

# The threads unraveled: the great themes of traditional popular music in Brazil<sup>1</sup>

MARIANNA F. M. MONTEIRO and PAULO DIAS

## The place of traditional popular music

THE STRENGTH and specificities of traditional popular music in Brazil has aroused great interest among researcher of Brazilian culture since the late nineteenth century. Later on, folklorists associated it with dancing and drama and explored the diversity and richness of its expressions. In the second half of the twentieth century, the creation of humanities departments in universities opened up new forums for discussions about traditional culture among anthropologists, historians, sociologists, and ethnomusicologists. Subsequently, the same themes became the subject of emerging research areas such as ethnoscenology and theater anthropology.

In classical music, the appropriation of the popular in search of the consolidation of a national school of composition was already being outlined in Alberto Nepomuceno's *Séries Brasileiras*, a symphonic suite written between 1888 and 1896 from themes and melodic-rhythmic structures of traditional Brazilian music. In the first decades of the twentieth century, in the context of the modernist movement, composers from the nationalist school began to consider musical creation from raw materials supplied by traditional popular songs.

The decisive impulse towards the establishment of a national aesthetic base from musical creation and research came from the poet, writer, researcher and thinker of Brazilian art Mário de Andrade, when he collected and transcribed into scores a large collection of musical themes from popular traditions gathered over repeated travels throughout Brazil, to be used by the creators of that emerging national school.<sup>2</sup> Composers such as Villa-Lobos, creator of "Brazilian Soul", Camargo Guarnieri, Francisco Mignone, Guerra-Peixe and others based their compositional work on genres, instrumentation and melodic and rhythmic procedures of traditional popular music, just like Stravinsky, Bartók and Kodály were doing in Europe, either by harmonizing their themes or creating original pieces inspired by the national-popular.

Urban popular music in Brazil was also fueled by traditional music, to which it had an umbilical connection. Songs previously restricted to the lower classes of urban peripheries and rural areas moved on to the sphere of urban

popular music, as with iconic genres such as *samba* and *baião*, preceded by *lundu* and *maxixe*. In the era of recordings, radio and television, the appropriation of traditional Brazilian music by Brazilian popular music (MPB) - then already quite intertwined with the cultural industry - increased even further.

Especially since the 1990s, in the wake of the merchandising boom of world music, the music industry have welcomed recordings by communities and popular artists produced by popular Brazilian music (MPB) artists, producers and intellectuals interested in bringing popular art to the “great culture” circuits. We have been witnessing a proliferation of folklore and popular culture festivals; in large cities, groups of young people dedicate themselves to the research and performance of songs and dances from popular tradition, as well as to reworking them under different esthetic projects ranging from *forró* to rock.

Despite the many lines of force and the dynamics and interactions between popular culture, classical culture and mass culture, traditional popular music in Brazil has often been thought of as expressions of folklore, as a phenomenon linked especially to rural life, the rather anachronistic survival of ancient aesthetic forms, alien to contemporary cultural institutions. In fact, these so-called folk traditions have a dynamism of their own, which somehow strays from the hegemony of mass culture and even from more institutionalized cultural exchanges with classical culture, in which popular culture always gives more than it takes.

The recognition of cultural exchanges between popular and classical culture as well as their role in popular mass music should not, however, prevent us from understanding the specificities of traditional popular artistic production in what they teach us about a variety of making and experiencing art. Rooted in devotion, festivities and tradition, it is a multiple phenomenon that neither can nor should be reduced to a single dimension, in this case, the artistic dimension.

The first aspect that distinguishes popular culture from both classical production and the current popular mass production is linked to the notion of authorship and in relation to it, of originality or innovation. In the process of artistic creation within traditional popular culture as well as in the fruition of its work, originality is underrated; what is valued, on the contrary, is loyalty to tradition, to known and approved ways of creating and performing. The transmission of this knowledge seeks to preserve the “authenticity” of such works and in this regard uses as reference what is considered old, passed on from one generation to another. It is worth recalling that the preservation of artwork in the field of oral tradition dispenses with supports such as scores or records, and relies almost exclusively on performances and guarantee of its perpetuity.

In a time of idolatry of the new and of invention, the creativity of the artist here occurs in a different tune. What one wants is to ensure is oral transmission, and if there is room for innovation, as in poetic-musical improvisation and various other aspects of these manifestations, it can never imply breaking the paradigms already established by tradition; innovation is controlled by the very

parameters in which creation and learning occur. This is the position of both the artists and the public and relates to how they experience the artistic expression, to the meaning attributed by them to art-making.

Another distinctive aspect of this kind of artistic expression is that of being often inherently associated with social rites or, more often, with popular religiosity. Averse to the concept of art for the sake of art, traditional culture is not established within a sphere separated from social life, whether it's entertainment or "disinterested" culture. As a manifestation of a collective, but not public nature, popular art is always addressed to specific and known recipients - as in the praise to the dwellers, revelers and gifts, in the contest between singers - mobilizing forces of social control. Moreover, in the case of traditional Brazilian popular music, it cannot be conceived separately from dance, theater, since a clear distinction between the arts is non-existent in the world of popular culture: singing, dancing, poetry and performance are often intertwined in a single expressive body, and attempting to separate them necessarily involves the transfiguration of their meaning.

### **Themes of traditional popular music in Brazil: the threads unraveled**

The literature produced by folklorists had the merit of describing the morphology and functionality of popular expressions, although by so doing it eventually excluded them from their social contexts. In the field of traditional music, folklore researchers develop categories such as dances, ballets and leisure, aiming to classify it according to its formal specificities. They perceive regional variations and are interested mainly in the ethnic origins ("acculturation") of such traditions. They consider the musical diversity of the Brazilian people with its extraordinary profusion of styles, musical instruments, ways of playing, singing and dancing, as a result of the wide variety of ethnicities that contributed to the formation of the Brazilian people.

Mário de Andrade (1982, 1983, 1984, 1987, 1991), through a multidisciplinary approach based on a work combining bibliographic and field surveys, paved the way and took decisive steps to understanding the major thematic areas of Brazilian popular culture. Edison Carneiro (1974) and Roger Bastide (1959) also made important contributions to highlight the socio-historical processes which, in the cultural development of Brazil enable interpreting popular forms of artistic expression from certain leitmotifs that are recurrent in vast areas of the Brazilian territory. Units of meaning, around which different musical-choreographic and dramatic expressions are structured, regardless of their territoriality. Amidst the diversity of expressions of traditional popular culture there are recurrent religious articulations, dramatic structures and characters, musical and choreographic forms and poetic themes. The meaning of these recurrences lies not only on data of immediate reality, but is also basically linked to the social and historical processes of the development of Brazilian culture. It is necessary to think in terms of "classification keys" for popular Brazilian music-dances,

in order to address, in addition to the uniqueness of each form of expression, the similarities expressed in the use of musical instruments, in the melodic and rhythmic systems adopted, in the form, performance, symbolic systems and social meanings. As artificially isolated categories, these leitmotifs never appear in a “pure state”; they are, rather, themes-components always competing in different sets and in varying proportions.

In every Brazilian chant, dance and festivity, we can detect an intertwined bundle of these motifs, as if we were looking closely at the multicolored patterns of a fabric and seeking to follow each of the threads that make up the weft, grouping them according to their texture or color. These different thematic lines, the threads of the weft of artistic and religious expressions of the Brazilian people weaved in the collective memory of the peoples that confront one another here. They are woven in the loom of the history of nationality under the sign of conflict between ethnic social identity groups, in order to preserve “original” features as a form of resistance or, in moments of negotiation and approach, to generate cultural forms characterized by hybridization, moving many times through the ambiguity between resistance and acceptance of a dominant cultural pattern. The dynamism of these arrangements leads us to speculate on the formation or establishment of these artistic expressions, as well on as their movement, seeking to understand what processes were those that allowed the dissemination of these features and similarities in a country of continental dimensions.

Many of these traditions were forged during the colonial period and were linked to the catechetical project of a Christian empire in expansion. Far from being a form of “spontaneous”, primitive expression, they were important in structuring the colonial project in Portuguese America.

Folklore studies linked to the romantic proposal of discovery of a national spirit, necessarily suffer from serious anachronisms by connecting Brazilianness to popular culture, neglecting the fact that many of its artistic expressions, prior to becoming Brazilian expressions were the result of the encounter of different cultures and only became national in a second moment, when several of them had already been consolidated. Understanding these artistic expressions from a historical point of view involves the analysis of social processes preceding the formation of the Brazilian nation and refers to the social dynamics of Portuguese colonization.

### **Catechesis: Jesuit-Indigenous traditions, caboclinhos**

Colonization under the aegis of the expansion of Christianity, linked to the ideals of the Counter-Reform was based, in terms of cultural life, on the catechetical project embodied in the religious education of the primitive inhabitants of the land. In the process of Christianization of the heathen, a pedagogic system in which music, dance, poetry and theater played a preponderant role was redeveloped. The effectiveness of these instruments depended largely on a

translation of the Christian message, in order to adapt it to the cultural parameters of the populations to be converted. Initially the Jesuits and later priests belonging to other orders adopted as a conversion strategy, the *contrafactum*, a method already tested in Asia and Africa, which consisted of different forms of appropriation and use of indigenous cultural elements, especially the language, the dance and music, associating them with exemplary Christian contents, or overlapping them with European cultural forms. In the Jesuit settlements of the sixteenth century, the natives were taught to sing European chants in their native languages, playing European musical instruments (they were called *nheengariba* or “musicians of the land” in general language). They were also taught Portuguese dances, especially the children, or *Indian kids*.

While on the one hand in Portugal the Church waged a strong fight against the peasant dancing and musical expressions that interfered in Catholic rituals, on the other in the colony the catechetical project depended on – and fostered – heterodox ritual practices, which entailed the amalgamation of forms of Portuguese and indigenous expressions, creating unique artistic forms that are at the root of many manifestations of popular culture today. The *cururu* in the states of Mato Grosso and São Paulo would have been originally a popular indigenous dance, to which the singing of religious topics was adapted. Two contestants challenge each other with improvised verses, a practice used by the Jesuits to stimulate the absorption of knowledge related to the Catholic religion (Dias & Ikeda, 2003). The interaction between Indians and Jesuits has also given rise to dances like the Santa Cruz dance or *sarabaguê*, and probably the *cateretê* or *catira* as well. In the Amazon region, where contacts between priests and Indians were also intense, we have the Sairé procession as a modern example of native manifestation adapted by the catechesis.

Within these cultural dynamics there was, in addition, an extrapolation of the real Indian to an idealized figure of the native. In the sixteenth century, the procession of Rouen (1562) depicts Tupinambá Indians brought from Brazil flanked by European dancers dressed as savages: the figure of the Indian penetrated the canon of itinerant ballet companies.<sup>3</sup> Guilds with their dances, among that of the boilermakers, which performed a *mestizo* dance, participated in the festivities held in Rio de Janeiro in 1818 to acclaim D. John VI. Taken over by the guilds and having survived their disappearance, the dances of “Indians” or “*mestizos*”, then recreated, were always part of new social scenarios. The idealized figure of the “*mestizo*” migrated to the field of the basic constructs of the imaginary and achieved flexibility and agility as an expressive matrix, allowing it to spread across the traditional Brazilian popular culture and become an overarching, almost ubiquitous theme.

Today we see parading during Carnival or religious feasts in Pernambuco, Sergipe, Paraíba, Bahia, Minas Gerais, São Paulo and Goiás groups of revelers dressed as Indians holding bows and arrows adapted to be used as a per-

cussion instrument (*preaca*). They are the *mestizos*, *caboclinhos*, *penachos*, Indian tribes, *Tapuios*, *Caiapós*. In Minas Gerais, some groups of *mestizos* are linked to the *congado* Catholicism and take to the streets celebrating Our Lady of the Rosary together with the other groups of the so-called *congado* from Minas Gerais, which we shall discuss later.

The music is usually only instrumental, the choreographies are agile, acrobatic and with quick maneuvers, and the most common dramatic theme is war against rival tribes or against runaway slaves by order of white men. Some groups, such as the Kayapo from São Paulo perform traumatic events that perpetuate the memory of the violent contact between Indigenous peoples and white men, like the action of jumping to the ground when they hear the roar of a rocket, which is associated with the guns of their capturers or the kidnapping of young Indigenous women (*bugrinhas*) by whites. Perhaps one of the few indigenous traits noted in some of these dances is the use of a small block flute, along with percussion instruments, in the *caboclinhos* and Indigenous tribes of the Northeast.

The Indigenous character also appears as a striking figure in imposing and very luxurious *caboclos de lança* (mestizo with a spear) of rural *maracatu* dances in Pernambuco, or in the *caboclos de pena* (mestizo with feathers) dance of the *bumba-bois* in Maranhão. The mestizos are also present in African-Brazilian religions of Bantu matrix – *candomblé de caboclo*, *catimbó* and *umbanda* – representing, as deified spiritual entities, the ancestors of the owners of the land.

Popular Portuguese Catholicism in Brazil:

### **Nativity, Holy Ghost, Patron Saints**

Although the Portuguese colonial project established with remarkable uniformity its basic institutions, language, moral precepts, uses and customs throughout the vast territory of Brazil, this actually did not occur through the elimination of local cultures, as seen in Anglo-Saxon America. Rather, the ethics of Iberian Catholic settlers was characterized by alliances and negotiations with indigenous peoples, expressed, for example, in marriages between Portuguese men and Indigenous women who survived the first contacts. Despite the massacres and genocides perpetrated against indigenous groups, the settlers adapted to native customs and adopted them, leading from the start to the emergence of a racially and culturally mixed civilization, as exemplified by the backland culture that spread along the paths of expansionism of the so-called *bandeirantes* [pathfinders (from São Paulo to the Southeast, South and Central-West)]. The catechesis of indigenous peoples and the moral and religious control over them proved to be arduous and unpleasant tasks, and the integration of these cultural habits of the whites could not occur without great flexibility.

The enforcement policy of the institutions in the metropolis came across the incompetence brought from home by the Portuguese, such as the impossibility, endured for centuries by the Portuguese Church, to uproot ancient pre-

Christian traditions of its people;<sup>4</sup> in addition, the colonization project associated with the mercantilist expansion and transatlantic slave trade was far above the possibilities of royal and/or ecclesiastical control. Thus, Catholicism as reproduced here flourished outside the control mechanisms of the official church, producing, in this gap, forms of worship that rehabilitated ancient rites of popular Portuguese religiosity, such as the veneration of saints through dance, while incorporating an older African Catholicism.

The dance in honor of São Gonçalo de Amarante, a form of devotion already popular in Portugal and maintained by sailors and mature nubile women (the saint is known the “spinsters’ matchmaker”) spread throughout Brazil, where the saint also became the patron of violists. At dances, despite the presence of instruments like fiddles and tambourines, the viola is indispensable. The ritual is conducted by the laity: preparation of the altar, prayers that precede the dance, the collection of donations are tasks that involve the entire community. Devotees dance to deliver on a promise, even if these were made by people who died. In the Southeast, the first and second violists lead the singing before the altars, heading the two lines of participants. Each turn or sequence of choreography comprises different moves by dancers, including the Iberian tap dancing and clap dancing (Dias & Ikeda, 2003). The São Gonçalo version in Sergipe, in turn, is performed by a community of black people, with songs, sounds and dances that resemble the African-Brazilian tradition of the *congadas*.

The Pentecost festivities in honor of the Holy Ghost, which was brought to Brazil from Portugal and Azores,<sup>5</sup> is typical of a Portuguese religiosity that was established here and spread throughout the territory. As in Portuguese lands, processions with red flags bearing the image of the dove, the emperor, the empress and their pages (valets) richly dressed, the abundant distribution of food and the musical itinerant ensembles mark this religious celebration from north to south. Its music has characteristics related to the European Middle Ages, such as the succession of plays in the form of suite, modal polyphony, rhythms predominantly ternary or with a ternary subdivision (the *perfectum* of the medieval rhythm) and hemiole.<sup>6</sup> The music is accompanied by instruments of Portuguese origin such as violas, violins and bass drums.

The festivities associated with the Christmas season, including the birth of Jesus and the epiphany - visitation of the Three Wise Men - is another case of ancient Portuguese traditions revamped in Brazil in different manifestations of music, dance and popular theater from December 25 to January 6 (Twelfth Night). Related to the Iberian *vilancicos*, the *lapinhas*, *pastorinhas* and *pastoris* from the Northeast, they feature scenic-musical groups that dramatize events related to the birth of Christ, the adoration of the shepherds and of the Three Wise Men. In the Central-South region the most frequent expressions are the *Ternos de Reis* (Festival of the Three Wise Men), groups that by visiting houses along an extensive route retrace the journey of the Three Wise Men. Revelers

acknowledge different styles in this festival: the one from Minas Gerais, with remarkable vocal polyphony and accompanied by plucked strings, fiddle and drums; the one from Goiás, in which two pairs of singers in an interval of the third alternate in singing the sacred text; and northwards is the one from Bahia, with singing accompanied by the renowned *fife band* consisting of two bamboo flutes in response to the principal theme and a percussion suit.

**The black brotherhoods:  
Congo, Christian and Moor kings, sailors**

From the seventeenth century onwards, slave labor becomes predominantly African, which will involve new cultural arrangements because of both the peculiarities of African cultures and the specificities of the place of the African slave in colonial society. Most slaves were brought here from the African regions subject to the European colonization project since the fifteenth century, such as the kingdom of Congo (Souza, 2002). The conversion of the King of Congo to Catholicism in 1491 justified Portuguese military support in inter-tribal wars that increased slave trade.

The arrangements and combinations between Portuguese and African cultures, which are typical of many forms of Brazilian popular artistic expressions are therefore processes started in Africa, with old ramifications in the European continent. In fifteenth century Lisbon, African Bantu slaves brought from Congo and Angola were already organizing themselves into brotherhoods and elected a king and a queen among their peers (Tinhorão, 1988a). The royal processions with music and dance in which Black sovereigns appear protected by large umbrellas were also documented early in Brazil.<sup>7</sup> A common feature inter-connecting religious expressions distant from each other in space and time, with equally varied performances, the African royalties and their dancing processions were an integral part of the power structure of the Brazilian black brotherhoods and were intrinsically linked to black-fraternal sociability.

Inside the black brotherhoods of Our Lady of the Rosary, St. Benedict, St. Iphigenia, religious and political bodies were coordinated in two fronts: these entities were at the same time promoters of public Catholic rituals and rituals of the coronation of kings and queens which, by including songs and dances accompanied by percussion instruments revived aspects of African culture and religion within typically European institutions. The presence of African kingdoms in the processions reflected, thus, the link between African political and religious traditions and Portuguese religious and political forms. Tolerated by the authorities, they were part of the great eighteenth-century public festivities, and reason for admiration by scholars in festive eulogies that describe their grandeur and beauty, without, however, assigning them legitimate political power.

A dancing entourage accompanied the sovereigns on the streets, singing praises to the patron saints and Congo kings representing ancestral African-Bantu nobility. Thus, ties with the “mother land” were established through



the ancestors, symbolized and embodied in the figure of the Congo kings. The battles and feats of the great dynasties of Congo and Angola are remembered on those occasions through a dramatization of royal embassies and war dances as was the custom, according to chroniclers, in the kingdom of Congo.

Processions to escort Congo kings documented since the seventeenth century in Brazil show great similarity with the entourages of traditional African chiefs, who were also escorted by dancers and musicians playing accompanying instruments. *Marimbas de arco* (bow marimbas) with gourd resonators, instruments present in royal processions in Central Africa, are still played in *congadas* in São Paulo and Minas Gerais. However, the musical instruments most common in procession *congadas* are the *caixas* (boxes), which are portable bimembranophone drums strained by “v” strings and played with drumsticks. They are European model drums (war drums) reinterpreted by African-Brazilians in different regional morphologies such as the implements of the *maracatu* of the Recife nation and the Mozambican *boxes* of Minas Gerais. So, those drums once played by white men in the armies achieved, in the hands of black *congadoeiros*, a sacred character, endowed with mystical powers and the power to evoke, through their sounds, African ancestors in the spiritual rear-guard of the procession. Along with the boxes, certain groups used European instruments like the viola and the accordion.

Having originated in the entourage accompanying the Congo kings, most of today’s *congadas* consist of simple processions with music and dance, without a dramatic plot, some of them with no connection to the black brotherhoods. This is the case of the famous *maracatus* in the Pernambuco nation, which today are staged during Carnival. Other regional forms of procession *congadas* are the *catumbis* in Santa Catarina; the Mozambiques in Rio Grande do Sul; the *congadas*, Mozambiques and sailors in São Paulo; the villains, *catopês*, sailors, *congos*, *penachos* and Mozambiques in the *congado* from Minas Gerais; the *congos* in Goiás; the *congo* bands in Espírito Santo; the *cambinda* in Paraíba; and the *taieiras* and *cacumbis* in Sergipe, among others.

Among the *congadas* with a dramatic plot, besides those already mentioned we have the *Ticumbi* in Espírito Santo; the *congos* in Paraíba; the *congos de saio* in Rio Grande do Norte; the Vila Bela *congos* of the Holy Trinity in Mato Grosso; and the *congada da Lapa* in Paraná. In these *congos*, the fighters dramatize a confrontation between African kings and their warriors. The conflict is always between a Christian kingdom and a pagan kingdom, representing a Bantu-African feat with the narration of interethnic battles. Since the colonial processions, the blacks have exhibited in the Catholic festivity the fights between kingdoms, reproducing African forms of royal procession, while stating and legitimizing internal “national” leadership before other white brotherhoods and authorities. In the state of Minas Gerais, the brotherhoods still have a great influence in the religious life of the cities, gathering thousands of people in their

celebrations, crowning their kings and celebrating Our Lady of the Rosary as it was done in Lisbon four hundred years ago.

In the colonial context, the dramatic plot was the representation of intertribal wars, which were interpreted as a “fair war” between Christianized Africans and their pagan enemies. In Portuguese culture, the theological-political discourse about the “fair war” refers primarily to the Crusades, the kingdom establishment process, the expulsion of the Moors and the recovery of the Holy Land; hence the importance of Charlemagne and the 12 pairs of France, which has also left traces in various manifestations of traditional Brazilian culture. The dramatic piece that restores the European feat of Charlemagne’s crusade is present in dramatic *congadas* such as that of Lapa, in Paraná, and those of Ilhabela São Sebastião, on the coast of São Paulo, and *moçambiques de bastão* in the Paraíba Valley, São Paulo. The theme of the conflict between Christians and Moors is in itself a new classification key, due to its recurrence in festivities like *cheganças* and *cavalcadas*, besides the *congós* or *congadas*. It is also combined with the Holy Ghost festivities in *cavalcadas* of Christians against Moors, as seen in Pirenópolis, Goiás.



Carlos Julião. Entourage of the Black Queen in the Twelfth Night festivities, circa 1776, watercolor.

The reference to the fights against the infidels leads us directly to the Portuguese maritime saga, whose memory inspires many Brazilian popular festivities. By staging events of life at sea associated with the Portuguese naval epopee, the sailors’ games, with or without dramatic plots, are another major theme of popular choreographic musical traditions. Barges, fandango dances and *marujadas* emerge as independent dramatic<sup>8</sup> dances, bringing to the stage new interpretations retelling old Portuguese novels, as is the case of the ship *Catarineta*. There is also a nautical version of the fights between Christians and Moors in the *cheganças*.<sup>9</sup>

*Brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary of Justinópolis, in the Feast of the*



*Blessed Consecrated Host of Colina, in Ribeirão das Neves (Minas Gerais), May 2005.*



*Meeting of rural Maracatus from Nazaré da Mata (Pernambuco), Carnival 1998.*

When linked to the Congo kings festivities and to black brotherhoods, the theme of sailors refers to the painful memory the Atlantic crossing aboard slave

ships by African ancestors, called “Sailors of God” in the songs of *congadeiros* from Minas Gerais. In this state, one of the “Seven Sisters of the Rosary”, as the different *guards* (categories of *congada*) of the *congado* from Minas Gerais are called, is the *marujada*, *marujos* or *marinheiros* (groups of sailors), whose members wear the stylized costume of the navy and have hierarchical positions based on navy ranks.

### **Prohibited drumming: *terreiro* and *candomblé* drumming**

The reception of artistic and religious forms developed by the blacks with greater or lesser participation of poor whites ranged from persecution and prohibition to the relative tolerance or overt support. The festivities of the blacks were perceived, in a dual key, as “honest” or “dishonest”. The processions and *revelry* that accompanied the *reinados* in the brotherhoods, such as popular Catholic devotions, were perceived as honest entertainment. But drumming - meetings with dances, songs and drums, of a more reserved character and outside the public sphere - were prohibited and persecuted, feared as dangerous gatherings of blacks. The acceptance or rejection of this spiritual African-Brazilian art is expressed in the realm of religion as witchcraft against Christian devotion; in the realm of morality as honesty against lasciviousness; in the realm of violence as riot or revolt against resignation. It is important here to note this dialectic between honest and dishonest entertainment in order to understand the place of this great set of African-Brazilian manifestations, the so-called *batuques* (dances accompanied by drums). Against the grain of allowed forms of entertainment, they act as cultural and political affirmation of the excluded outside the dominant ideological apparatus.

The true nature of the *batuques* – whether entertainment or rite - always escaped the understanding of white observers from the colony and the empire. This ambiguity that misguided them was conveniently exploited by the actors of the black festivities, at times when they gathered to worship their ancestors and African deities, for the performance of songs and dances of social genealogy, for the resolution of conflicts through the challenge the singing duel contest, or for the performance of war dances. Among the Bantu slaves in the Southeast, a metaphorical poetics developed in the slave quarters from the symbolism of African proverbs and riddles, allowed the slave community to communicate close to the ears of the foreman through songs and drums. Using the language of deception, of double meaning, and pervaded by strong spirituality, poetic-musical-choreographic manifestations arose – such as the *jongo* (in southeastern states) and the *candombe* (in Minas Gerais), with their chants of praise to ancestors, of social genealogy and poetic-magical challenge; and the *capoiera*, which is at the same time a fight, a dance and a game. Among the current *batuques*,<sup>10</sup> which bear witness to the cultural presence of Bantu in regions where there were large concentrations of slaves from Congo-Angola and Mozambique, there are also the *umbigada* (belly-bumping) dances,<sup>11</sup> and the *tambor de crioula* (Creole’s

drum) from Maranhão and the *batuque* from São Paulo, traditions in which the singing refer to past and present events in the community, including criticism of racism and social exclusion against the black.

Currently, the *batuques* retain, to a great extent, this character of resistance, of a social space in which the blacks speak to the blacks, and most of them occur in the poor outskirts of the cities to which the populations of Afro-descendants moved in the post-abolition period, without any visibility or official support until very recently.<sup>12</sup> Also used are old drums made of carved tree trunks tuned by fire, which are true icons of African ancestry and preserve their Bantu nomenclature: *gomá*, *dambí*, *dambá* (*candombe* from Minas Gerais); *mulemba*, *quinjengue* (belly-bumping *batuque* from São Paulo); *candongueiro*, *angomapita* (*jongo* from the Southeast); and *zambê* (*zambê* coconut from Rio Grande do Norte).

Don José da Cunha Grã Ataíde, governor of Pernambuco between 1768 and 1769, distinguishes between two types of black *batuques*: those of a religious nature, which should be prohibited - “those that the Blacks in the Coast of Mina perform covertly, or in Houses or Farms, with a Black Master Woman and an altar of idols” - and those intended for leisure, “which though not the most innocent are like the Fandangos of Castella and the *fofas T* from Portugal.” Following his opinion, Minister Martinho de Melo ordered the prohibition, by royal decree, of “superstitious and pagan dances” (Tinhorão, 1988b, p.43- 4).

Although there are records of African religious manifestations since the seventeenth century, such as the so-called *calundus*, it was in the nineteenth century that the first organized worship group emerged, in the context of urban slavery. The growth of cities gives rise to the importation of Africans for domestic and urban services, such as the merchant slaves known as blacks or *escravos de ganho* (self-renting slaves). In prosperous capitals of the Northeast such as Salvador, Recife, São Luis do Maranhão as well as in Rio de Janeiro and to a lesser extent in Rio Grande do Sul, these urban slaves moved around with relative freedom, with the possibility of organizing groups according to their ethnicity. Thus *jejes*, *nagós*, *malés* and *haussás*, *angolas* and *congos* met in remote locations to practice their traditional religion, in which ancestral spirits or different tutelary deities related to natural forces and life in society took over the bodies of their priests during the mystical trance. The re-articulation of the African veneration of *orixás*, *inkisses* and *voduns* in Brazil occurred through the establishment of a pantheon gathering deities related to different ethnic groups, worshipping together in organized communities which began to be called *candomblés*.<sup>13</sup> The ritual and associative structure of these African-Brazilian houses of worship is due largely to the cultural imprint of the Sudanese *nagós* and *jejes*,<sup>14</sup> brought by the Atlantic slave trade, especially from the second half of the eighteenth century. In urban environment of the Northeast, the Sudanese became

culturally hegemonic among the slave mass, their worship model was adopted, and their deities were worshiped in various syncretic associations by Africans of different ethnic origins, especially Bantu.

Notwithstanding the prohibitions and constant police persecution they endured, the *candomblé* houses remained as strongholds of Africanness – languages, mythology, medicine, cuisine, music and dance, not to mention an entire African worldview. They receive different names according to the regional version or African ethnic matrix: *candomblé ketu*, *jeje*, *angola*, *caboclo* in Bahia (now disseminated through various Brazilian states); *xangô* or *nagô* in Pernambuco; *xambá* in Alagoas; *tambor de mina* in Maranhão; *babassuê* in Pará; *batuque* in Rio Grande do Sul.

In the early twentieth century, black and white religious people in the Rio-São Paulo axis strove to bring to the public sphere the spiritualist African-Brazilian religion. Pantheons from different African-Brazilian religious strands - *jeje-nagô*, *congo-angola* and *caboclo candomblés*, *macumba* in Rio, *cabula* in Espírito Santo and others - amalgamated by philosophical-religious conceptions of Bantu matrix (strongly present in southeastern Brazil) were reinterpreted in the socially legitimizing light of the European Christian Kardecism, giving birth to a new religion known as *umbanda*. With a strong institutionalizing and associative vocation, the faith of *umbanda* attracted followers in the white middle classes and aimed to become the Brazilian religion par excellence.

Currently, the different strands of African-Brazilian religions are part of a gradient extending from the more orthodox African rites to those which adopt European religious practices. The music of *candomblés* reflects this gradient, with African musical characteristics more or less hybridized with other types of musicality. The *candomblé nations* translate, in turn, into specific music styles that preserve elements of ethnicity. So while in the *nagô ketu* the sacred drums are played with drumsticks (*aguidavi*) and pentatonic scale systems prevail, in the Congo-Angola houses the drums are played with the hands and the heptatonic system<sup>15</sup> is used, in addition to other contrasting elements: *toques* (sacred rhythms), morphology of the drums, African languages used in the musical repertoire<sup>16</sup>, etc.

### **Secularization of culture: profane dances, singing, oxen and samba**

The purchase of freedom from slavery, the slaves' increased mobility and independence in urban environments gave rise, still in colonial times, to an important population of freedmen and mulattos. The strength of the black brotherhoods, often the oldest in the area, and the large concentration of slaves explain the emergence of an extremely diverse culture developed by black people. Sacred classical music was performed and written by mulattoes with perfect mastery of educated norms, who produced music similar to the European music of the period. In the *batuques*, slaves and free blacks mingled with poor whites and mestizos, forming an urban culture of ordinary people which was often the target of repression in the name of morality and public order.<sup>17</sup> There was

a movement towards a secularization of segments of popular culture as well as of its repression. Throughout the nineteenth century, Catholic religious festivities began to lose strength as aggregators of revelers, bringing together cultural expressions of different social and ethnic groups. The ideology of progress, urbanization and sanitation shared by the intellectual elites and public officials threatened the old colonial religious festivities, which were considered backward, barbaric and unhealthy. The calendar of public Catholic festivities had been drastically reduced at the end of the nineteenth century, especially after the separation of the Church from the State, with the advent of the Republic.

Entertainment dances emerged in cities and farms, amidst an ongoing process of interclass appropriation and circulation of choreographic and musical elements – from the popular *terreiros* to stylish ballrooms and vice versa, and from rural areas to urban environments. While the poor mestizo population appropriated the dances and contra dances of Europeans ballrooms, the *lundus* of slave quarters stepped into the ballrooms of the white elite at the expense of disposing of their percussive and choreographic elements, which were seen as sensual. Tap-dancing of Iberian origin like *catiras* and *cateretés* flourish in the rural areas of the South-Central region and the *fandangos* take over the coast. Radiating from the rural Northeast area, it is likely that dances like *coco* and *baiano* may have contributed to the development of the current *forró*. In the late nineteenth century the *maxixe*, a sensual popularization of the polka gestated in the suburbs of Rio de Janeiro, became a success in the ballrooms of the elite and traveled to France. All these modalities involve the couple entwined, the circle or the formation vis-à-vis the contra dance.<sup>18</sup>

Alongside the profane dances, another musical modality focused on recreation gains strength: the improvised song contest between two singers, which was already present in the colony as a religious modality from the early days of catechesis. The habit of improvising verses according to strict rules of rhyme and metric would have come to us through Portuguese tradition, which in turn came from the European troubadour music, enriched here with contributions from the African sung narrative and indigenous mythical poetry. Meetings in homes at the invitation of residents among famous improvisers to compete to the sound of the viola and the accordion became frequent, with enthusiastic supporters of each of the competitors. Today the practice of singing is present throughout the country: in the rich Northeastern improvisation with dozens of modalities, in the ballad of Rio Grande do Sul, in the *cururu* of Western São Paulo, in the *calango* of the Paraíba Valley, and in the *samba de partido alto* among others.

While in the houses leisure hours are filled with dances, instrumental music such as *choro* and *seresta*, and the song duel contest, in the squares and public spaces of cities several popular plays are staged featuring music and dance. Very popular in Brazil was the story of the death and resurrection of a pet ox told

through comic characters. This popular satirical play consists of theatrical scenes followed by songs and dances. In the oxen of the North/Northeast, a common performance is related to the story of a black cowboy who betrays his master by killing his best ox. His pregnant wife, who wanted to eat the tongue of this ox is the pivot of the betrayal. Underlying the improvised dialogue laden with social and political criticism is the class conflict between the employer and the employee. At the end of the play, as it is currently staged, the ox resuscitates, leading folklorists to associate it with European pagan rituals of the summer solstice. The ox, in this case, is thought of as a tradition belonging to a European archeo-civilization, to use the words of Roger Bastide (1959).

Masks of ox and its dances are frequent in Africa, and since the eighteenth century they have been reported in Portugal and in Brazil, manipulated by comic black clowns in farcical bullfighting in bullrings. The popular comicality typical of ox plays, especially the unmistakable figure of the black clowns Catirina, Pai Francisco (*bumba-boi* in Maranhão and *boi-bumbá* in Amazonas), Mateus and Bastião (seahorse from Pernambuco and Paraíba) refer to these black clowns of eighteenth century bullfighting mentioned in almost all festive panegyrics of the colonial period. The bullfights were held in stalls, spaces built especially for the festival, and were spaced by equestrian demonstrations, parades of floats, dances and scenes, in which the black comedians stood out mimicking the actual bullfight and performed brief comic scenes. An entire popular comic tradition seems to emerge from these clowns and extend to the popular figures (characters) of seahorses and bumba-bois of today, not to mention that the figures of the ox and the cowboy are also found in the festivities in the Southeast and South, such as the ox kings in Espírito Santo and the papaya ox in Santa Catarina.

Considered by the elites of the nineteenth century as a dance of trouble-makers and dangerous people, the ox revelries endured the same persecution as the *batuques*. Today the ox, reworked by the tourism industry has become an attraction, whether in the Maranhão form of a scheduled race groups of different *sotaques*,<sup>19</sup> sponsored by the government during the June festivals,<sup>20</sup> or in the form of the boi-bumbá in Parintins, Amazonas, a phenomenon of features and proportions as spectacular as those of the samba schools in Rio de Janeiro. In Rio and São Paulo samba 'stadiums' (*sambódromos*) were built as "packaging" for the parades of samba schools; in Parintins a bumba 'stadium' (*bumbódromo*) was designed for similar purposes.

The development of a secular and urban culture opens way to the growth of Carnival, the major date of profanity, to which different musical-choreographic traditions previously present in Catholic celebrations migrate. The tradition of the Portuguese Shrovetide established here since the colonial times was soon enriched with local dances - *caboclinhos*, *maracatus* and *bumba-bois* dances - which today are still preserved in a few carnivals, such as in Recife. Over time, the old-time carnival with its flour, water and lime fights began to be considered



abusive and provincial by the advocates of the progress and modernization of cities – and therefore inappropriate for metropolises such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. In these cities, the visceral Shrovetide was gradually replaced by stylish carnivals imported from Europe, where the elites paraded in processions of carriages (and later of cars) and organized processions of floats, and the water fights gave way to the civilized confetti fights.

Poor people, particularly of African descent, became spectators of the ‘big carnival’ of the affluent classes, which dominated public spaces, but at the same time organized their ‘small carnival’ in backyards and squares in the suburbs. Adopting different strategies of city occupation during the Carnival Triduum, processions of blacks and lower classes - the *zé-pereiras* (John Does), ranches, blocks, groups of revelers, and then the samba schools - grew and eventually replaced the white carnival in central public spaces.<sup>21</sup>

In the second decade of the twentieth century, Rio de Janeiro witnessed the emergence of the first samba schools,<sup>22</sup> associations resulting from the encounter of the many forms of expression brought in the saddlebags of blacks and not so blacks who came to share the sub-proletarian fate in the outskirts and slums of Rio, looking for a job and a place in society – which the abolition, paradoxically, had taken away from them. They came from decadent rural areas of coffee plantations amidst the waves of demobilized soldiers of the Canudos War or people displaced by severe droughts in the Northeast. In the slums of Rio there were, on the one side, specifically African styles of speech with the reverberating rhythm, the ritualism, the swagger and body malice typical of *batuques de terreiro* and *candomblé*; on the other, practices already socially accepted like the processions of popular Catholicism - *congadas*, *ranchos de reis*, pastoral – re-signified in carnival groups and dances, organized into different lines with themed costumes and floats resembling the old Portuguese colonial processions. The primitive groups of string and wind instruments of carnival associations gradually gave way to drum orchestras, accompanying the strategies of the urban black population to legitimize their peculiar forms of artistic expression within the dominant white society that marginalized them, now inserted in the brief reign of Momo.<sup>23</sup> The notion of ‘honest entertainment’ of public expression was then articulated into arrangements, to provide the illusory approach between social classes, between blacks and whites. In parallel, the samba evolved as a genre of Brazilian popular music, championed by a host of fantastic creators coming from the slums, becoming an icon of nationality.<sup>24</sup> Under the wings of the capitalist society of spectacle and consumption, a unique model of Carnival, that of the samba schools of Rio, spreads across the country with the samba schools competing for points in confined spaces, the *sambódromos*, with their parades marketed as merchandise and broadcast live on TV. But if on top of the floats, as a model reproducing the existing social stratification, white socialites stood out reaffirming their media success, the black communi-

ties resisted as the great masters and craftsmen of the greatest Brazilian festival, stomping the ground with faith and making the heart of samba beat with multitudes of drums.

### The threads of the weft

In the preceding pages we examined some of the major social and political processes and the institutions engendered by them which, in the course of the history of the formation of the Brazilian people contributed to the consolidation of certain leitmotifs or themes in the field of popular artistic and religious expressions. The catechesis of indigenous peoples by means of cultural counterfeit is linked to the fixation of the *image of the Indian* (mestizo) in dances and frolics, while the re-territorialization of popular Portuguese Catholicism in Brazil leads to new elaborations of the *veneration of saints*, of the celebration of the *Nativity* and the *Divine Holy Ghost* through music and dance. In turn, the establishment of black brotherhoods as mediators of the social inclusion of the blacks allows the multiplication throughout the country of the processions of Congo kings, linked to the African-Brazilian worship of Our Lady of the Rosary and Saint Benedict; the theatrical performance of African inter-ethnic battles in the *congadas*, seen by the white as a *fair war*, intertwines with the fable of the inexorable advance of Christianity, which multiplies into various festivities: that of the war between Christians and Moors. In turn, ancient Portuguese epopees of sailors represented in different dramatic dances are understood by the blacks of the brotherhoods as the sad transatlantic saga of their African ancestors aboard slave ships. The policy of prohibition and acceptance of African expressions, while praising the *congadas* as ‘honest entertainment’, relegates to marginality the artistic and religious forms outside the scope of Christianization, considered as ‘dishonest’; this is the case of the *batuques de terreiro* and the African-Brazilian religions that established themselves as spaces of resistance and construction of an African-Brazilian identity. In the cities, a gradual process of secularization and urbanization of culture encourages the multiplication of profane dances and improvised chants in houses and ballrooms and of popular musical comedies in public places, such as those staged in the *brincadeiras de boi* (ox games). The festivities of Carnival and its parades, a secular context from which the urban samba emerges as a new, socially expanded version of ‘honest entertainment’ - now for blacks, mestizos and whites, gain strength.

Currently spread over vast geographic area of the country, the great themes highlighted here in italics as weft threads of a fabric, rarely occur in isolation, but bundled in different arrangements and proportions. Let us look at an example of the use of these keys.

If the theme “Christians and Moors” includes the *congadas* featuring war dances or dramatic plots opposing a Christian king and a pagan king, these manifestations can also be understood as frolics of ‘Congo kings’ due the presence of the couple of sovereigns, of ‘sailors’ if the participants are so dressed or call

themselves as such, and also of the veneration of our Lady of the Rosary, as belonging to the heading ‘veneration of saints.’ This is the case of dramatic dances like the *marujada* from the town of Serro, in Minas Gerais, where the components dressed as sailors, after roaming the streets singing and dancing in praise of the Mother of the Rosary and the Congo kings, stage bitter sword fights in the episode called *rezinga grande* (big quarrel). Therefore, in this frolic the four aforementioned themes – ‘Congo kings’, ‘Christians and Moors’, ‘veneration of saints’ and ‘sailors’ intertwine. We believe, precisely, that the complex dynamics of the migration of core themes as well as the capacity they show to combine and recombine in a multitude of different arrangements in the Brazilian popular imaginary, are factors located on the very base of the extraordinary diversity of artistic and religious manifestations of our people. Hence the functionality of the major themes proposed here as categories for reflecting upon traditional Brazilian popular culture.

#### Notes

- 1 A French version of this text was published under the title “Diversité et unité dans la musique du Brésil,” in the catalogue of the exhibition “MPB - Musique Populaire Brésilienne” (Paris, Cité de la Musique, 2005).
- 2 In 1938, under the direction of Mario de Andrade, the Department of Culture of the City of São Paulo promoted a trip of ethnographic registries to states in the Northeast and North of the country, as well as small inroads in the Southeast. The resulting material was published in 78 RPM records, which are currently at the São Paulo Cultural Center. It was only in 2006 that part of this songbook was released on CD in Brazil by the label SESC/Department of Culture of São Paulo.
- 3 “Balé ambulatório” (itinerant ballet) was the expression used by the French Jesuit Claude-François Ménéstrier, a great ballet theorist of the seventeenth century, in his book *Des ballets anciens et modernes selon les règles du théâtre*, published in 1682, to designate the Portuguese processions.
- 4 In Portugal, the resistance to the exclusion of dance from religious practices was particularly strong, as evidenced by the longevity of numerous acts by initiative both of ecclesiastical and civil authorities. In that country, dances inside the churches were strongly condemned for over almost two centuries (from the XV to XVII century).
- 5 The oldest fraternities of the Divine Holy Ghost in Europe date back to the thirteenth century; introduced in Portugal by the Catholic Queen Isabel of Aragon in 1323, the adoration was banned shortly thereafter by the Church, remaining as popular devotion.
- 6 Hemiola: meter alternation of triple simple and duple compound. In the Middle Ages, the three-beat meter was known as *tempus perfectum* in analogy to the perfection of the Trinity; in turn, two or four-beat meters were called *tempus imperfectum*.
- 7 See watercolors by Charles Julian (1740-1811) in the series *Riscos iluminados de figurinhos de brancos e negros dos uzos do Rio de Janeiro e Serro Frio*.

- 8 Category created by Mário de Andrade (1982): “I gather under the generic name of ‘dramatic dances’ not only the ballets featuring a dramatic plot, but also all collective ballets which, besides following a given traditional and characterizing theme, respect the formal principle of the suite, i.e., a musical work formed by the arrangement of several choreographic pieces.”
- 9 “It is in these two Brazilian dramatic dances that Sílvio Romero entitled ‘Chegança de Mouros’ and ‘Chegança de Marujos’ that the work at the Portuguese sea and the fights against the Infidel experienced their most remarkable, most beautiful and most profound popular celebration. It was the Brazilian people who, by bringing together and amalgamating a world of diverse traditions that arrived here, turned these two ballets into the most admirable rhapsody, telling for the first time ever the hatred to the infidel and the work at the sea” (Andrade, 1982).
- 10 At the moment we prefer the designation of *batuques de terreiro* over *sambas de umbigada* proposed by Edson Carneiro (1961) – the first author to recognize common traces between geographically dispersed songs-dances of Congo-Angola matrix – since the term samba, today, is excessively semantically attached to the urban popular genre and to the carnival tradition of samba schools. This family consists of expressive Bantu-descendent forms characterized by the recurrence of hand drums made from tree trunks or barrel, tuned by fire, of symbolic or metaphorical poetic language, of the presence of social chronicle and poetic jousting, of the dance usually in circles, of the actual or suggested presence of the *umbigada* (belly-bumping), of the usually night and intra-community event, sometimes occurring at a sacred/profane threshold. This family includes *batuque de umbigada* (São Paulo), *jongo* or *caxambu* (São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo), *candombe* (Minas Gerais), *suça* (Goiás), and *zambé* and *bambeló* (Rio Grande do Norte), *tambor de crioula* (Maranhão), *samba de aboio* (Sergipe), *batuques* and *samba* from Amapá, among others.
- 11 The *umbigada* is present in engagement and fertility dances of the Bantu from Angola, as reported by chroniclers like Ladislau Batalha. The actual or simulated presence of this choreographic gesture in different African-Brazilian dances led the anthropologist Edison Carneiro (1961) to group them under “*sambas de umbigada*” (belly-bumping samba).
- 12 Recently, three of them were listed as intangible heritage of Brazil by Iphan: first, the *samba de roda* from Bahia (2004); then the *jongo* from the Southeast (2005); and finally the *tambor de crioula* from Maranhão (2007).
- 13 The *Ilê Iyá Nassô*, or *Casa Branca do Engenho Velho*, in Salvador, is the oldest *candomblé* still active. It was founded around 1840 by the African woman Iyá Nassô, daughter of a slave who returned to Africa, along with other Yoruba priests. In São Luís do Maranhão, Casa das Minas was established in the same decade by Nan Agontime, queen of Dahomey sold into slavery along with some of her relatives; the deified ancestors of the royal family of Dahomey are still worshiped there.
- 14 Jeje was the name adopted still in the colony to designate the ewe-fofon from Dahomey, now Benin, and Nago, for the Yoruba coming from the territory now occupied by Nigeria.
- 15 The heptatonic scale or seven-note scale system as well as the use of polyphony choir at intervals of third, fourth and fifth, naturally brought the musicality of the Bantu people close to the music of European origin widespread here, which shares these cha-

racteristics, providing interpenetrations, as noted by the ethnomusicologist Gerhard Kubik (1979). In turn, the five-note system of the Sudanese (pentatonic scale), without resonance in European music, remains still largely confined to the sphere of the religious houses of Jeje-Nago root.

- 16 Yoruba and Fon in jeje-nago candomblé; quimbundo, umbundo and quicongo in Congo-Angola candomblé; Portuguese in umbanda.
- 17 In the nineteenth century there were reports of *batuques* organized in Rio de Janeiro in homes or farms belonging to important figures of the white society of the capital of the empire. The loan or rental of these sites, along with the informal authorization of neighbors and especially the police, are actions that make up a strategy of insertion of the *batuque* in non-public urban spaces adopted by the black organizers of these events.
- 18 The term contra dance is used here to designate a dance in which two rows of dancers face each other. In the studies of history of the dance, other possible meanings for the term are suggested.

The expression appears in European documentation to designate the dances that prevailed in aristocratic ballrooms of the eighteenth century, surpassing the popularity of the gígues, sarabands, minuets, etc. Some suggest that the term may have come from country dance and express the influence of peasant dances from England in aristocratic dances. The term also appears in the documentation about festivities in colonial Brazil, (Castello, 1969, p.97-121).

- 19 In Maranhão, the *sotaques* (accents) of the *bumba-boi* relate to different regional styles of the festival in that state: *boi de matraca*, *boi de zabumba*, *boi de orquestra* and others.
- 20 As stated earlier, it is impossible to assign to the concrete manifestations of Brazilian popular culture a single classification key; the ‘threads of the weft’ can hardly be separated, since in every manifestation a number of them are overlain, which allows us to say that the ox game and its congeners (*cavalo marinho* (seahorse), *boi de mamão* (papaya ox), etc.) can be interpreted as both secular and religious manifestations linked to the devotion to St. John (Maranhão oxen, Parintins ox) or to the Saint Kings of the East (Pernambuco seahorse, Espírito Santo ox kings) or simply a manifestation of Carnival, such as the Pernambuco ox.
- 21 In Salvador, a reverse phenomenon is observed: since the nineteenth century street carnival has been dominated by African carnival societies such as the African embassy and the Africa revelers, while the Carnival of the whites took place in homes and private ballrooms. Perhaps for this reason the Carnival of Salvador still boasts a strong African-Bahian identity, expressed in the presence of *afoxés* and African groups, resisting the penetration of the model of samba schools from Rio de Janeiro.
- 22 The most accepted date for the foundation of the first samba school is 1928, when samba dancers from Morro do Estácio (Estácio Slum), including Ismael Silva, created a group that danced at the syncopated rhythm of the samba, called “Deixa Falar” (Let them Talk), with a predominance of percussion instruments; a year later the samba school Estação Primeira de Mangueira was created.
- 23 The drums of the samba school reflect that confluence of cultural data from different sources. The *surdo* (large bass drum) is a version of the Portuguese bass drum (Zé-Pereira), but used in the African style as the solo drum of the group in the bass register [*contrassurdo* (smallest and highest pitched drum) or *surdo de corte* (third surdo)].

The tambourines and *adufos* (square frame drums which evolved into the tambourine), present in the first drum groups, are of Arab origin and were brought by the Portuguese and Islamized Africans. The *caixa* drums derive from the war drums used in Europe since the Middle Ages. Instruments such as *cuíca* and *agogó* are clearly African, as well as the way of playing the *repinique* (repetition), with possible influence of Jeje-Nago *candomblés*, where the bass drum is played with a stick and a loose hand.

24 As noted by Oga von Simson (2007), carnival samba, which originally arose as a manifestation of resistance and affirmation of black identity, gains contradictory meanings as it is appropriated by the cultural industry and starts to serve the purposes of consumption and leisure of the dominant white classes, a process in which it is made into a symbol of the national identity and brandished as an icon of a fictitious Brazilian racial democracy.

#### References

- ABREU, M. *O império do Divino*. Festas religiosas e cultura popular no Rio de Janeiro (1830-1900). Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 2000.
- ANDRADE, M. de. *Danças Dramáticas do Brasil*. Belo Horizonte: Itatiaia, 1982.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Música de feitiçaria no Brasil*. Belo Horizonte: Itatiaia, INL, 1983.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Os cocos*. São Paulo: Duas Cidades, INL, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *As melodias do boi e outras peças*. São Paulo: Duas Cidades, INL, 1987.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Aspectos da música brasileira*. Belo Horizonte: Vila Rica, 1991.
- BASTIDE, R. *Sociologia do folclore brasileiro*. São Paulo: Anhembi, 1959.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *As religiões africanas no Brasil*. São Paulo: Pioneira, 1989.
- CARNEIRO, E. *Samba de umbigada*. Rio de Janeiro: Campanha de Defesa do Folclore Brasileiro, 1961.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Folgedos tradicionais*. Rio de Janeiro: Conquista, 1974.
- CASTELLO, J. A. *O movimento academicista no Brasil, 1641-1820/22*. São Paulo: State Council for Culture, 1969.
- DIAS, P. A outra festa negra. In: VVAA. *Festa: cultura e sociabilidade na América portuguesa*. São Paulo: EDUSP, Hucitec, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Comunidades do tambor. In: VVAA. *Textos do Brasil*. Brasília: Ministry of External Relations, 2004. No. 11.
- DIAS, P.; IKEDA, A. *São Paulo, corpo e alma*. São Paulo: Associação Cultural Cachueira!, 2003.
- KUBIK, G. *Angolan traits in Black Music, Games and Dances of Brazil*. Lisbon: Council of Overseas Scientific Investigation, 1979.
- MENESTRIER, C.-F. *Des ballets anciens et modernes selon les règles du théâtre (1682)*. Genève: Éditions Minkoff, 1972.
- MONTEIRO, M. F. M. *Noverre: cartas sobre a dança – natureza e artifício no balé de ação*. São Paulo: EDUSP, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Espetáculo e devoção: burlesco e teologia-política nas danças populares brasileiras*.

São Paulo, 2002. Thesis (PhD in Philosophy) – School of Philosophy, Letters and Humanities, University of São Paulo.

PEREIRA de QUEIROZ, M. I. *Carnaval brasileiro. O vivido e o mito*. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1999.

RISÉRIO, A. *Carnaval ijexá*. Salvador: Corrupio, 1981.

SIMSON, O. von. *Carnaval em branco e negro: Carnaval popular paulistano: 1914-1988*. Campinas: editora da Unicamp, 2007.

SOUZA, M. de M. e. *Os reis negros, no Brasil escravista: história da festa de coroação de Rei de Congo*. Belo Horizonte: Editora da UFMG, 2002.

TINHORÃO, J. R. *História dos negros em Portugal*. Lisbon: Caminho editorial, 1988a.

\_\_\_\_\_. Correspondência da Corte, 1780-1781. In: \_\_\_\_\_. *Os sons dos negros no Brasil*. São Paulo: Art editora, 1988b.

*ABSTRACT* – In the Brazilian popular chants, dances and festivities one can detect different motifs and patterns of a tissue. It is interesting to investigate and follow each of these threads that constitute this weft, grouping them according to their texture or coloring. These different thematic lines, threads of the weft of artistic and religious expressions of the Brazilian people are the theme of this article, which intends to analyze cultural forms characterized by hybridization which often resides in the ambiguity between resistance and acceptance of a dominant cultural pattern. The dynamism of these arrangements makes us speculate about the formation or constitution of these artistic practices, as well as their circulation, trying to investigate about the processes that were responsible for the broadcasting of these characteristics and similarities in such an enormous country.

*KEYWORDS*: Brazilian popular music, Popular culture, Folklore

*Marianna Francisca Martins Monteiro* is a professor at the Institute of Arts, “Julio de Mesquita Filho” State University of São Paulo (UNESP) and author of *Noverre: cartas sobre a dança* (EDUSP, 1998), *A dança na festa colonial* (Hucitec, Edusp, Official Press, 2001), *Dança afro: uma dança moderna brasileira* (in press). @ – mmartinsmonteiro@gmail.com

*Paulo Dias* is a musician and ethnomusicologist specialized in African-Brazilian music from the Southeast. He is the author of several articles on the subject, having also produced CDs, video documentaries, radio programs, exhibitions and other publications on Brazilian musicality. He is president of the Cultural Association Cachuera! ([www.cachuera.org.br](http://www.cachuera.org.br)), an organization dedicated to recording, disseminating and reflecting on traditional Brazilian popular music. @ – paulodias@cachuera.org.br

Received on 20 Jan. 2010 and accepted 27 Jan. 2010.

