

AFRO-BRAZILIAN MUSIC AND RITUALS
Part 1. From Traditional Genres to the Beginnings of Samba

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I. AFRO-BRAZILIAN MUSIC: A GENERAL OVERVIEW

This paper presents a general overview of the various musical traditions of African origin, which have developed in Brazil since the first decades after the arrival of slaves, brought to Brazil from the African continent. The discussions will therefore encompass both ritual and secular forms of Afro-Brazilian music. Written as a guide for a lecture course, the arguments are presented here in a highly synthetic form. I hope the reader will be able to grasp the general theoretical perspective which is partially implicit in the analysis and interpretations of concrete musical examples I will offer. Nonetheless, I believe that by the end of the text, a certain approach will become established. In a few words, this is one which aims at making sense of a musical tradition such as the Afro-Brazilian (in which practically all musical genres are at the same time sung genres) through the articulation of three main dimensions of a cultural text: musical texture, poetics of songs, and social history. The last is here understood broadly as the overall set of practical conditions which shaped the musical genres that managed to acquire a formal stability which allowed to develop a life partially detached from the initial social and historical circumstances which they comment by means of aesthetic signs.

This paper is particularly concerned with devising a conceptual model which allows us to understand how genres are created, expanded, and transformed through time, and how certain pieces of a repertoire are recreated when they pass from one genre to another. This implies a hypothesis of a unity behind the Afro-Brazilian musical experience. There is a national space that at a certain point forced a process of intertextuality, even if based on the harsh and horrifying conditions of slavery. There are compelling reasons to believe that Afro-Brazilian music evidently expanded enormously after the second half of the nineteenth-century and especially in the mid twentieth-century; thus, precisely after the nation was consolidated and its borders defined and closed. It is only recently, at the end of the twentieth-century, that Afro-Brazilian religions and music are transcending the national boundaries and expanding inside Argentina and Uruguay, where, (probably new and very different from what we have seen so far), processes of fusions, syncretisms, cross-fertilizations are taking place and need to be studied in relation to the Argentinian and Uruguayan musical traditions.

There are two very distinct models of Afro-Brazilian religious traditions that have reflected two different musical organizations. The first model, which can be identified in one word is the *candomblé*¹ model, of which the xangô cult of Recife is an equivalent, has kept itself extraordinarily cohesive and closed to influences and experimentations. Being a highly aristocratic form of cult, with a very elaborate and demanding process of initiation, xangô cults have somehow captured musical expression and made it captive of its liturgy. So, orthodoxy, conservatism, is the main push. The result is a fascinating world of symbols, organized internally with such control on the part of leaders that they invite a structural analysis. Since it is a universe that is ideologically closed, one can look for structural transformations, oppositions, equivalences, so that a unity can be sustained in the end of the interpretation. In this model, therefore, the theory most readily at hand will be of a kind which makes wide room for

¹ *Candomblé*, Afro-Brazilian cults from Bahia not to be confused with *candombe*, the Afro-Brazilian musical form practiced in Minas Gerais.

functionalist and structuralist arguments. A context-sensitive analysis will practically be unavoidable. This is not a criticism of this kind of analysis, but rather a remark on the fact that one's theory depends on the question asked of the material one is trying to understand, and moreover, one's response to the intellectual and aesthetic (mainly in the sense of sensuous) challenges the music material itself is imposing upon us.

The second model is the Angola religious tradition. It was organized in such way as to allow an open window to influence and be influenced by other musical genres. This is an old argument in Brazil, but one which needs more historical and empirical research to be reformulated. The Angola nation of candomblé has a liturgy which is more mixed in terms of the musical and linguistic material used. Therefore, one can actually trace the passage from strictly ritual, orthodox Angola repertoire, to the repertoire of umbanda cults, which are a much more syncretic kind of cults and finally to secular traditional genres; ones which are rural, or communitary, such as capoeira, maculelê, samba de roda, jongo, and finally to the variety of genres of popular music, from commercial to "experimental," or "cult." As can be expected, studies of Angolan tradition will most likely emphasize dynamics and deal with issues of change, ambiguity, polysemy, and hybridity. To arrive at a general picture one should develop these two theoretical trends simultaneously. The seminar on which this paper is based was an opportunity which allowed me to attempt to formulate a more general interpretation of Afro-Brazilian musical genres and their connections (influences, borrowings, commentaries, and hybridism) with popular and secular genres.

Two very distinct models of aesthetic and symbolic influence can be identified:

1. In the case of Yoruba Nations, both of xangô and of candomblé, popular commercial songs evoke the *orishas*² via a musical language which has not come from Yoruba. João Bosco, Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, among others, they mention names of gods, praise names, fragments of Yoruba song texts or invocations, but the MPB³ material itself goes in another direction. There may be some degree of experimentation with Yoruba material (songs and drumming patterns), but there is a stock of musical grammar in the hands of listeners. If experimentation goes beyond a certain limit, the public cannot assimilate the aesthetic message and the process of communication does not grow or is not fully accomplished. With the risk of pushing the structural argument too far, one can sometimes speak of a musical paradox: popular musicians want to compose songs that refer to orishas in the Yoruba tradition; but when taking the MPB idiom, they are in fact working with a grammar that is closely linked to Angola background: variations of samba, binary rhythms, melodies which have a closer affinity with Portuguese repertoire, strophes more similar to Iberian models and even harmony, already a result of this long process of fusion which occurred throughout the nineteenth century and which resulted in the vast, but recognizable world of Brazilian popular music (what is usually defined as MPB). Yoruba repertoire implies time line pattern, usually in 12, be it 7+5, or 5+7, which sets

² Yoruba gods, also worshiped in Santería.

³ *Musica Popular Brasileira*, a rather loose term which refers to the broader field of Brazilian popular music.

the ear in a clear aesthetic direction; antiphonal style of singing; song texts with strophes which do not adapt easily to Portuguese versification; melodic lines which are remote from the styles coming from the forms generated out of an old fusion of Portuguese and African musical styles; and finally, polyrhythmy, which even today does not appeal much to the public.

2. In the case of Angola, popular music pieces can be built as contiguous with the religious repertoire. This is due to various factors pertaining to music and language: for instance, mixing between Portuguese and Bantu words has been historically much more intense than mixing between Yoruba or Fon and Portuguese. This argument about language is a typical analytical argument, because Afro-Brazilians are scarcely aware of it.

II. THEORIZING MUSICAL GENRES

a) Song Text

A sound analytical reason to study song texts can be made clear if one thinks there is so much hidden behind the levels of symbolic and aesthetic expression activated in these complex cultural events: drumming, dancing, costumes, acting, miming, moving; and, one realizes that people are muttering words. It seems irrelevant, because there is so much already, so why listen carefully to people who most often do not pronounce in standard language, cut off half of the words, chose to use voice production that makes their own language difficult for outsiders to understand, when not by themselves? I am interested in what they are saying. For instance, as seen later, what are the Taieiras, or the Congos, saying in front of the church?

b) Hybridity

Hybridity implies necessarily that there is structure in the first place. One can only make hybrids if one has structure. The listener is supposed to follow the fusion. If the listener is not aware of the structures fused together, he will lose much of the aesthetic pleasure and some of the plausible meanings offered by the musical piece. The mere qualification of an aesthetic form as hybrid implies the existence of others which are certainly not hybrid. When a composer uses so-called "native" material, he knows that it appears as a citation, a parody, a collage, an allusion, an element of experimentation. The final expression, therefore, is not a hybrid, because it alludes to a subject who establishes a relationship with this work of art not in a condition of being a hybrid.⁴

c) Genres

We need musical genres, and we need them to be stable because we have different keys of our selves that should be expressed: the social key is to be expressed, the political, the spiritual, the affective, and so on. A musical genre is many things at the same time: it is a

⁴For hybridity in music, see Simon Frith (1996); for a general discussion of hybridity in the contemporary context of globalization and transnationality, see Homi Bhabha (1996).

rhythmic pattern, a drumming pattern, a precise, or at least a recognizable harmonic circle or sequence, sometimes it is a set of words or fixed literary tropes that combine with this rhythmic pattern and with this particular kind of harmony and melodic movement because these words or tropes evoke a certain social landscape, a historical landscape, a geographical landscape, a divine landscape, or even a landscape of the mind. All that is a musical genre. Once one has the articulated whole together as a genre, then one has many fusion experiments that partially form genres and the overlap between two or more of them results in great richness. This richness is able to evoke the structures of the genres which were put into contact in a single piece. Usually the different genres from which the hybridity is being formed, were somehow structured in a previous era. And they do not seem to have the same kind of importance or meaning today that they then had. So hybridity becomes necessary to bring it up to date, to propitiate the sensuous atmosphere which will hopefully allow it to sound revealing and surprising once more. One has to experiment constantly; one has to go forward, even as a way to go into the past, in order to retrieve an aesthetic experience that runs the danger of disappearing.

A very clear parallel can be drawn between the theory of genres in music and in literature. The classic study of Tzvetan Todorov, for instance, will sound familiar to music theorists, especially when he emphasizes the historically instituted character of literary genres, which allows them to function as “horizons of expectation” for readers and as “models of writing” for authors (Todorov 1990:18). Even Jacques Derrida’s powerful attack on the normative character of genres in art and literature presupposes the constant necessity of shaping expression in order to find aesthetic leeway to expand its contingently pre-ordained limits.⁵ Of course, one could argue that the case of musical traditions is more complex, or at least more demanding, since it requires paying close attention to at least two relatively separate traditions of institutionalization and consequent de-institutionalization of genres: musical genres and poetical genres. When it comes to ritual music, that agenda will have to be expanded to accommodate theories on other dimensions of symbolic expressions. For example, an articulation of music and poetry with choreographic genres.

As seen later, in the discussion of samba, there has always been (especially in the New World) strong inter-class pacts in the symbolic and aesthetic spheres. Styles have moved upwards and downwards in the social ladder, and hybridity was constantly appearing to express these movements. A great example is, of course, tango, from the *bas fond* (red light district near the port) of Buenos Aires to the grandeur of Bohemian life in Paris. Changes or fusions in music, text, harmony, certainly expressed this transformation of its social basis. One should bear in mind, however, that there is one dimension, obviously, one among many, in these processes which pertains to the life of aesthetic forms, and as such it is not linked exclusively to the culture of modernity. The retro wave, for instance, in films, books, post cards, dance, and finally in music, is just one aspect of the life of musical genres today.

In the sixties, awareness of these changes was the background for the signing, of the Samba Charter (*Carta do Samba*), by all the members of the League of Samba Schools of Rio de Janeiro, to preserve samba as a genre. This movement of preservation has to be understood beyond the simple trope of conservatism, reaction, fossilization of culture. It actually addressed

⁵ See Derrida (1980).

aesthetic issues of song, poetry, rhythm, to stimulate creativity within a framework of competition: how to evaluate a good samba without a discussion of samba as a genre? We will return to this later when we discuss the history of samba.⁶

Names of music and dance genres are quite often revealing of stereotypes, positions, historical events, traumas, slips, and counter-images. In other words, they are almost invariably expressions of contestation within a field of social inequality and contrasting ideologies. In the case of the Kalunga quilombos⁷ of Goiás, for example, their main, sacred dance, made central to the construction of their identity as a unique group of communities of descendants of runaway slaves, is called *súcia*.⁸ Curiously, *súcia* in standard Portuguese is a pejorative word, a category of accusation, referring to people of bad reputation joining together; in short, a *súcia* is a gang of bad people! Instead of rejecting the word, used against them, to describe negatively their forefathers at the time they were trying to escape from slavery, the Kalungueiros kidnaped the word to identify them and inverted its meaning, to represent a desirable kind of dance, the best of all dances, their dance! An etymological study of most of Afro-Brazilian musical genres would probably lead us to similar conclusions.

Another question that should be addressed, is that of mediation: which part of these genres was actually imposed on the slaves and ex-slaves by the Whites? There was never a plan of musical education in Brazil for the poor classes; nothing more than some basic harmony in Church hymns. The *folias* (festival, Carnival; samba itself) may reflect this influence, especially because there was some connection with Baroque orchestras. Some of the dramas may have been written, at least partially, by Jesuits. In the Congadas, Taieiras, St. Gonzalo Dance, some verses were probably produced outside the popular classes. This might have been quite different from the United States: Protestants taught Western harmony, choir singing. In the case of *candomblé*, *xangô*, and similar traditional cults, an entire cultural tradition came to Brazil; so, systematic knowledge was transmitted in an integral form. In the case of the *candombe*, no such integration ever happened and the whole process of structuration of musical ideas was one of reconstitution.

In the case of Afro-Brazilian ritual musical genres, the fate of a particular dance, a festival or a musical practice, is dependent upon transformations which may occur inside an institution that carries out a global project: the Vatican. So, the difference between one tradition and another may be a direct consequence of the positions taken by two persons inside the Church's hierarchy: first, on the receptiveness (or lack of) of the local priest towards these unofficial Catholic practices; second, and most decisively, the bishop's attitude towards the positions taken by the local priest. The Bishop can, at any time, at his own will, keep a priest in a parish or remove him to somewhere else. A case occurred in Salvador in 1998 illustrates this point quite clearly: a new bishop arrived in Bahia (being the first Black Bishop ever to preside the Church in the most "Black" city of the entire New World) and soon stimulated the integration of African culture inside Catholic rituals, a tendency which already had some limited precedents. The Cardinal of the state of Bahia, however, reacted strongly against that politics of "Blackening" the Church practices and removed him from Salvador, transferring him to a city in the hinterland of the state, where his singularity as a Black bishop would be less relevant and

⁶ The text of the Samba Charter was edited by Edison Carneiro (1962).

⁷ Maroon community.

⁸ The *súcia* dance can be seen in the video *Quilombos do Brasil* (1995).

where Afro-Brazilian cultural expressions are much less prominent. In the few months that he was in charge of the Salvador dioceses he already stimulated the creation of new cultural forms in the Afro-Brazilian scene, with groups such as Ilê Ayê, Sons of Gandhi, and Olodun. The Black community complained about his leave, but the Cardinal's power is absolute and every priest is bound to his superiors by an oath of obedience. Thus, recent developments in the Black cultural scene in Salvador will probably include a component of response, or reaction, to the attitude of the Cardinal. A certain "African aesthetic fundamentalism", for instance, may grow as a kind of statement, to repudiate the denial of integration expressed by the Church's hierarchy.

d) Stereotypes

Images of Blacks dancing and playing music by travelers. It is always an image of fun. The Black girl is playing the marimba, skillfully. Since she is playing, everything is fine with her; the image of music making helps obliterate the agony of the slave regime. In this case, she does not look particularly sensuous or erotic. It is worth remarking that the marimba was used in sacred events, and the painter might have been aware of that. As Richard Leppert has stressed, the sight of sound is as important, for a certain class, as the sound itself.⁹ In the case of Brazil, it is almost always the Blacks who are playing music, and not the Whites. The Blacks bring fun to life; Whites just pose, show their rank and status symbols, and they are hardly depicted doing any productive activity. From the perspective of the Whites, who painted slaves and commissioned the paintings, performance was the natural expression of slaves when they were not being punished. We can trace a continuity of this regime of images, from colonial days up to contemporary Brazilian media. The setting to film the capoeira dance, for instance, in the JVC series,¹⁰ is very similar to Debret's emblematic poses.¹¹

On the other hand, one can see in many songs and in the voice production of many singers, a touch of melancholy and sadness, which can pass as part of the "Black perspective." This melancholic touch never gets to the point of emotional intensity and stress of American spirituals; neither the voice production, nor the arrangement, nor the body language utilized in performance can be compared to it. If compared to the African-American musical aesthetics, in this sense, Afro-Brazilian styles will certainly sound, look, and feel much more low key.

e) Contextuality and Intertextuality

Afro-Brazilian music must also be presented from the perspective of social history. Musical genres open up, describe and inscribe a landscape, social, geographical, historical, aesthetic (Greek, *aesthesis* meaning sensation, thus, sensuality, or sensuousness). It is important to analyze the various spaces that are mentioned in song texts and the landscapes that are symbolized in the performances, be it in dances or in the name given to the places where the music happens.

Although, inevitably working with intertexts, as analysts one should bear in mind that the

⁹ See Leppert (1994).

¹⁰ See the video: *JVC Anthology of Music and Dance of the Americas*, vol. 5.

¹¹ See Debret (1978).

actual expressive musical object of our analysis may be an absolutely singular text. A particular musical piece might be performed under such special circumstances to the point of becoming unrepeatable. Therefore, the theoretical treatment we might choose to give while discussing it has to take this factor into account. This is because the idea of repetition is a primary idea for analysts of musical genres. Another factor which influences intertextuality is musical performance itself. Aesthetic expressions such as the playing of instruments, dance movements, formalized costumes, kinetic displays, and dramatization, create an environment which passes on the idea of continuity and articulation of the lyrics being sung. On the other hand it is sometimes a medley that probably will not be repeated in the same order or even with the same aesthetic elements. This is a process similar to what we can experience in the other arts, such as poetry and literature. Consider, the facsimile edition of Ezra Pound's intervention in what was supposed to be a final draft of *The Waste Land*, by T. S. Eliot, taken to be one of the most important poems of the century: dozens of verses and parts of verses were cut off from the poem as it appeared when it was published. Yet, the poem would also get another unity, another sense of whole and balance if Pound had left them in. Critics and readers who, for decades, were not aware of Pound's corrections and cuts, marveled at the conciseness of the text. So, macro-meanings are always imposed upon by the reader, interpreter or, listener.

That is, the conditions for intertextual reading are clearly given, but it can be misleading to reduce the meaning of the entire whole to a unified aesthetic consciousness. The singing subject does not have to be consistent, coherent or even unified. Heteronimity, masking, fragmentation, plurality, multivocality, these are all standard expressive devices available for singing practices in many of the Afro-Brazilian musical genres will be discussed and, probably, a feature of many musical genres in other musical traditions as well.

Another question which must be examined: is the musical community more consistent (if not more coherent) than each individual singer or player? To what extent is a musical genre something more than just the sum of all individual singers and players that subscribe their aesthetic belonging to a particular genre? Constitutive to genres is a pressure towards stability in space and time. Dialectically opposed to genres is the logic of individual musical pieces, which tend to reveal the tensions and confrontations experienced in the realm of social interactions; be they racial, ethnic, class originated, or religious, and transfer them to the realm of the aesthetic imaginary, structural, and performatic.

Some musical pieces are the result of three modes of expression put together at a certain time, but which could have, each one on its own logic, been generated and acquired a communicative life on their own, independent of each other. Mythically, at least, popular music, with a known author, appears as an aesthetic object which belongs to a historical (and professional, technological, productive, material) time, whose biography of gestation and realization can be traced. Thus, there are endless programs, documentaries, interviews, books, articles, etc., explaining in great detail how the lyrics of a particular song were put together, combined with the melody, how it demanded a certain arrangement, and so on.

As for *candomblé* and *xangô*, the story of the music is not narrated as a biography, but it is presented as if that was a particular Yoruba or Fon piece which used to be performed in Africa at a certain time and then brought to Brazil, where it has been preserved. If it presents changes, these should be seen as accidents of use, much like a painting, a sculpture, an idol, and a chair, all get fissures, little damages, repairs, and inevitably are worn out through time.

On the other hand, dramatic genres do not appear with these same narratives. In them, the collage aspect is much more visible; strophes come and go, narratives are fragmented, numerous

variants of the same text are a common feature. The *candombe* piece from *Matição*,¹² for instance, it is more like a heteroclyt expressive object, result of a drumming practice developed and transformed on its own; a song text acquired, probably, from other ritual traditions such as Catholic Mass, *novenas*,¹³ *trezenas*,¹⁴ and a repertoire of melodies and a harmonic singing practice that may have been assimilated by practicing with song texts distinct from the ones now in use.

III. TRADITIONAL RURAL GENRES

a) *Vissungos*¹⁵

Vissungos are songs of power. They were originally sung during the work of mining in the rivers of Minas Gerais in the early eighteenth-century. Taking the standard comparative ethnomusicological perspective, they could be classified as work songs; though, if we bear in mind that people who sang them were carrying out their activities under severe physical coercion, by calling them “work song” we would be hardly reflecting the singing subject's point of view. The setting for the performance of *vissungos* is well depicted in plate forty-two of Carlos Julião's *Riscos Iluminados*, produced in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and published around 1800.¹⁶ After the decline of mining in that region the *vissungo* became a ritual singing tradition, in which the actual work in the gold digging line was dramatized into an occasion of communitary effort. Under this ritual form they were recorded in the region of Serro (exactly in the same place quoted in plate forty-two almost two hundred years earlier) by Ayres da Matta Machado Filho. In the thirties, the quality of recordings was terrible. The rhythmic base was most likely composed of a trio of drums, playing interlocking parts, connected with *candombe* drumming, as remote from mainstream Afro-Brazilian secular and commercial music as the *vissungos*. In the sixties, Clementina de Jesus recorded them with a group of musicians. The rhythmic base chosen did not reproduce original *vissungo* drumming, but used a kind of generalized *umbanda* binary rhythms, such as *barravento*, which we hear in *umbanda*, *macumba*, and *jurema* houses all over the country.

1. *Vissungo*-Sung by Clementina de Jesus

Êi ê covicará iô bambi
 tuara uassage ô atundo mera
 covicara tuca tunda
 Dona Maria de Ouro Fino
 crioula bonita num vai na venda

¹² See the video *Matição, Comunidade Iluminada*, directed by Gloria Moura.

¹³ The recitation of prayers and practicing of devotions on nine days, usually to seek some special favor.

¹⁴ A prayer recited for thirteen Tuesdays in commemoration of the death of St. Anthony.

¹⁵ Slave songs from the mining area of Minas Gerais.

¹⁶ See Carlos Julião (1960).

chora chora chora só
chora chora chora só

(Miss Mary from Fine Gold
the beautiful mulatto girl will not go to the grocery shop
she cries cries cries alone
she cries cries cries alone)

Bantu linguist Yeda Pessoa de Castro offered me the likely following translation for the first part of the text: "It is raining, early in the morning, and the hens are scratching the soil [in their typical backward movement]."

In this song one can perform the typical exercise of mishearing; many times the listener adds his own desire and changes what he hears in a song lyric. Here, for instance, Clementina de Jesus lets the energy of her voice drop almost to silence in the words "*na venda*" (in the grocery shop). For a long time, it was believed she had said, "*não vai nascer*" (a lovely mulatta girl shall not be born.)

To start with, the text unfolds a very prosaic and domestic scene, which is related to the slave quarters of a village in colonial Minas Gerais; early in the morning (chickens usually wake up at dawn), it is pouring rain and that is why the young mulatta cannot go for groceries. However, since all *vissungos* convey an esoteric meaning, one can venture the following, the two sets of signifiers: her incapacity to leave the house, and the heavy drops of rain, both may form a coherent chain with the tears falling from her eyes. "Miss Mary" because of the incapacity of female beauty generated under those inhuman circumstances.

In this *vissungo*, Clementina breathes in a moment which can be considered "wrong," from the point of view of popular commercial music. In a commercial recording, the producer would probably have asked her to repeat the piece in another take. However, her "wrong" breathing can be heard as symbolically right, for it becomes iconic of the text, which says: he cries, he cries, alone. The blot in the voice, the wrong breathing, can be heard as the sobbing of the slave who did not have the chance of running away to the *quilombo* together with the young man.

2. *Vissungo*-Sung by Clementina de Jesus

Muriquinho piquinino,
ô parente
muriquinho piquinino
de quissamba na cacunda.
Purugunta onde vai,
ô parente.
Purugunta onde vai,
pro quilombo do Dumbá.
Ei chora-chora mgongo ê de vera
chora, mgonga, chora.
Ei chora-chora mgongo e cambada
chora, mgongo chora.

(Very small little boy
 oh my kinsman [oh brother]
 with a *quissamba* (rucksack) in his back.
 Ask where he is going to,
 oh brother,
 ask where he is going to-
 to the Dumbá quilombo.
 Eh cry [cries], cry [cries], mgongo,¹⁷ a lot
 cry, mgongo, cry
 Eh cry, cry, mgongo, eh people
 cry, mgongo, cry.

Translation offered by maroons descended from the slaves who worked in the mines in the regions of Sêro and Diamantina:

“The boy, with the bundle of his clothes on his back, is running away to the quilombo of Dumbá. Those who stay are crying because they cannot go with him.”

Vissungos, just like Umbanda song texts for some deities such as *Pretos Velhos* (Black old men) and *Pretas Velhas* (Black old women) dramatize a particular use of Portuguese language with sounds heard as infantile, especially with diminutives. A correlation has been established historically between the way Bantu speakers change the Portuguese morphology by adding vowels and thus expanding the original number of phonemes of words, and the way children speak. In short, the process of Bantuization of Brazilian Portuguese was ideologically constructed as if the subject has become mentally infantile, retarded or incapacitated. There is also an overtone of lack of self-esteem, of cowardice, of accepted and overt inferiority in speaking in a Bantuized manner. *Muriquinho* is a Bantuization of *mulequinho*, little boy. *Muriquinho piquinino* means a very small little boy.

Who is the ‘I’ that is speaking in the song? To whom is he speaking, that is, who is the ‘thou’ for him, and who is the third who guarantees the communication he is attempting to establish? The subject here says someone asks where is the boy heading to; someone cries a lot; probably the cambada is crying. We have here what Bakhtin calls the double voice: he is crying through the statement that the others are crying.¹⁸

3. Vissungo-Sung by Clementina de Jesus

Iáuê ererê aiô gumbê
 Com licença do Curiandamba
 com licença do Curiacuca
 com licença do sinhô moço
 com licença do dono de terra

(With the permission of the curiandamba

¹⁷ An iron gong, both used both as a musical instrument and bell to announce the beginning and the end of the work day for the slaves in the mines.

¹⁸ See Bakhtin (1984).

with the permission of the curiacuca
 with the permission of the young man
 with the permission of the land owner)

Curiandamba is a supernatural being who leads the way and demands to be appeased so that he will not cause trouble for the Black slaves working in the mines. Curiacuca is another supernatural being, which would also have a menacing power for the subject who sings and for those listeners who agree in sharing the community of meaning and experience formulated by the song. Both supernatural beings are probably mythical equivalents of the role played by Eshu, or Bara, or Legba, the trickster god in Afro-Brazilian religions. Despite of the fact that it is a genre of very restricted circulation, this *vissungo* states a certain attitude of Blacks in Brazil which is emblematic. The subject unites the supernatural and the natural world, the religious and the social, the celestial and the human hierarchy; he seems obliged to surrender to African as well as to Brazilian spheres of his experience. On the one hand, he pays ritual obligation for the spirits, exactly as it is done in *candomblé*, *Xangô*, *umbanda*; on the other hand, he pays his homage to the young man, who is probably the son of the White master, mentioned explicitly in the following verse. That can be taken as a guide for the behaviour of ex-slaves in twentieth-century Minas Gerais.

Even so, Clementina de Jesus' record circulated only among an elite of middle-class people with a refined taste for popular music (generally called MPB). It is the kind of music utilized in plays, university concerts, special television programs, and similar contexts. *Vissungo* songs gives us a good opportunity to differentiate words which are taken allegorically, or metaphorically, from words which are meant to be secret. This mechanism of hiding meaning is common to most ritual genres in Afro-Brazilian music. Samba, *pagode*, and *coco*, all use strong sexual innuendos through words which clearly have double meaning. As if the singer is saying to his/her public: I know you are following me, you are translating what I am singing. On the other hand, in ritual styles the listener is constantly pushed out of the agreement between members of a particular cult, brotherhood, sisterhood, or exclusive community. What Clementina de Jesus does here is to reintroduce secrecy in the potentially universal mode of expression, which is commercial recording.

b) **Jongo**

The *jongo* is a genre which expresses neatly one part of the historical process lived by Blacks in Brazil of having to leave the plantations just after the abolition of slavery in 1888, and integrating themselves into the cities, especially Rio de Janeiro. A "rural" dance, is sometime known as *caxambu*. It is part of the general pre-industrial, pre-urban styles which Edison Carneiro grouped together under the rubric of *samba de umbigada*. Another dance and musical genre connected to the *jongo* is the *cafezal*, which celebrates the skill of holding a tray to clean the coffee and making circular movements with it. If one saw, first, life in the *quilombos* as they exist today, *jongo*, *capoeira*, *maneiro pau*, and *maculelê* describe this intermediate world, between the entire rural area, where plantations were, and the full urban area. Some of the skills displayed in these dances are, to a certain degree, rural skills: hand dexterity; muscular power in the arms, legs and thighs; resistance and disposition to cope with open physical confrontation. Parallel to the physical display is the poetic and singing display: *samba de roda*, *capoeira*, *jongo*,

among other similar genres, all incorporate improvisation and poetic contest, and challenge between singers, articulated with the responses by the chorus.

1. **Jongo**-Sung by Clementina de Jesus

Tava durumido
cangoma me chamou
disse levanta povo [fogo]
cativeiro se acabou

(I was sleeping
cangoma [the drum] called me
he said: wake up, people [fire] slavery is over)

The drumming mentioned in this jongo is probably taking place in a small village, a kind of continuation of the *senzalas* (slave quarters) that were abandoned not so long ago. The kind of wasteland (*terreno baldio*): end of secondary street, backyard of an abandoned house, peripheral area, equivalent of the space where popular soccer used to happen (*futebol de várzea*), rarer and rarer these days.

As will be argued in the last section, one of the referents that surround those Afro-Brazilian musical genres is the process of urbanization itself. Musical styles have built inside their textuality the social space where they mythically originated, where they are supposed to be performed and the listeners are expected to transport themselves to that place. On the other hand, in most situations of commercial music, the listener is more likely to be situated somewhere distant from the place evoked in the music.

A good example of this imagination of space in Afro-Brazilian music is the word *terreiro*. It is used to define two different territories, one of them sacred and the other secular. In the sacred sense, *terreiro* is the yard of the temple house (nowadays, just the lounge of the temple house) where the main public celebration for the gods take place (what is called *toque* in Recife): at the moment cult members start the ritual, the *terreiro* is transformed into African soil; people step on African land, not on Brazilian land anymore. The same word, however, is used to define, in the imaginary, the place where secular dance styles of Afro-Brazilian music takes place: samba, pagode, tambor de crioula, carimbó, and samba de caboclo, they are all played in the *terreiro*. Thus, both sacred and secular traditions of Afro-Brazilian music comment on the process of industrialization of the country. It is much more than a coincidence, for instance, that the first samba song ever recorded, *Pelo Telefone* (The Telephone), tells us about the conversation of a police officer with Black musicians who were playing a samba, probably in a *terreiro*.

2. **Jongo**-Candongueiro (Wilson Moreira and Nei Lopes)-Grupo Batá Cotô

Eu vou-me embora pra Minas Gerais agora
eu vou pela estrada afora
tocando meu candongueiro
Eu sou de Angola, bisneto de quilombola

não tive e não tenho escola
 mas tenho meu candongueiro
 No cativo, quando estava capiongo
 meu avô cantava jongo pra poder assegurar, ô
 E a escravaria, quando ouvia o candongueiro
 vinha logo pro terreiro para saracotear
 (Eu vou me embora...)
 Meu candongueiro bate jongo dia e noite
 só não bate quando o açoite quer mandar ele bater, ô
 Também não bate quando o seu dinheiro manda
 isso aqui não é quitanda
 pra pagar e receber
 (Eu vou-me embora...)

Meu candongueiro tem mania de demanda
 quem não é da minha banda
 pode logo debandar, ô
 Pra vir comigo, tem que ser bom companheiro
 ser sincero e verdadeiro
 pra poder me acompanhar

(I am leaving to Minas Gerais now
 I am going on the road
 playing my candongueiro¹⁹
 I am going from Angola, great-grandson of a maroon
 I did not and do not go to school
 but I have my candongueiro

In the time of captivity, when I was sad
 my grandfather sang a jongo to be able to resist, oh
 And all the slaves, when they heard the candongueiro
 would soon come to the terreiro in order to dance

My candongueiro plays jongo day and night
 it only does not play when the lash gives him the order to play, oh
 He also does not play when his money commands him
 this here is not a shop
 where you pay and receive money

My candongueiro has the habit of confrontation
 whoever is not from my side
 may leave soon, oh

¹⁹ Candogueiro is a small drum used in jongo ensembles, the large drum being the tambu or caxambu.

If you want to come with me, you have to be a good companion
to be true and sincere
in order to follow me)

In this example, due to the systematic device of making up lyrics with a certain content, the interlocking pattern of the jongo becomes associated with an idea of a rural setting in a kind of “regressive” mood. The subject has moved from a village in the interior of Minas Gerais to the city (mythically, Rio de Janeiro) and now feels the same sadness (*capiango*) that his great-grandfather felt during slavery days; and so wishes to return to Minas. This migration, both in space and in historical time is iconically expressed by the elegant shift in rhythm, from the 2x4 of the samba to the bi-rhythmic hemiola pattern of the jongo. The sounds of the marimbas interlocking with the drums evoke the singing subject walking along dirt roads, on his way to the farms and small villages where the candongueiro drum played to ease the hardships of slavery and post-slave conditions. In the last part of the song, the vocal harmony evokes the two-part or three-part singing of Congadas, waving their colored sacred flags as they cross the countryside, uniting the environment and transforming the hell of life in the senzalas as a kind of blessed peacefulness and communal integration, which can only take place, according to the subject’s phantasy, in a rural setting, and never in an industrial megalopolis. Thus, by listening carefully to the text and the context of this samba-cum-jongo, one has been able to exercise in full the three dimensions of analysis outlined at the beginning of this paper.

IV. RITUAL GENRES CONNECTED WITH CATHOLICISM

a) Candombe of Minas Gerais

The candombe pieces which appear in the video by Gloria Moura come from a highly isolated community, if we opt to describe it from the point of view of the White national society.²⁰ As a cultural form, the candombe is a spectacular case of socially constructed remoteness within a framework of deep musical interrelationship. Matição is a village quite protected from the outside world, especially from the central institutions of the state: very poor formal education, no television, a minimum access to radios, inaccessible dirt roads, very few economic activities apart from subsistence agriculture and some handicrafts. Yet, seen from the point of view of the great Afro-Brazilian musical text mentioned before, Matição shows a high degree of integration and contact, probably over hundreds of years, with other Afro-Brazilian traditions of the area.

The candombe is a highly developed aesthetic form which combines very precise harmonic singing of a Western style with a drumming ensemble developing rhythmic patterns that seem to be very distinct from the Yoruba and Fon drumming tradition in Brazil and which count among the most “African” of our drum ensembles. The trio of candombe drums resemble very closely Bantu drum ensembles known in other parts of the New World, such as the redondo drums of Barlovento, in Venezuela. How could such an articulate musical genre be created? Certainly a long process of experimentation, observation, and exchange with musical patterns coming from other traditional Black communities and from important centers of Catholic

²⁰ See the video *Matição, Comunidade Iluminada*, directed by Gloria Moura.

musical cultures in Minas Gerais and in the neighboring states of Rio de Janeiro, Espírito Santo, Bahia, and Goiás. Somewhere around the borders of these four states a line could be drawn to trace the limits of a *candombe* musical area. Thus, *candombe* music can only be regarded as isolated from the point of view of those sectors that control the circulation of music in a wider scale, be it state-wide, regional or nationwide.

The *candombe* ensemble consists of a trio of drums, whose organological principles count among the most purely African of all Brazilian drum ensembles. They are the *requinta*, *crivo* and *santana*; one friction drum called *puíta* and one ordinary barrel drum, the *caixa*. On this basis, a melodic pattern unfolds, in singing in two voices, generally in thirds, with precise measures, tempo and perfect adjustment to the drums' beat-different, therefore, from the flow and fluctuations which are so characteristic of the singing style of *candomblé* and *xangô* music. Words are scarce, with numerous vowels, isolated syllables, and exclamations. Certain melodic and harmonic patterns of *candombe* show clear connections with similar singing styles of *Congadas* and *Folias de Reis* of Minas Gerais. For instance, the size of verses and musical phrases, the strophe composed of two phrases moving around the dominant and two around the tonic, always finalized with long exclamations. What is unique, though, of *candombe*, is the powerful drumming (together with the preservation of an extensive knowledge of drum making) adjusted to a refined two-part singing. The dance is also very singular, in Brazilian terms, and clearly different from the dances performed by *Congadas* and *Folias*. Unfortunately, information about *candombe* music in Brazil is still very scant and there is not a single recording available of this music.

b) Congos and Black Catholic *Irmandades* (Confraternities)

The Black *irmandades* represent, in the cultural history of Brazil, an expression of the colonial pact between Blacks and Whites. There were *irmandades* just for Blacks all over the country. The true *irmandades* came from Portugal in the seventeenth-century and some of them that are still active today, started in 1690. Slaves built churches for Whites and for themselves. Two *irmandades* were especially important: the Order of Our Lady of the Rosary of the Blacks (*Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos*) and the Order of Saint Benedict. They are similar to the *Cabildos* in Cuba and in other parts of the Spanish Caribbean. That was one of the ways through which Blacks would be incorporated into "civilized" colonial Portuguese life in the tropics. They would enter into the colonial order with a difference. They would have one day to celebrate their devotion. There were separate churches and separate days for their celebrations. It was a ritual of reversal: they could parade in the public space as if they were civilized, because they were Catholic. As long as (or at least during that precise period of time) they were celebrating Our Lady of the Rosary or Jesus, they could be taken for full human beings. They would use drums, African melodies, dresses, that could somehow keep their African cultural heritage alive. While White *irmandades* tended to reproduce Portuguese songs, dances and, costumes, the Black *irmandades* would be a first instance of preservation of African traditions. As soon as they were set up by the priests, they developed their own aesthetics, basically using African songs, musical instruments, and sometimes dance patterns, even though they might replicate melodies of the Church.

What is relevant is that they did not merely imitate the behavior of the White Portuguese *irmandades*, but at all times they dramatized the condition of the Blacks. Their celebration had a

flavor of its own. They would state, "We are the Blacks who are now singing." And they would also incorporate their social positions in the songs, always within a ceremonial framework of compromise; festivities of a Catholic saint together with a recuperation of African mythical and religious traditions. Certainly they were all Catholic to a certain extent, because they would all go the church at a certain stage, or moment, of their parade, in their dance, or in their dramatic performance. But they would also enact some aspect of slave life (and post-slavery as well, since these traditions are very live today) inside the church. Sometime they would mock the colonial social and political order, sometimes they would do things which would be considered irreverent for someone who was not a member of an irmandade to do inside the church; sometimes they would perform only until they reached the stairs outside of the church, without ever crossing the actual threshold of the Catholic temple.

The majority of Afro-Brazilian musical genres and dance genres too are connected with these sisterhoods and brotherhoods. Unfortunately, they have not received the attention they deserve from scholars. Usually they have been studied by folklorists and then one has many descriptions of rituals, festivals, dances, and musical instruments from various states of the country and from many orders: St. Benedict, St. Anthony, St. James, and St. Gonzalo. It is a real world of oblique expression: one thing is happening "officially," let us say; and another thing is happening beneath that supposedly straight Catholic devotion. Hiding, camouflaging, parodying, teasing are all constantly there. Usually they come from poor districts, neighborhoods or remote quarters of towns and cities and at a certain stage in their ritual activities they have to negotiate aspects of their worship with the local priests. Ninety per cent of the priests are White, coming from the different Catholic orders. Therefore, regardless of the music being played, or the dances taking place, there is an almost a European-minded priest present. The Vatican, not a context-sensitive institution, distributes its priests all over the world according to its own logic, regardless of the local cultural traditions. Some priests are more conservative, and discourage the activities of the irmandades; other are more lenient and tolerant, to the activities of the irmandades. And some (a minority so far) can be even supportive and enthusiastic about their artistic expressions; in other words, with their devotion to the saints.

In addition to the irmandades organizing their feast day, they also celebrate kingly *ambassades*; they display a replica, sometimes a parody, of African embassies. Most of them refer to fifteenth-century Portugal, when this country dominated the area of Angola, Congo, Mozambique, and to the way the Portuguese dealt with African kingdoms there. Many of these Congadas in Brazil celebrate a meeting of a Portuguese general with a certain African queen known as Dzinga Bandi, from the Lunda area, between Angola and Congo. These brotherhoods parade in the street with a king, a queen, vassals, ministries, ambassadors, guides, and with the people at the front leading the march. The *ambassade* is generally preceded by a group of dancers, whose task is to announce the arrival of the king and the queen. Sometimes most of the singing, dancing, and other aesthetic expression comes from the group of the people who are leading the parade.²¹

The video *Festa do Rosário dos Homens Pretos do Sêrro* begins with a voice off telling the following story:

Dizem que Nossa Senhora tava no meio do mar. Aí vieram os caboclos e lhe

²¹ For a general description of the Congadas, see Ayres da M. M. Filho (1974).

chamaram, mas ela não veio não. Depois vieram os marujos brancos, mas ela só balanceou. Aí chegaram os catopês. Eles cantaram, tocaram, só com caco de cuia e lata véia. Ela gostou deles; teve pena deles e saiu do mar.

(They say Our Lady was in the middle of the sea. Then came the caboclos²² and called her, but she did not come. Afterwards came the White sailors, but she was only swayed [by their presence]. Then came the catopês.²³ They sang, played, only with pieces of calabash bowls and worn out cans. She liked them; she felt sorry for them and got out of the sea).

This is a myth of reconciliation, integration, as well as a symbolic compensation for the historical experience of Black slavery in Minas Gerais. Based on the stereotypical Brazilian image of the three races, Our Lady did not go for the Indians nor for the Whites (*marujanos*), but only for the Blacks, who were the poorest of all. This experience is openly expressed in many song texts of the Congadas.

A great part of Afro-Brazilian music and dance traditions is connected with these Catholic (though not exclusively so) celebrations. Even popular musical styles are constantly filtered from these "Catholic" genres. Thus, a constant aesthetic overlapping occurs between songs, lyrics, and rhythmic patterns of different ritual and secular genres. To date, the majority of studies of Afro-Brazilian music have tended to concentrate either upon styles of traditional Afro-Brazilian religions (especially music of *candomblé*) or on popular, commercial music (MPB, *samba*, and *bossa nova*). Therefore it is important to investigate the world of ceremonial genres. They are practiced throughout the country, presenting an amazing variety of styles, genres, unique configurations. Moreover they are aesthetically and formally linked (both influencing and being influenced by) the two main styles mentioned above (traditional cult music and popular music). In this sense, one has to consider the historical implications of the establishment of a national space. Once a nation is defined, an arbitrary number of cultural texts are forced to begin interacting with each other. It definitely constrains, provides limitations, and stimulates mutual fertilizations among cultural forms, to the extent that, after five centuries of African cultural presence in Brazil, the hypothesis can be formulated such that there is a great Afro-Brazilian musical text, with signifiers cutting across numerous socially defined aesthetic boundaries. A certain melodic movement, associated with sequences of words, can be part of the standard repertoire of dozens of different musical genres. By showing examples of various ritual genres, secular and commercial, I hope to provide evidence for some melodic, rhythmic, literary and instrumental connections between all of them. This is the process defined by Hans-Georg Gadamer as effective historical consciousness; every time one tries to trace the limits and characteristics of a particular musical genre, one has already entered into a circle of meaning previously established.

1. Moçambique-Congo groups from Oliveira, Minas Gerais

²² Indians.

²³ One of the three ceremonial groups which form part of the Congado folk drama, composed exclusively of Black dancers.

Deus seja louvado
 ai, meu Deus, o que há de fazer
 rêgo tá rombado
 moinho quer moer
 chora engoma, ê
 olelê-leô, olelê-leô

Salve o nosso Capitão
 salve a Princesa Isabel
 salve os Congo

Ê louvado seja, nossa princesa
 louvado seja, ué-olê-oleleô
 vamos começar
 Mamãe do Rosário mandou me chamar, ué
 buscar minha bandeira
 prá banda de cá

ê taquaiana de taruê
 de taruê, de taruá
 os carrombo na paiça

(Praised be God
 Oh my God, what can one do
 the stream is damaged
 the mill wants to work
 cry, engoma [drum])

Greetings to the Captain
 greetings to Princess Isabel
 greetings to the Congos

Praised be our Princess
 Mother of Rosary has sent for me
 to pick up my flag
 to this side

Here, the Moçambique player mentions the *ngoma*, the generic Bantu word for drum. As it is frequently expressed in many of these ritual genres, the *ngoma*, symbolic witness of the regime of slavery suffered by Bantu people who were brought by force from Africa, cries. Through the *ngoma*, the subject cries for his condition.

2. **Catupé**-Congo Groups from Oliveira, Minas Gerais

Senhor, senhor,
 tem pena de mim, tem dó

a volta do mundo é grande
seu poder inda é maior

(Lord, Lord, have pity on me,
take pity on me, be merciful
the turn of the world is big
thy power is even greater)

These specific versus can be identified in an Umbanda song for Oxalá, the father god:

Oxalá meu pai
tem pena de mim tem dó
as voltas do mundo é grande
seus poder inda é maior.

(Oxalá my father
take pity on me, be merciful
the turns of the world are big
thy powers are even greater)

It remains to be decided which version came first, but it is more probable that this song was first part of the repertoire of the Congadas, and then migrated into the umbanda cult, sometime during the beginning of the century. The Congo King himself (*Rei Congo*) is also one spirits of the pantheon of *Preto Velhos* (old Black men) of umbanda. So, at a certain point, probably at the end of nineteenth-century, the Congo King, a “real” character of the Congadas, was transformed into a supernatural being of the macumba or jurema, and later, of umbanda cults.

3. **Catupé-Congo** Groups from Oliveira, Minas Gerais

1888
naquele dia de ano
[es]tava dormindo no mato
soldado me procurando

(1888
in that day of the year
I was sleeping in the woods
a soldier was after me)

4. **Catupé-Congo** Groups from Oliveira, Minas Gerais

Quando Deus andou pelo mundo
ôi que beleza
abençoando o povo tudo
louvado seja

Ô siriema
 canela fina corredeira
 nunca vi páss'ro de pena
 deixar rastro na ladeira

Senhora do Rosário
 foi quem me trouxe aqui
 a água do mar é boa
 eu vi, eu vi, eu vi

(When God walked this world
 oh what a beauty
 blessing everybody
 praised be He

Oh siriema
 thin knee, good runner
 I never saw a bird of feather
 to leave a trace on the hillside

It was the Lady of Rosário
 who brought me here
 the water of the sea is good
 I saw it, I saw it, I saw it)

The Congadeiro (especially the Black, or catopê, of whom Our Lady took special pity) is declaring how good the seawater is. It is worth knowing that Sêro and all this area is considerably far from the sea, and the singer of the song probably has never seen the sea, as is true of most inhabitants of Minas Gerais. When he says I saw it, he may also be making reference to the original myth mentioned above: he saw the Lady of Our Rosary at the sea, before she decided to come to the land.

This same song text, with a minor variation, is present in the repertoire of umbanda cult houses in Rio de Janeiro:

Senhora do Rosário
 foi quem me trouxe aqui
 a água do mar é santa
 eu vi, eu vi, eu vi

(It was the Lady of Rosário
 who brought me here
 the water of the sea is holy
 I saw it, I saw it, I saw it)²⁴

²⁴ My thanks to Michael Ferreira for information about this umbanda song.

5. Moçambique-Congo Groups from Oliveira, Minas Gerais

Princesa Isabel
foi ela que mandou

no tempo do cativoiro
quando o senhor me batia, ay ay ay
eu gritava por Nossa Senhora meu Deus
quando a pancada doía

Óia o nêgo d'Angola, meu Deus
óia que vem saravá

(Princess Isabel
she is the one who gave the order
[to abolish slavery])

In the times of slavery
when the master beat me, ay ay ay
I shouted for Our Lady, my God
when the beating hurt me

See the Angola Negro, my God
see he is coming, hail/greetings!)

All five passages are performed by groups from Oliveiras, Minas Gerais.

6. Song of the catopês-Sêro, Minas Gerais

Ô cuemba ô cuemba, ô cuemba ô cuemba
ôi no Rosário tem cuemba
ô cuemba ô cuemba no Rosário é o cuemba

(Cuemba cuemba, o cuemba cuemba
There is cuemba in the Rosary)

This song is heard at the end of the video on the Festival of the Rosary of the Blacks of Sêro. In a kind of coded Bantu (*cuemba* means 'singing' in Kimbundu), the woman is stating that the Rosary (Catholic, therefore Portuguese in origin) is an occasion to sing things African, or in an African mood.

Ô lelê catumbi ô lelê catumbi
arreda do caminho que eu quero passar
galinha d'Angola não é patuá

Ô lelê catumbi ô lelê catumbi

arreda do caminho que eu quero passar
galinha d'Angola virou patuá

(O lele catumbi,
get out of the way because I need to go by
guinea fowl is not a magic charm

O lele catumbi
get out of the way because I want to go by
guinea fowl has turned into a magical charm)

This song presents in a neatly designed aesthetic form, the multilevel led dilemma lived by the practitioners of the Congadas. In the first half of the strophe, the subject addresses the ambassade that is parading in the street in Bantu language, showing thus a familiarity, or intimacy, with the content of the celebration which is taking place; he asks the catumbi (another name for the member of a group of Congos) to get out of the way because he wants to cross the street. The signifier *galinha d'Angola* (guinea fowl) is evocative of offerings and blood sacrifices for the African supernatural beings. Since the celebration of Our Lady of Rosary is taken as a deep Catholic tradition, the subject then emphasizes that the guinea fowl is present there, but not as an emblem of Afro-Brazilian magic (*patuá*), a general name given to many types of amulets. Immediately after he has stressed that refusal of African magic, he states, at the end of the second half, repeating the same verse and meter, that the guinea fowl has become an amulet. Given the order of presentation of the halves of the strophe chosen by the composer, the general meaning tends to point out in the direction that the ritual of performing catopê leads to similar results to the rituals of sacrifice in umbanda or candomblé; to open a space to create magical elements, such as the patuá.

c) Taieiras of Sergipe

The taieiras form the last part of the Congo Parade, which counts on the presence of a queen, a king, a minister, a general, a master, a perpetual queen, ladies in waiting, guides (two men who play the drum) and the taieiras, which consist of two lines of dancers. Each group comes from one part of the town and every year one of them is responsible for leading the parade up to the church. Sometimes there are the adult taieiras plus a parallel group of taieiras composed exclusively of children. They all vote for the irmandade; they are dancing for Saint Benedict—they are dancing for divinity. So, it implies a high status, especially if we think they are coming from poor quarters of the town (where invariably the population of descendants of slaves is concentrated). After the displays in the streets, the last stage is in the church. The taieiras sing, accompanied by a drum, and they all carry a *querequexé* (a rattle) in their hands. The following examples come from the recordings of Beatriz Góis Dantas.²⁵

²⁵ For an ethnography of the taieiras, see Dantas (1976); for their music, see the record *Taieiras* (1976).

1. Taieiras-Laranjeiras,Sergipe

Ô estrela ô estrela
ô estrela do céu
ô caiu no mar

A São Antônio por piloto
São José por generá

Vamos ver a barca nova
Que do céu caiu no mar

Para São José a barca nova
que do céu caiu no mar

(Oh star oh star
oh star of heaven
who fell onto the sea

To Saint Anthony for pilot
Saint Joseph for General

Let us see the new boat
That from the sky fell onto the sea)

For Saint Joseph a new boat
That from the sky fell onto the sea

The music of the taieira is a very remote kind of music, never heard on the radio, and which influences (and at the same time is influenced by) the country's musical scene in a very subtle and slow way. Nonetheless, even in this highly devotional and relatively unusual tradition, one can spot in these song verses a classic trope of sung lyrics widely used in the tradition of Brazilian popular music; the image of the star of heaven that falls into the sea. This is a classic Brazilian song text trope, a stock verse, a familiar sign which connects this genre with the more widely spread styles of Afro-Brazilian secular and popular music. The sky, the stars, the sea: the taieiras are near the sea, so they are expressing this cosmic connection. They describe a sea scenery which is described even in capoeira and in many other genres; who is the pilot, who is leading, how is the boat (the boat being another important motif, like the canoe, whether it is rocking in the waves). So that is why St. Anthony for a pilot and St. Joseph for general. And one of the girls in front of the taieiras is carrying a miniature boat as a pedestal, with the statue of the saint inside. So, the song is commenting on what the people are seeing as they move about the streets. *Barca* and *barco*, both mean 'boat.' Here, it is group of women who are singing and dancing, and that is why they are referring to a *barca* (she-boat). Every year they will change the ornaments of that miniature boat in which they carry the saint.

2. Taieiras-Laranjeiras, Sergipe

Olhe o rio fundo
 ô rema a canoa
 chega na janela, amor, meu bem,
 que a crioula é boa

Eu bem que dizia
 que dois covos dava
 da saia balão, amor, meu bem,
 inda subejava

(Look, the river is deep
 oh paddle the canoe
 come to the window, love, my sweetheart,
 for the mulatta woman is lovely

Small wonder I said
 that two measures were enough
 to make the bell skirt, love, my sweetheart,
 and it would even be more than enough)

3. Taieiras-Laranjeiras, Sergipe

Alê lê lê ô cutia macamba-A lê lê
 A fazê maravia-A lê lê
 Na porta do Rosário A lê lê
 Do Rosário de Maria-A lê lê

Ô Virgem do Rosário
 ô Senhora do mundo
 ô dá-me um côco d'água
 ô se não vou ao fundo

Ô senhora rainha
 rabo de tainha
 Ah hoje tá na sala
 Amanhã na cozinha

(A lê lê Cutia Macamba
 to perform wonders
 at the door of the Rosary
 of Mary's Rosary

Oh Virgin of the Rosary

Oh Lady of the World
 Oh give me one coconut
 or I will sink to the bottom)

Oh Lady Queen
 like a mullet's tail
 ah today she is in the livingroom
 tomorrow she will be in the kitchen)

In this song, it is the epiphanic dimension of the taieira practice which acquires primal importance; in the proximity of Cutia Mucamba, wonders can be realized. The signifier for wonders, (*maravilha*), is the same as Mary's Magnificat, Luke 1:46 sung in Brazilian Catholic masses, "O Senhor fez em mim maravilhas\ santo é seu nome..."

4. Taieiras-Laranjeiras, Sergipe

S. Catirina Mubamba mandou me chamar
 Ch. Louvô em terra, louvô no mar
 S. Isto tudo é louvô, isto tudo é louvá
 A rainha de Congo de Congoriá
 Catirina de Congo de Congoriá
 Isto tudo é louvô, isto tudo é louvá
 A Rainha de Congo mandou me chamá
 O seu padre vigário mandou me chamar
 Me puxou pela cadeira
 mandou-me assentar

(Catirina Mubamba has called me
 Praise in earth, praise in the sea
 This is all praise, this is all praising
 The Queen of Congo of Congoriá
 This is all praise, this is all praising
 The Queen of Congo has sent for me
 The priest of our parish has sent for me
 He held by the hips and bid me to sit)

Here is an expression of two opposite desires put side by side in the same song. Whenever she sings, "The Queen of Congo has sent for me," the mythical connection with Africa is stated clearly, Africa wants the taieira back. In the next phrase, however, she sings that "The priest of the parish has sent for me," the Catholic Church, Brazil, or Europe is also desiring her. This identity dilemma is iconically heard in the musical performance of the taieiras, the caixa passes directly from a binary rhythm (2/4) to a ternary one (a 6/8); the binary can be heard as the mainstream, European side of the music; and the ternary, in a drum, as its opposite symbolically speaking, African, therefore.

In the last two lines one can see a brilliant use of the signifier cadeira, she seems to be

saying, on the one hand, that the priest welcomed her inside the church, grabbed a chair and invited her to seat, so that she would feel more comfortable after the long and tiresome journey through the streets, dancing, singing, and playing. On the one hand, she may be reporting to the listener that the priest grabbed her by the hip (which is also *cadeira* in Portuguese) and forced her to sit, in other words forbade her to continue the performance of the taieiras, as if he said to her, "Sit, do not dance inside the church." Thus, the priest may have been kind and even courteous to her; or he may have been censoring her for indulging in an ambiguous practice, when seen from the official point of view of the Catholic church. A third, and compromising meaning for the phrase may be that the priest did participate in the ceremony of the taieiras and by doing so, he has collaborated with an unorthodox form of worship through music and dance, even if *malgré lui* (in spite of himself) he held her and made her sit to finalize that stage of the celebration.

5. Taieiras-Laranjeiras, Sergipe

Ô meu São Benedito
tenho morro ao vento
fulô e o vento
pela porta a dentro

Taiê ajuê ajuê Jesus
ou tan tan tan taiê

Ô Virge do Rosário lhe venho pedir
saúde e gulora
para conseguir

Taiê...

Virge do Rosário
soberana bela
adorai as taieiras
de coroa e capela

Taiê...

Que santo é aquele
que vem no andor
é São Benedito
mais Nosso Senhor

Que santo é aquele
que vem na charola
é São Benedito
mais Nossa Senhora

(Oh my Saint Benedict
I have a hill to the wind
oh flower and wind
rushing through the door

Oh Virgin of the Rosary
I have come to beg you
health and glory
to overcome

Oh Virgin of the Rosary
beautiful sovereign
love the taieiras
with crown and mantle

Which saint is that
who is coming in the bier
it is Saint Benedict
together with Our Lord

d) Dance of São Gonçalo-Rio Grande do Norte and Sergipe

The dance of São Gonçalo is found, albeit in many variants, all over the country.²⁶ It is aimed at paying homage to Saint Gonzalo, a Dominican friar who is supposed to have lived in the city of Amarante, Portugal, in the thirteenth-century. According to popular legends, St. Gonzalo was a fun loving young man who liked to play guitar and dance with prostitutes as a stratagem to take them out of their sinful practice. This legend works also as an ideological rationalization to incorporate, within the Catholic tradition, a ritual of singing, dancing, and dressing that uses aesthetic symbols quite apart from the Iberian cultural patterns that the dominant classes wanted to impose upon slaves and the lower strata of Brazilian society in order to build a Christian civilization in the tropics.

It is a typical case in which a particular cultural form is associated with a particular racial group without being necessarily "African" in all its components. The story behind the dance can be read as a typical myth of incorporation, which could be used both by the colonizers and by the colonized.

In the variant of the São Gonçalo dance practiced in Laranjeiras, state of Sergipe, there are eight male dancers dressed as women and one woman, called "Butterfly," who carries the saint's image inside a miniature boat. There is certainly no equivalent of this transvestism in any orthodox form of Catholic ritual in Brazil. Why should men occupy the role of the female prostitutes who used to dance with St. Gonzalo is something for which the ethnographer Beatriz Dantas could not find any explanation among practitioners. This aspect in itself points towards a layer of meaning of the worship that most likely goes beyond Catholicism. The dance is

²⁶ For a documentary of the dance, see the video *Dança de São Gonçalo* (1996).

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