many white owners to allow throngs of black Brazilians into their buildings. Once inside, samba and Black Soul enthusiasts mixed, in most cases, dance and music without conflict. Indeed, this interaction sometimes led to new, more experimental samba compositions.”²³³

By the end of the 1970s, Black Soul had petered out and been transformed into a Brazilian equivalent of disco, devoid of racial imagery and consciousness. Hanchard describes how by 1978, “the attacks and discrediting in the mass media, coupled with the rising popularity of disco music, had telling effects on Black Soul. The parties, newspaper columns, record contracts, and television specials petered out. Funk and Charme, dance hall phenomena in the 1980s with their basis in black U.S. music was reminiscent of Black Soul, but without glimpses of alternative forms of racial identification found in the slide presentations, films, and literature circulating in and around their predecessor.”²³⁴

Hanchard sees the main weakness of Black Soul as its focus on the cultural manifestations of Black resistance, rather than on using those aspects of culture as a means to revolution. It seems, however, that an equally important consideration was the lack of grounding in specifically Brazilian considerations. Black Soul did not create music of its own, but simply identified with the music of blacks in the United States. Moreover, because the movement was based on pre-existing recordings, it could not easily cope with the need for creative responses to specifically Brazilian concerns.

On the other hand, Black Soul was an important contribution to the growing Black consciousness of Afro-Brazilians. This process was begun with Jorge Ben, developed by Gilberto Gil, and with Black Soul finally reached large number of Black youths in the largest cities in Brazil. One could argue that the deep feelings of racial solidarity with other Black people of Africa and the diaspora had been a part of the hidden transcript, a transcript that was hidden even within the Black communities. As these ideas and images made their way to explicit cultural forms like Black Soul, they evoked deep resonances within those participating.

Chapter Eleven — Back to Bahia: the Rise of the *Blocos Afro*

As ideas of resistance and Black consciousness within the hidden transcript entered into the public, resistance itself took on a new dimension: rebellion. Because rebellion is much more obvious than resistance within the hidden transcript, rebellion has always garnered more attention. However, the transition from hidden resistance to rebellion should be seen as a matter of degree. This is because the underlying factors which motivate resistance in both cases are the same: resentment against domination and belief in the potential for change.

In addition to their history of resistance within the hidden transcript, Afro-Brazilians have had a long history of open rebellion. Escaped communities of slaves, called *quilombos* or *mocambos*, were essential in constructing belief in the possibility of change and transformation. These communities came to symbolize the possibility of direct, confrontational resistance to domination. The *mocambos* opposed the power of the white authorities with their own military, social, and economic power.

In the 1970s and 1980s, a series of Carnival groups formed in Salvador which became the cultural equivalent of open rebellion. The roots of these groups go back to the Carnival groups which formed in Bahia soon after abolition in 1888 called *afoxés*. In his article “Black Consciousness, *samba reggae*, and the Re-Africanization of Bahian Carnival Music in Brazil,” Larry Crook writes:

Afoxés were public manifestations of the African-derived *Candomblé* religious centers of Salvador. Groups like the ‘Embaixada Africana’ (‘African Embassy’) and ‘Pândegos de Africa’ (‘African Merry-makers’) served as a means for the turn-of-the-century Bahian blacks to publicly celebrate their African heritage in the streets with dancing, singing, and drumming derived from *Candomblé*

religious practices. Occurring in the 1890s, this represented the initial Africanization of Bahia's most public event, its carnival.²³⁵

* Note: for an example of present day *Afoxé* song texts, see Songs 5 through 7 of Appendix A, pages, 151-152. It is unclear to what extent the *Afoxé* texts of the early twentieth century are as explicit in reference to Black culture and themes, but the attacks on these songs by white authorities suggests that they were indeed quite explicit.

Crook goes on to describe the oppression which these groups soon faced. He writes, “During the 1890s the *afoxés* presented themes glorifying African history and religion accompanied by African instruments such as the *atabaque* drums, *agogô* iron bells, and *shekeré* beaded gourds. But such public displays of unabashed African aesthetics shocked the turn-of-the-century white Bahian elite who lobbied the police to crack down on the African parades. In 1905 the ‘African groups’ were outlawed by Salvador’s chief of police. Although official and unofficial acts of repression and suppression against them persisted throughout the 20th-century, *afoxés* continued to be part of the Bahian carnival.”²³⁶

In the book *Black Brazil: Culture, Identity, and Social Mobilization* (edited by Larry Crook and Randal Johnson), João Jorge Santos Rodrigues (the director for the music group Olodum) writes about the effect of this repression on Afro-Brazilians in Bahia, as well as the ways it influenced their children:

In the twentieth century, the persecution of Candomblé, of the *afoxés*, produced a new kind of black person in the city of Salvador—the fearful black who would wear dark clothes (navy blue or brown) to diminish his blackness. Hair was cut as short as possible and no rings or bracelets were worn. Candomblé beads were hidden. He would not parade in carnival groups that made reference to Africa. But despite its shortcomings, this generation of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s studied hard

and educated itself.²³⁷

He continues:

Our parents from this generation transmitted something very important to us, despite their fear of being and acting black in a repressive society. They transmitted dignity, and they transmitted our history. They told us how the police used to invade black neighborhoods and order everyone into the streets dressed in their underwear to find out who was who. They also told us how the authorities invaded the *terreiros* of Candomblé and took sacred instruments to the police station where they would be placed alongside guns that had been used to commit crimes. Our parents' generation, afraid to be black, miraculously passed along the oral tradition of our African heritage. They passed on respect for elders, the strength of culture, and the knowledge that wisdom could be conveyed in spoken as well as written form. In the early 1960s, many of us thought that by studying we could be successful in Brazilian society. But the 1964 military coup destroyed that idea for the black community. . . . We stayed in Salvador, in Rio, in São Paulo, in São Luís, Maranhão, facing authoritarian regimes, facing the repression of ideas, facing educational inequalities. But we survived and culture became the road to follow. We could not go to the university, we could not join political parties, we could not do anything except reconstruct our black identity.²³⁸

The first response toward this reconstruction of Black identity was, bizarrely enough, based on perceptions by blacks of American Indians from United States cowboy films. Blacks from Bahia formed Carnival groups, known as *blocos índios*. These groups fell into disrepute within a couple years after claims of sexual harassment were leveled against them.

Rodrigues continues his narrative: "Salvador's black community involved in the *blocos índios* wanted something more, something stronger and more intense. It no longer wanted to be identified with American Indians. In 1974 the *bloco afro Ilê Aiyê* was formed. The creation of

Ilê Aiyê in the area of Liberdade known as Curuzu was a milestone of contemporary Brazilian negritude and the struggle against racism. Ilê Aiyê was formed with an exclusively Black membership. Its blacks only policy was initially criticized as racist. But gradually Ilê Aiyê began conquering its own space and by 1977 it was one of the largest carnival organizations in Salvador.”²³⁹

The explicit message of Black power sung by Ilê Aiyê created a sensation in the country (see Song 8 in Appendix A). As Larry Crook also notices, the group’s message “resonated well with young Black Bahians and the group quickly became a powerful vehicle for expressing Black pride and Negritude. Moreover, by focusing on their identity as blacks and by implicitly comparing their situation to that of blacks in the U.S. (note the reference to Black power), Ilê Aiyê refuted the myth of Brazil as a ‘racial democracy.’”²⁴⁰

Ilê Aiyê was created with a policy of exclusion towards both whites and *mulattos*. Considering the high degree of miscegenation that had occurred in Brazil’s history, this policy excluded the majority of people with African ancestry in Brazil. A number of members of Ilê Aiyê disagreed with this policy to such an extent that they split off from Ilê Aiyê and formed a new group. João Jorge Santos Rodrigues was one of these, and he recounts the creation of the new group which was formed:

In Pelourinho, the city’s historical district, a group called Olodum was born. Olodum is a Yoruba word that means the moment of creation, of being in Orum, the supreme deity, conceived by other religions as God. It is a powerful force. Olodum was founded in 1979 by prostitutes, homosexuals, people associated with the *jogo do bicho* [an illegal lottery], dope smokers, bohemian lawyers, and intellectuals.

He continues:

The first thing we did was to admit whites and mestizos as members. Olodum would be made up of blacks, whites, and mestizos. The second thing we did was to insert ourselves into the political struggle. We knew that participating in Candomblé was good, that being a black artist or cultural producer was good. But something was missing. Previous revolutions and rebellions had taught us that it is not enough to acknowledge the value of our blackness and to say that we were beautiful. Above all we had to be strong. We had to have institutionalized strength and Olodum would fulfill this organizational role.²⁴¹

Olodum needed a new sort of music that would represent their identification with other blacks in Africa and the diaspora. This need was filled by Neguinho do Samba, the leader of Olodum's percussionists, with his musical creation *samba-reggae*. This music was influenced by *salsa* and *merengue* from Cuba and the Dominican Republic, by *reggae* music from Jamaica, and by *Candomblé* rhythms from Bahia itself. It incorporated these influences into a sound deeply rooted in Brazilian samba. Crook notes that "the style and lyric content of this music actively engage Black Brazilians to think about their history in Brazil and their socio-historical links to blacks in Africa and the African diaspora. The music itself has become a force of resistance and source of self confidence among the *bloco afro* participants."²⁴²

Just like the Black liberation movements in the United States and in Africa, Olodum faced severe repression from Bahian authorities. Rodrigues describes the both the brutality of the authorities and the police, as well as Olodum's response:

One of Olodum's directors, Lazineiro, had both arms broken by the police. We asked him what he would do with the ideas of Malcolm X. He responded that he would make a revolution. Another

director, Carlos Cardoso, was shot twice by the state military police early one morning in 1990 while he was waiting for a taxi to take him to the airport. We asked him what he would do with the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi. He said he would make a revolution. In January of this year [1993], another of our directors, Gilmar, received two bullets from a military policeman. We asked him what he would do with the ideas of Kwame Nkrumah. He answered that he would make a revolution.

He continues:

“Through it all we have constructed and are still constructing a patrimony that has not been given to us by any politician. We have established our independence from the *jogo do bicho* and from drug traffickers. It has not been easy because we have encountered many enemies, both black and white. Our work has been based on self-esteem, on telling our history through carnival music. This is the history of Africa and the African diaspora. It is the history of humanity. Our work is based on principles of nonviolence. No matter how much we are attacked, we respond only with the violence of ideas. Olodum’s work is a form of nonviolent guerrilla warfare. At all moments we are engaged in politics. At all moments we are articulating the taking of power. At all moments we are thinking about taking power in order to create the concrete conditions for us to share the wealth of a country that has gold, petroleum, cacao, coffee, sisal, plenty of land, plenty of water, and plenty of air.”²⁴³

Olodum’s struggle was waged on local, national, and international fronts. In their neighborhood, they have struggled against police violence and for the restoration of the historical center of Palourinho, where Africans used to be sold in markets and where Olodum established their headquarters. Partly due to Olodum’s efforts, the state government provided \$12 million dollars for this restoration. Internationally, Olodum participated in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, advocating for the release of Nelson Mandela. After Mandela’s release, they

raised the issue of the war in Angola.²⁴⁴

Nor is Olodum alone in its mission and struggle. Numerous *blocos afro* have sprung up in Salvador, including Timbalada, Araketu, Male Debale, Afro Palmares, and Os Blacks (See Songs 9 through 12, pages 152-154, in Appendix A for examples of lyrics). In addition, Larry Crook describes how “dozens of *blocos afro* are popping up in the poorest neighborhoods of cities like Recife, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. These community-based organizations provide alternatives to gang life and other marginal activities so chronic among Brazil’s street youth.”²⁴⁵ This growth of *blocos afro*, especially in Rio de Janeiro, is directly linked to both a decline in the *escolas de samba* as well as the influence of rising Black consciousness. In a New York Times article from February 25, 2003, Larry Rohter describes this growing commercialization:

But in place of knowledgeable samba fans, the stands along the parade are increasingly filled with tourists, celebrities and high-rollers, many of whom are guests of corporations that have spent huge sums on luxury boxes. And instead of choosing parade themes developed by their members and based on folk or mythological subjects, many samba schools now are paid by large companies to choose topics that are thinly disguised commercials. Outsiders are even infiltrating the parade, to the point that a majority of those parading with sections of some samba schools are not even members. Tourists as far away as Japan or Scandinavia can now buy package tours that include the right to parade with a samba school, wearing a tailored costume at a cost of an additional \$300 or so.

Rohter also describes that remarkable growth in the number and size of *blocos* in Rio in recent years. He writes:

... the informal neighborhood associations known as blocos or bandas, considered moribund just a couple of decades ago, are making a remarkable comeback. All around the city, local groups with

whimsical or irreverent names like Christ's Armpit, Leopard's Breath, Meeting Without a Parade, Affinity Is Almost Love, and Hang On So You Don't Fall Down have already taken to the streets, encouraging residents to dress up and join them. According to a recent study, the number of such groups has doubled in less than a decade, and popular participation in them is zooming.

Serious challenges face Afro-Brazilians in terms of poverty, crime, environmental degradation, unemployment, and racism. As the *blocos* spread across Brazil, they will be forced to solve innumerable questions, difficulties, and challenges. The extent to which they are successful will depend on the skill in using tactics of resistance. Now that explicit themes of resistance have become a part of the public transcript, Afro-Brazilians will have to create new tactics to deal with these new challenges (for an example of an explicitly political Carnival song text, see Song 13 in Appendix A, page 155). Although the specific tactics change from situation to situation, the importance of power, domination, resistance, and creativity do not.

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper has been to critically analyze power struggles involving Brazilian music. At the heart of these struggles is the relationship between domination and resistance. Yet these struggles for power are not simply theoretical constructs in which each side employs tactics and the most skilled player wins. To see domination and resistance in this manner is to miss the point. It abstracts the situation until it becomes a board game. It ignores the devastating effects that struggles for power have on people. As those with more power seek to dominate those with less power, the subordinate parties are stripped of what little they do have. Loss of this little amount of power translates into loss of choice, freedom, and ability to determine one's own life. This is the way that domination functions: it allows people who have power to increase their power, and takes it from those who have little. This process creates powerful reactions in the subordinate party, including suffering, anger, and hope.

Suffering in this context reaches far deeper than insults, accidents, or injury. When people are born into positions of lesser power and privilege, this creates suffering. When people are forced to spend their lives fighting uphill battles, this creates suffering. When people have only very little to begin with, but this little is taken away so that another person can have an abundance, this creates suffering. Many Afro-Brazilians were victims of one of the most powerful structures of domination the world had ever seen: colonial slavery. Later, they bore the brunt of white Brazilian racism, classism, and discrimination. The level of suffering created by these asymmetries of power was unimaginable.

For some Black Brazilians, simple survival within the overwhelming suffering of slavery and domination was as far as they could go. Others transformed their pain into anger. Unlike

suffering, anger can be a motivating force. This anger can easily lead to resistance as the subordinate person refuses to cater to the choices of the dominator. This resistance can lead to antagonism and a struggle for power, either indirectly or openly. Within the hidden transcript, this resistance involved aspects of survival and transformation, both predicated on unity. Within the public transcript, this resistance turned into rebellion.

Throughout this framework of domination, suffering, and resistance runs a different sort of thread: hope. One of the greatest hopes of subordinates has always been an end to domination, wishing for an upside-down world where power roles were reversed. Those with less ambitious dreams simply hope for transformation of circumstances which reduce asymmetries in power to a more balanced level. For those in particularly bleak circumstances, hope for improvement gave subordinates energy to simply survive from one day to the next.

The two central aspects of resistance identified in this paper were survival and transformation, both of which were predicated upon unity. Survival included both physical and mental sorts. It included the small acts of resistance: sabotage, petty theft, deceit, and cunning; in short – *malandragem*. It also included the spaces created by Afro-Brazilians to escape from the surveillance of the authorities and retain mental sanity. These were acts of resistance because they were choices which were not presented to Afro-Brazilians by white authorities, but were creative alternatives to the choices presented to them.

One component of mental survival in the present is hope for future transformation. This is present within survival itself, but extends beyond it. Themes of transformation were found in spaces of relative autonomy among Afro-Brazilians. These spaces were used by Afro-Brazilians to reconnect to their cultural heritage, as well as to transform the reality in which they lived. This transformation of social space created hope for transformational possibilities in the future.

Unity was the necessary prerequisite for *either* survival or transformation. Both survival and transformation involved a degree of power on the part of those subordinate, and individuals who sought to resist societal domination in isolation were virtually powerless. Music played role in building unity among Afro-Brazilians throughout their history. During slavery, music played a part in the creation of social spaces such as *Candomblés*, *batuques*, and *Congadas*. After slavery ended, these spaces converged in Rio de Janeiro in the *morros*, where blacks from all over Brazil began to interact with far greater freedom. Out of this relatively free social space came samba.

In the 1930s, themes of appropriation, nationalization, and notions of authenticity gained new prominence. The tools of appropriation created by Vargas placed tight censorship controls on all national music production. These tools also sponsored programs of cooption and appropriation of both musicians and musical organizations. Together, cooption and appropriation generated notions of static authenticity which denied music any potential for creative resistance. Some musicians resisted this censorship by slipping their meanings past the censors, encoding these meanings in innocuous language. Other musicians accepted the government's terms and produced nationalist samba. Some samba schools attempted to retain control over their own institution and maintain their relationship with the community. Others made the best of the situation and sought for the prizes being offered by the government.

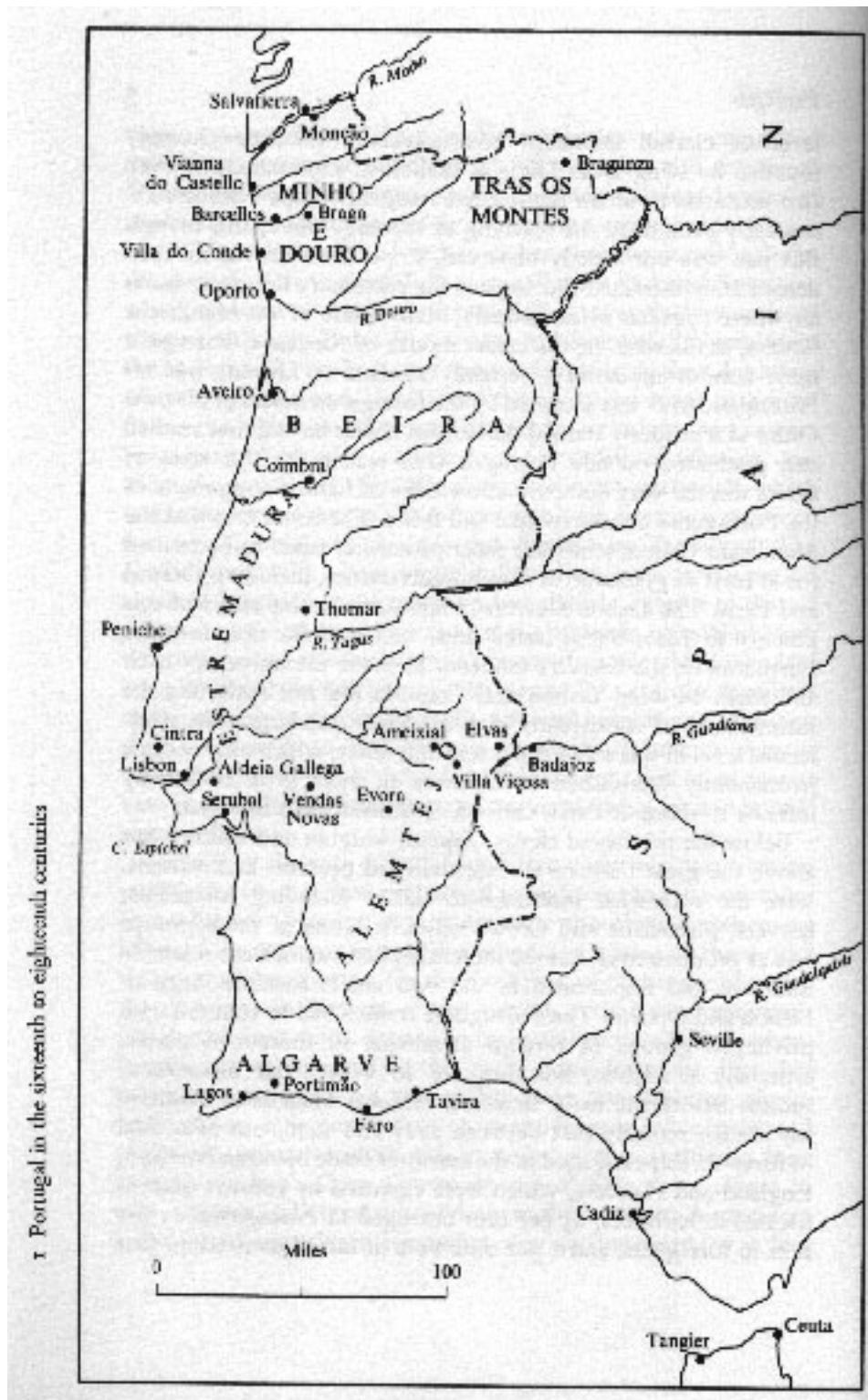
Entering into a new era of optimism and energy, Brazilian musicians in the 1950s and 1960s were not contained by the versions of authenticity which had been created. First with bossa nova, then with *tropicália*, these musicians of the 1950s and 1960s burst free of the stagnant orthodox conceptions of national identity and authenticity. The creativity in this music reflected the same forces which inspired the first *sambistas*, creating something new, relevant,

and meaningful. This opened room for non-orthodox conceptions of identity, particularly for a growing Black consciousness among a generation of Afro-Brazilian youths. Events in the United States, Africa, and at home resulted in a growing identification with blacks from around the world and the creation of a critical analysis which ripped apart the myth of a Brazilian 'racial democracy.'

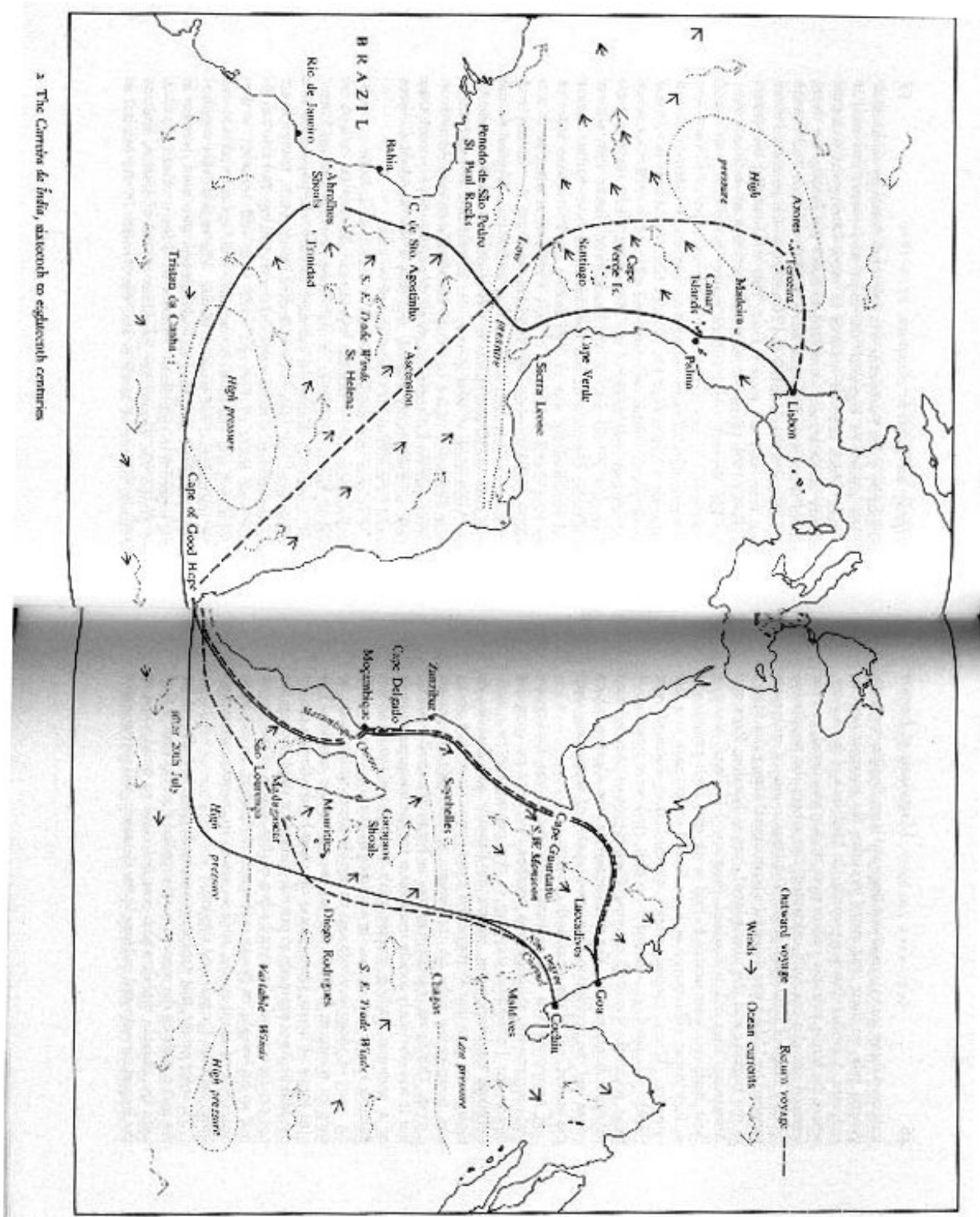
This growing Black consciousness found expression first the music of Jorge Ben, Gilberto Gil, and Black Soul. Later, blacks of Bahia founded the first *blocos afro*, explicitly connecting the message of Black consciousness with music for Carnival. With this development, Afro-Brazilian resistance against domination became explicit and unmistakable. The struggle to raise people's consciousness has entered into the public transcript and the political arena, and struggles for political power are increasing in importance. In these struggles, new tactics of domination and resistance will respond to new circumstances. Undoubtedly, music will continue to play a critical role in the contested terrain of this struggle.

Maps

1. Portugal (taken from Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire: 1415-1825*, p 8)



2. Carreira da Índia (taken from Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire: 1415-1825*, p 54-55)



2 The Carreira da Índia, sketching an equivalent centuria

3. Brazil (taken from <http://www.nazarenemissions.org/education/gin/sam/brazil.htm>)



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Appendix A: Song texts

Early Samba Songs

Song 1 — “Pelo Telefone”

by Donga and Mauro de Almeida (translated by Schreiner, p 105)

The master of the follies
Had me advised on the telephone
Not to quarrel with pleasure
If I wanted to have fun
Ai, Ai, Ai
Leave your worries behind you, my boy
Ai, Ai, Ai
Be sad if you succeed and you'll see.
I hope you get a thrashing
So you'll never try again
To take a woman away from another
After you've performed your tricks.
Look, the turtledove,
Kind sir, kind sir,
It is outright embarrassed.
The little bird
Kind sir, kind sir,
Has yet to dance a samba,
Kind sir, kind sir,
Because the samba,
Kind sir, kind sir,
Gives you goose bumps
Kind sir, kind sir,
And makes you weak at the knees
Kind sir, kind sir,
But it's great fun

Song 2 — “Mulato bamba” (Cool Mulatto)

by Noel Rosa

Este mulato forte
É do Salgueiro
Passear no tintureiro^d
Era seu esporte
Já nasceu com sorte
E desde Pirralho
Vive à custa do baralho
Nunca viu trabalho

This strong mulatto
Is from Salgueiro
Hanging around in the dry cleaner's
Was his favourite sport
He was born lucky
And since he was a kid
He's lived from a pack of cards
He's never seen a day's work

^d The word for dry cleaner's, *tintureiro*, was a slang term for the police van used to arrest vagrants in Rio de Janeiro

Song 3 — ‘O que será de mim?’ (‘What Will Become of Me’)

By Ismael Silva (1931)

Se eu precisar algum dia
De ir ao batente
Não sei o que será
Pois vivo na boemia
E vida melhor não há

Não há vida melhor
E vida melhor não há
Deixa falar quem quiser
Deixa quem quiser falar

O trabalho não é bom
Ninguém deve duvidar
Trabalhar, só obrigado
Por gosto ninguém vai lá

If one day I have to
Go out to work
I don’t know what will happen
‘Cos I live a bohemian life
And there’s no better way to live

There’s no better life
No better way to live
Let people say what they want
Let them say what they like

Work isn’t good
No one should doubt that
I’ll only work if forced to
Nobody works for the fun of it

Song 4 — ‘Rapaz folgado’ (‘Laid-back Guy’)

By Noel Rosa (1933)

Deixa de arrastar o teu tamanco
Pois tamanco nunca foi sandália
Tira do pescoço o lenço branco
Compra sapato e gravata
Joga fora esta navalha
Que te atrapalha

Com o chapéu de lado deste rata
Da polícia quero que te escapes
Fazendo um samba-canção
Já te dei papel e lápis
Arranja um amor e um violão

Malandro é palavra derrotista
Que só serve pra tirar
Todo o valor do sambista
Proponho ao povo civilizado
Não te chamarem de malandro
Mas sim de papaz folgado

Stop dragging your clogs
‘Cos clogs have never been sandals
Take that white scarf from around your neck
Buy some shoes and a tie
Throw out that knife
That gets in your way

With your hat tilted like that
I want you to escape from the police
By writing a *samba-canção*
I’ve given you a pencil and paper
Find a guitar and a lover

Malandro is a defeatist word
It’s only function is to take
All value away from the samba writer
I propose that civilized people
Don’t call you a *malandro*
But a laid-back guy instead

Carnaval song texts from Salvador, the *Afoxés*

Song 5 — “Ethiopa, A Union of Races” (Crowley, 26)

by Zezito
Afoxé Union of Races

O Rei Selassié assim nos falou:
“União tem na Etiópia
Todas as raças tem valor.”
Cidade capital Adis-Abeba,
Todas as raças vêm dançar.

King Selassie thus spoke to us:
“Union we have in Ethiopia
All the races have value.”
Capital city Addis Ababa,
All the races are going to dance.

Seu Ijexá,
Adis-Abeba, Harar,
Adis-Abeba.

Your Ijesa,
Addis Ababa, Harrar,
Addis Ababa.

União traz esse tema
Rebenteko para você.
Todo povo empregado
Assim vai dizer:
Adis-Abeba, Harar,
Adis-Abeba.

Union presents this theme
Bursting out for you.
All the thrilled people
Are going to say:
Addis Ababa, Harrar,
Addis Ababa.

Song 6 — “Okanbi; Power of the Sugar Mill” (Crowley, 26)

by Carlos Tuia
Afoxé Okanbi
Sons of the Okanbi Kingdom

Africá
Nigéria, Angola
Uganda, Congo e Guiné
Filho de Rei Oduduá
Cidade de Ilé Ifé.

Africa
Nigeria, Angola
Uganda, Congo and Guinea
Son of the King Odudua
City of Ile Ife.

Como dizia o Rei Negro
Alagonda alagum meu papá
Eh, eh, Babá

As said the Black King
Alagonda alagum my father.
Eh, eh, Baba (Yoruba, father or elder).

Okanbi essa força do engenho
Engenho que o Negro apanhou
Negro não é mais escravo
Pode cantar com amor.

Okanbi, this power of the sugar mill
Sugar mill that the Black took over
The Black is no longer a slave
He can sing with love.

Song 7 — “Salutation to Yemanjá” (Crowley, 27)

by Toinho
Afoxé Zanzibar
Bahia and All the Orixás

Quem comanda 83
É a rainha Yemanjá
Zanzibar segundo ano
Também veio lhe saudar.

She who commands in ‘83
Is Queen Yemanja.
Zanzibar for a second year
Also came to salute her.

Nós somos todos Negros.
Nós somos todos irmãos.
Vamos todos dar as mãos,
Vamos juntos cantar
Com muita fé em Yemanjá
Que a paz há de reinar.

We are all Blacks.
We are all Brothers.
Let’s all hold hands,
Let’s sing together
With much faith in Yemanja
So that peace now reigns.

Carnaval song texts from Salvador, the *Blocos Afro*

Song 8 — “Que Bloco É Esse” (“What Group Is That”) (Crook 1993, 96)

by Paulinho Camafeu
Bloco Ilê Aiyê

Que bloco é esse
Eu quero saber
É o mundo negro
Que viemos cantar pra você

What carnival group is that
I’d like to know
It’s the black world
That we come to sing to you about

Somos crioulos doidos
Somos bem legal
Temos cabelo duro
Somos black power

We’re crazy blacks
We’re really all right
We have kinky hair
We are black power

Branco se você soubesse
O valor que preto tem
Tu tomava banho de piche
Ficava preto também
Eu não te ensino minha malandragem

White man, if you only knew
The value that the black man has
You would take a bath of tar
So black you would be too
I’m not going to teach you my trickery

Nem tão pouco minha filosofia
Quem dá luz a cego
É bengala branca de Santa Luzia

Nor even my philosophy
Light to the blind man
Is given by the white cane of Saint Lucy

Song 9 — “Congratulations To Araketu” (Crowley 29)

by Gilson Nascimento

Bloco Araketu

Water Mothers

Felicidade do Araketu
Nesta homenagem as águas mães
Cantando pros mares
Pros lagos e rios
Seu canto singelo
Mãe da chuva é Nanã ae o.

Congratulations to Araketu
For this homage to the Water Mothers
Singing over the seas
Over the lakes and rivers
Your simple song
The Mother of rain is Nana *ae o*

Não se importe Negro
A verdade vencerá
Sua cultura é completa,
Seus Deuses são vivos,
Choraminga Oxum.
Se envaidece Iemanjá
Tanta coisa Negra
O Araketu exibindo
O seu povo inteiro cantando ae o
Seu canto singelo
Que exalta Nanã ae o
Mãe da chuva é Nanã, ae o.

Don't worry, Black,
Truth will conquer.
Your culture is whole,
Your gods are living,
Whimpering Oxun.
You can be proud, Yemanjá
Such Black things
Araketu is displaying.
Your entire people singing *ae o*
Your simple song
Which exalts Nana *ae o*
The mother of rain is Nana *ae o*

Song 10 — “Rebellion” (Crowley, 30)

by J. Eumawilye

Bloco Male Debale

Homage to African Liberation

Malê Debalê
Símbolo de lutas Negras
Hoje traz até vocês
A rebeldia de um povo
Eu lutaria de novo
Para ser livre de uma vez.

Malê Debalê
Symbol of Black struggles
Today presents for you
The rebellion of a people
In struggle once again
To be free once and for all.

A exemplo de Zimbabwe e Gana
Tongo, Angola, Moçambique
Guiné, Bissau, Bissau.

The example of Zimbabwe and Ghana
Togo, Angola, Mozambique,
Guinea, Bissau, Bissau.

A libertação Africana
Os mussurimins
Homenageiam neste carnaval
Os Negros contra o Apartheid
Pedem algo à suprema divindade

African liberation
The mussurimins [Muslims?]
Give homage in this Carnival
The Blacks against Apartheid
Ask permission from the Supreme Being

Pra clamar esse louvor.

To shout this praise.

África primeira
Negra nação do mundo.

Africa foremost
Black Nation of the world.

Song 11 — “Palmares, a Little Village” (Crowley, 31)

by Ariosvaldo Manoel da Conceicao

Bloco Afro Palmares

King Zumbi

Palmares, um pequeno povoado
Aonde os Negros reunidos
Discutiam sua liberdade.
Engenhos, inferno de azar ou sorte
Suor dos Negros era sangue
Às vezes preferiam a morte.
Zumbi, Negro valente inteligente,
Nunca puseram em seu corpo uma corrente,

Palmares, a little village
Where the reunited Blacks
Discussed their liberty.
Sugar mills, inferno of bad luck and good
The sweat of the Blacks was blood
Sometimes they preferred death.
Zumbi, brave intelligent Black,
Never were chains on his body,

Lutava armado até os dentes,
E hoje, os Negros têm a sua
Própria liberdade,
Os Negros podem andar livres na cidade
E até curar faculdade.

Struggled armed to the teeth,
And today, the Blacks have
Their own liberty,
The Blacks can walk free in the city
And even attend the University.

. . . E podem ser advogados.
Lá, lá, lá, lá, lá, lá, laia.

. . . And can become lawyers.
La la la la la la laia.

Song 12 — “Universal Shout” (Crowley, 32)

by Durvaltecie de Jesus

Bloco Os Blacks

Liberty

Ilha preta Jamáica
Sigo em rumo de lá
Venho mostrar as raízes
Desse Negro Yorubá.

Jamaica, Black Island
That’s where I’m heading for
I come to show the roots
O this Yoruba Black.

Trago a harmonia de meu canto Afro
Num grito universal
Liberdade
Os Blacks no Carnaval.

I bring the harmony of my African song
In a universal shout
Liberty
The Blacks in Carnaval.

Venho dizer que sou Negro
Não somente na cor
Vim mostrar as raízes

I come to say that I am Black
Not only in color
I come to show the roots

E mostrar meu valor
Vou jogar capoeira
Não pra folclorizar
É pra recorda Zumbi
Quando quis libertar-nos

And to show my value
I am going to play *capoeira*
Not to folklorize it
It is to remember Zumbi
When he wanted to liberate us.

Desperta a mente um grito universal.
Liberadade, os Blacks no Carnaval.

A universal shout revives the consciousness.
Liberty, the Blacks in Carnaval.

Carnaval song texts from Salvador, *political protest*

Song 13 — “Empty Pan on the Avenue” (Crowley, 36)

by Fernando Grande
Bloco Panela Vazia
Salvador, Capital of Opposition

É
Companheiros de folia
Vem chegando na avenida
O Bloco Panela Vazia
Que apesar dos sofrimentos
Vem trazendo alegria

It is. . .
Companions in revelry
Come arriving on the avenue
The Empty Pan Bloco
Who in spite of sufferings
Come bringing happiness.

Repita comigo este verso
Não esqueça do refrão
O povo precisa de escola
Água, luz, habitação
E com este salário minguado
Não tá dando nem pro mão.
Como é que pode?
Como é que pode meu irmão

Repeat with me this verse
Don't forget the refrain
The people need schooling
Water, light, housing
And with this scanty salary
There's not enough for anything.
How is this possible?
How is this possible, my brother?

O rico ficando rico
Só viaja a avião
O pobre ficando pobre
Já não pega condução.
O rico comendo filé
E o pobre lambendo sabão
Como é que pode meu irmão?
Os ricos morando em palácios
Os pobres morando em invasão.

The rich remaining rich
Just travel by plane
The poor remaining poor
Can't even grab a bus.
The rich eating steak
And the poor licking soap
How is this possible, my brother?
The rich people living in palaces
The poor people living in squatter
settlements.

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End Notes

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Carnival

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Partner-dances

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¹³³For a good description of a samba *bateria*, see McGowan and Pessanha, p. 38-44

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¹⁴⁵Ibid, p. 196

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¹⁹³J.E.H. de Mello, *Música popular brasileira cantada e contada por Tom, Baden, Caetano e outros*, (São Paulo, 1976), p 128. Qtd in Treece, p. 19-20

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